

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF FINLAND STRATEGY 2025





THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF FINLAND

STRATEGY 2025

Perspectives for the future



Vision of the National Archives of Finland

The National Archives of Finland is the leading expert and information service organisation in the management of the lifecycle of public information and a broad infrastructure for scientific research. The National Archives advances the transfer of official and private materials in electronic format, the customer-driven digitisation and diverse use of cultural heritage documents, data management based on artificial intelligence and modern scientific methods, open access to data and sustainable development.

Service promise

In 2025, the National Archives of Finland will provide its customers with diverse and secure electronic services that make use of the opportunities offered by AI and semantic systems.

It will be a globally advanced and active organisation that develops and utilises new ways to use and archive public information sustainably and cost-effectively.

It preserves nationally valuable analogue and digital cultural heritage documents for the next generations.

It will strengthen the expertise and professional pride of its personnel and advance cooperation with stakeholders and ethical operating methods that support sustainable development.



*“There’s no need for you
to reinvent the wheel!”
Photo: Jussi Nuorteva.*

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Strategy 2025 of the National Archives of Finland – our shared vision

JUSSI NUORTEVA

Director General, National Archivist



The year 2020 has changed the world more than any of us could have predicted at the start of the year. The global coronavirus pandemic makes the future uncertain in many ways. What are the effects of these changes on the global economy, our national economy and the financial situation, health and wellbeing of Finnish citizens? Can we ever reinstate free movement and global markets, or will states become increasingly closed-off and seek security by increasing self-sufficiency? Will the pandemic lead to increased competition for raw materials, energy and food? Will this crisis increase our desire to stop climate change, or will it make us indifferent to other issues? Will the gap between prosperous states and citizens and those not as well off grow wider, or will the crisis increase our willingness to help those who are less fortunate?

These are not the questions we discussed at the National Archives of Finland as we started preparing our new strategy for

*Director General, National Archivist
Jussi Nuorteva 2020. Photo: Mia Bergqvist.*

2025 at the start of November in 2019. The premise of our work was ensuring that all employees can participate in formulating it. The strategy is for all of us and its result is a shared vision for the future!

It was prepared in four strategy groups, headed by staff members from the different facilities of the National Archives of Finland, who also handled reporting. All employees were provided with the opportunity to sign-up for the groups. Work was done online, since we have nine facilities around Finland. The purpose of the strategy groups was to assess our current situation, form an overview of the international development of the archival sector in the coming years, discuss changing customer relationships, envision the digital services of the future and to suggest focus areas for recruiting and for the development of the competence of our personnel.

After just under three months of work, the strategy groups submitted their proposals. They were reviewed in a strategy meeting at the end of January that the employees who participated in the work could fol-

low online. After the meeting, the strategy was discussed by the management group of the National Archives of Finland and by an advisory board that the Ministry of Education and Culture establishes for three-year period at a time.

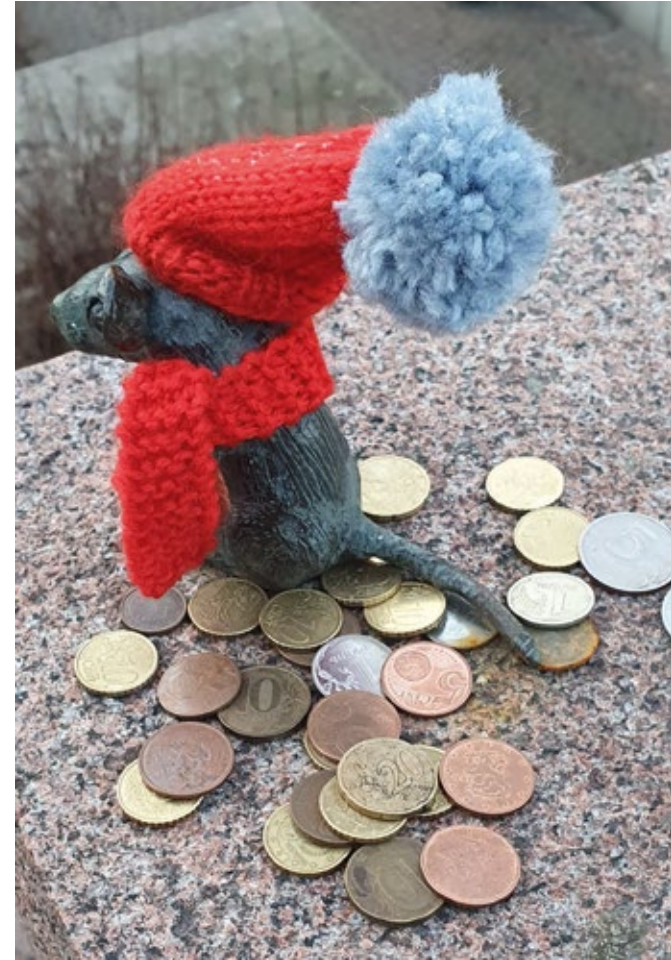
The strategy was approved and presented to our personnel on 4 March 2020. One week later, on 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the quickly spreading of COVID-19, a global pandemic.

Did our strategy become outdated right after being published? Not at all, it only became more relevant! The National Archives of Finland has been digitalising its services at an increasing rate. Over 90% of our customers primarily use our electronic services. Since early 2017, the National Archives of Finland has operated as a single agency, and our operations have been digitised at an increasing rate. The usefulness of this change has become clear during the pandemic. Most of our staff can work remotely, meetings can be held online, and we have been able to keep our services up and running almost as normal. Our ana-

logue reading room services, however, have been shut down by order of the government for the time being. Material orders can still be placed electronically, and our customer service operations now focus more on our online services.

The crisis proves that our strategic guidelines are appropriate and should be implemented quickly. Digitalisation enables access to administrative and historical materials. It provides us with the opportunity to maintain our services and to steer the document management and archiving of authorities. I believe this crisis will increase our faith in our newly approved strategy, so we can see it as a beacon of light that guides us into the right direction and helps us develop our digital services in the coming years.

The Viisas hiiri (the Wise Mouse), sculpted by Jyrki Siukonen, is the smallest publicly displayed sculpture in Helsinki. Photo: Jussi Nuorteva.



Steering the National Archives of Finland toward 2025

JARI OJALA

Professor of History and Vice Dean responsible for research and innovations at the University of Jyväskylä, Chair of the advisory board for the National Archives of Finland



Digitalisation brings with it a cultural change to archive-material-based research and to the sharing of research information and research materials. The National Archives of Finland is at the heart of this change. Digital archive materials enable the goals of open science: they make material more readily available both for citizens and researchers from multiple fields and they facilitate reproducing research results.

Multidisciplinary use of the digital datasets of the National Archives of Finland opens up endless possibilities for expert historians. It also strengthens the National Archives of Finland's position as one of the most important Finnish research infrastructures in the field of culture and society.

Digital materials and novel ways of utilising the existing material, for example with software designed to read handwritten text, open new avenues for research. Large

Professor Jari Ojala, chair of the advisory board for the National Archives of Finland. Photo: University of Jyväskylä.

datasets and combining material, different search functions, artificial intelligence and registry data are all at the fingertips of researchers as never before. Digital materials also enable sifting through big data for deeper meanings and values. By comparing large datasets, it is possible to find new connections between hitherto unrelated items.

Change demands competence and learning. In the last two decades, the way historical research is conducted has changed dramatically. Digital online material is available to everyone and in the archives, a digital camera is now more used than a computer or pen and paper. However, archive research is still based on deep reading. In the future, new competence in analysing big and extensive data is required to supplement the traditional methods.

Universities have the challenging duty of training a new generation of researchers for Finland that can make full use of the new methods used to analyse the new types of material. At the same time, it must be ensured that the current competence in archive research is maintained and that tra-



The Jyväskylä facility of the National Archives of Finland. Photo: Tiia Monto, Wikimedia Commons.

ditional historical research still has a place in the academic world of Finland now and in the future. Old handwriting processes must still be studied and, of course, most of the oldest archive material can still be accessed only as physical objects – and even when studying digitally produced pictures, what matters the most is the content. The significance of source criticism will only increase.

The National Archives of Finland will only become more important in the future as the amount of information keeps increasing. The archive is responsible for the lifecycle management of information, for archiving societally and scientifically important information and for ensuring access to it. The National Archives of Finland is not just a place where original information is stored

after use. On the contrary: the National Archives of Finland is a dynamic oasis of information, which ensures that material is easily found to be used for the needs of research and the society.

Information management and archiving – ensuring success with cooperation

RAIMO LEPISTÖ

Lawyer of the National Archives of Finland



- **STRATEGIC GOAL 1.1.**
Clear steering responsibilities for the life-cycle management of document data.
- **STRATEGIC GOAL 1.2.**
Digital archiving is the primary archiving method in the public sector.
- **STRATEGIC GOAL 1.4.**
The Archives Act will be amended to correspond to the needs of the digital public sector. National operating models form the basis of the new foundation.

The strategic target of the National Archives of Finland is to maintain its position as the most significant operator in the lifecycle management and archiving of public information – as it has done since the 1980s. Digitalisation has increased the importance of this target, since the context and reliability of records and data must be secured and recorded throughout its lifecycle. A new player entered the field as the Act on Public Administration Information Man-

Raimo Lepistö, lawyer of the National Archives of Finland. Photo: National Archives of Finland.



Tiedonhallintalautakunta
Informationshanteringsnämnden

*Logo of the Information Management Board.
Photo: Ministry of Finance.*

agement entered into force at the start of 2020: the Information Management Board appointed by the Ministry of Finance. The responsibilities of the board include assessing the descriptions, digitisation, methods of providing information, and procedures used in case management required by the Information Management Act, whereas the Ministry of Finance is responsible for the general governance of the interoperability of information pools belonging to the public administration.

Efficient general governance of information pools necessitates cooperation between the Ministry of Finance, the Information Management Board and the National Archives of Finland as well as coordinating the goals and targets of these parties. Recommendations for information management must be drafted to be very general in nature, as too much specificity can lead to optimising only

parts of the process. Developing and governing only some part of information management separate from the whole is impossible.

Archiving is a part of information management. It is partly covered by the Information Management Act, since the Act lays down requirements for archiving related to information security and operability of information systems. Otherwise archiving operations are regulated by the Archives Act, and a few specialised laws.

The Archives Act is in need of updating to ensure it corresponds to the new digital operating environment. The renewed Archives Act and the Information Management Act should form a comprehensive whole for lifecycle management at all stages.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has appointed a preparatory working group for the renewal of the Archives Act that will submit a report at the end of May 2020. The report will outline the current situation of archiving operations, describe the Act's relationship to other legislation and highlight the most significant challenges.



Volunteers digitising material at the National Archives of Finland. Photo: National Archives of Finland.

Defining the responsibilities of management and limits of governance is a central aspect of updating the Act, as is guaranteeing that the National Archives of Finland still has sufficient authority to manage the archiving of public records and data in accordance with the international practices with appraisal and disposal as central functions. Definitions in the old Act are in need of harmonisation, since data protection legislation and the Information Management Act have greatly changed the Finnish terms used in information management. Correlation with international terminology and the needs for renewal in the Act on the Openness of Government Activities, falling under the respon-

sibility of the Ministry of Justice, must also be taken into account.

The National Archives of Finland is digitalising its operations at an increasing rate. Together with its partners, it has initiated several projects for promoting electronic archiving and accessibility of information. After its renewal, the legislation must enable the use of modern analysis tools, data mining and the use of artificial intelligence. Clear rules must be set that coordinate the freedom for scientific research ensured by our constitution, the new digital ways to operate, restrictions on information use and the ethical principles of research.

No more new archive buildings – mass digitisation and retro-active digitisation improve the accessibility of material

TIINA HÖLTTÄ

Planning Officer, National Archives of Finland

VILLE KAJANNE

Senior Research Officer, Project Manager,
National Archives of Finland

Experts from the National Diet of Japan visiting the mass digitisation project of the National Archives of Finland. Senior Research Officer Ville Kajanne is presenting the project. Planning Officer Tiina Hölttä is in the background. Photo: Jussi Nuorteva.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1.2.

Digital archiving is the primary archiving method in the public sector.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4.3.

The goal of the National Archives of Finland is that no new archives spaces are built for analogue materials in Finland. This goal can be achieved by receiving materials in digital format, mass digitising public sector materials and digitising previously received materials retroactively.

The Finnish public sector still has 135 kilometres of shelves with physical documents that are to be stored permanently. These documents will be transferred to the National Archives of Finland as electric copies. The mass digitisation service of the National Archives of Finland oversees the project. The work will take time, but it is the most effective way to avoid building more physical archives and new permanent rent costs. Centralised mass digitisation is also more efficient than decentralised digitisation, where each authority handles their own digitisation. It provides a uniform



framework for the operation that includes careful quality assurance, evaluating the cultural historical value of the material and secure disposal of the digitised material at the end of the project. The most important material and a representative collection of typical material from each era will be preserved as physical copies as well.

The strategic goal is to decentralise the mass digitisation to the different facilities of the National Archives of Finland. This enables creating savings with reduced material transportation costs, creating job and business opportunities locally and promoting competence in digitisation. Decentralisation provides us with the opportunity to cooperate with the very independently operating municipality sector. The National Archives of Finland already has some experience in implementing data storage and information service solutions with municipalities. Before the digitisation cooperation can start on the practical level, the new organisations must be provided access to the joint metadata and data use interfaces.

Mass digitisation also necessitates uniform electronic information management from

the authorities, as traditional borders are opened – and hopefully, abolished – by the joint use of interfaces and user interfaces. The service for electronic archiving, which is included in the process of mass digitisation, also significantly improves electronic information management. At its core is the National Archives of Finland’s statutory right to decide what official material is archived and in what format. The whole is completed by the possibility to accept and store private archives.

The user interface and content recognition services of the National Archives of Finland increase the availability and usability of materials. Information becomes more visible and easier to use in different ways. It promotes the right of citizens and researchers to use public information and increases equal access to material, no matter the place or time.

The processes developed in mass digitisation should also be applied to the retroactive digitisation of material already stored in the National Archives. The goal is to have all material from the different periods of Finn-



Placing material in the central archive of the Mikkeli facility of the National Archives of Finland. Akti 1/2018.
Photo: Mikko Kankainen.

ish history stored in a digital format that enables easy access for all. This will reduce the need to hand over analogue material to customers, which in turn protects them from wear and tear and ensures they can be kept safe for future generations as well.

Genealogy thriving online

TEPPO YLITALO

Chairman of the Genealogical Society of Finland



STRATEGIC GOAL 2.3.

Retroactive digitisation corresponds to the needs of researchers and research projects. The National Archives of Finland advances customer and voluntary digitisation and offers digitisation as a paid service, particularly to public organisations. Crowdsourcing and volunteers are used based on material security and the sufficient expertise of individuals.

Genealogy is now more popular than ever in Finland. And it has never been easier. Whereas some time ago we were still handling rolls of microfilm, writing family charts and drawing family trees, these days many sources, research methods and even results are digital. You can research your family from the comfort of your own home.

The National Archives of Finland is one of the best tools an e-genealogist can have. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Director General Jussi Nuorteva and the

Teppo Ylitalo, chairman of the Genealogical Society of Finland. Photo: The Genealogical Society of Finland.



Emblem of the Genealogical Society of Finland. Photo: The Genealogical Society of Finland.

whole personnel of the National Archives of Finland for their excellent cooperation that reaches from joint planning to different events and crowdsourcing projects.

In the future, the importance of the digital world will only increase. This is both a challenge and an opportunity. The first thing is to continue digitising documents. Ensuring sufficient resources for this work and slowly extending it to cover regional collections and private archives will strengthen the broad and diverse pool of genealogical information sources. Genealogy is changing content-wise as well: in addition to family trees and genealogical charts, genealogy increasingly deals in comprehensive regional and local studies and network studies.

As the amount of material available online increases, it becomes more and more important to merge, link and compile data. With

my mind's eye, I can already see a single powerful and extensive search service that enables us to find as much material as possible with just one search that extends to the contents of the documents as well. A search service with semantically linked material and permanent URL addresses, and which enables users to automatically create citations. The updates to the information systems of the National Archives of Finland provide an excellent starting point for such a service.

Genealogists will continue to be excellent partners for the National Archives of Finland in the future as well. Genealogical researchers, who are familiar with local conditions and have expertise in using a variety of documents could, for example, create indexes for documents, pick key words for search functions from texts or correct mistakes made by optical character recognition software. Identifying pictures and their locations are also excellent subjects for crowdsourcing projects. Genealogists would also be an excellent resource for testing and improving new applications and user interfaces.



The genealogical event in Tampere in 2018 attracted a large crowd. Photo: The Genealogical Society of Finland.

One of our objectives for the future is have a simple and light-weight system for electronically storing and sharing the results of genealogical research. As I have said many times, genealogy is not just a simple history-related hobby, but a hobby with societal importance. Genealogy is always a process of finding and building the identity of the researcher themselves. Genealogical research expands your world, as you read about the lives and important decisions of all kinds of people. It brings with it an understanding of social cohesion and the society.

Genealogy is like the glue of our society. It shows that even though we are individu-

als with our own backgrounds, we are still connected to each other in countless ways. Genealogy lets us know us and be us. This is why it will continue to be important in the future as well.

Even though times and methods change, one thing will always remain at the heart of genealogy. Everyone has a right to their family, lineage and roots. We all have the right to belong, to be a part of a chronologically defined community and society. This is a service that the National Archives of Finland will continue to provide, develop and renew in excellent ways with their new strategy.

Handwritten text recognition opens up a treasure trove of information on Finnish society

KATI KATAJISTO

Doctor of Philosophy

ANU LAHTINEN

Professor of Finnish and Nordic History at the University of Helsinki



STRATEGIC GOAL 3.2.

The National Archives of Finland monitors the development of research data management and improves the visibility and availability of its materials in different scientific fields.

Use of digital material in the research of history has increased rapidly. Researchers are drawn to digital materials as they are more easily available. However, if physical material is no longer used, research results can become skewed. Using analogue material is part of a researcher's expertise. Still, researchers digitise material themselves and use more and more digital tools.

Digitalisation speeds up research since researchers can access their material whenever and wherever. It is great that the National Archives of Finland is taking part in the development of digital tools, as they have done in the READ/Transkribus project aimed at converting handwritten texts into digital documents. This ensures that these materials are compatible and usable with

Professor Anu Lahtinen. Photo: Hanna Tarkiainen.



Doctor of Philosophy Kati Katajisto being interviewed by Research Director Päivi Happonen in November 2019. Photo: Jussi Nuorteva.

the services the National Archives of Finland provides.

Machine reading enables us to process vast datasets, which in turn enables searching the data – which is extensive both in terms of time and space – for themes, keywords or people. In addition, the handwriting itself is often difficult to read, so when a machine is taught to read a specific handwriting, interpreting it becomes easier and faster. This enables researchers to browse through exponentially larger sets of data, which means they can make decisions on where to focus their deep reading faster. Collecting a quantitative dataset is also faster with machine reading, even though results achieved this way are not yet completely comprehensive.

In the coming years, artificial intelligence and systems based on semantic systems will change the way we operate and enable data mining from large quantities of data.

In our view, the fact that the material digitised and machine read during research processes can be saved in the National Archives of Finland, and re-used via the services it provides, is important. The National Archives also takes care of the long-term storage and archiving of such material. This way, a major part of the data management plan required by many funding organizations is covered.

The project-based cooperation of researchers and the National Archives of Finland and the everyday support the National Archives provide are vital for researchers. We would like the National Archives of Finland to provide instructions for the digitisation, since it is important to check the standards for digitisation and guidelines for metadata already at the planning stage of a project.

We also wish that the National Archives of Finland could provide recommendations and practical examples on how to link material to electronic publications. This may take some trial and error as well as crowdsourcing, since

most publishers have their own guidelines and models for citations. In an ideal world, a permanent identifier could be used in citations, such as PID or URN, to link a digital document to an electronic publication. Future international solutions will most likely be excellent choices for this purpose.



Promotional picture of the READ project. Drawing: Kare Salonvaara.

Presenting the READ project at the Turku International Book Fair in 2019. Photo: Jussi Nuorteva.



Artificial intelligence and the Semantic Web provide excellent opportunities for the management of large datasets

EERO HYVÖNEN

Professor of semantic media technology at Aalto University, Director of Helsinki Centre for Digital Humanities (HELDIG) at the University of Helsinki



STRATEGIC GOAL 3.1.

The National Archives of Finland is engaged in active national and international cooperation with universities and other bodies in the development of digital research processes.

Universities and the National Archives of Finland have worked together well, but the cooperation could be developed to be even more systematic. One possibility would be to use the hackathons of the Helsinki Center for Digital Humanities (HELDIG) to increase cooperation. Hackathons bring together groups of people who try to solve a problem together and innovatively. Another promising way to increase cooperation are big international projects and EU programmes, such as the Time Machine project currently underway. The National Archives of Finland is already taking part in the preparatory work of this project. National sources of funding, such as the Academy of Finland, should also be more strongly connected to these larger programmes.

Professor Eero Hyvönen. Photo: Eero Aalto.



The WarSampo portal, developed by Professor Eero Hyvönen's work group, has been widely popular. Photo: National Archives of Finland.

Aalto University and the National Archives of Finland have worked together on the implementation of the linked data services and semantic portals WarSampo and Sotasurmasampo 1914–1922 (Deceased in the First World War period), which are based on historical war data. These services facilitate the work of historians, for example, as they enable them to use and analyse the data used in the services without having to learn computer programming. Corresponding research infrastructures will be developed in the future as well.

Materials and services are increasingly available online, and the web technology is constantly becoming smarter and more semantic. As the ice hockey legend Wayne Gretzky said: “Skate where the puck is going, not where it has been.” This requires investing in research and independent development, because these next-gen systems will not all

become available for purchase. One example of this is the EU-developed machine reading project for handwritten texts, READ. Hatching ideas for new services, developing them and using them in digital human sciences are all areas that provide interesting opportunities for cooperation between universities and the National Archives of Finland.

Working together with other memory organisations and data producers, such as citizens, will also increase in importance, since the content in the cultural fields is strongly intertwined, no matter the organisational borders. To promote the automatic compatibility of data, a common lexis and shared ontologies are required. International publishing practices and tools for linked data and online material should be taken into use in Finland as well. This would also enable the enrichment of our data via cooperation with international partners.

From the point of view of universities, the research-related challenges in the development of information management methods is interesting, as are the questions related to management of research information.



The National Archives of Finland participates in planning of the EU funded international Time Machine project. Photo: National Archives of Finland.

Universities train and produce experts for the needs of memory organisations, so there is plenty of opportunities for cooperation. To save costs and resources, solutions and services on the national level are required as well.

Research infrastructures that are found necessary and useful should be included in the roadmap for research infrastructures of the Academy of Finland, as this would improve the chances of gaining funding for long-term development and upkeep. It is also important to connect the infrastructures as part of the EU's European Research Infrastructure Con-

sortium (ERIC) programmes, such as the Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities (DARIAH). The University of Helsinki's HELDIG centre and Aalto University are actively aiming to achieve this goal. I hope that we will be joined in this by parties external to universities, such as archives, libraries and museums, who have a vital role as owners of data and as experts in their own fields. Infrastructures that can be stabilised via these programmes will become a part of the normal services and operations of the organisations in question and as such, be covered by budget funding as well.

“There’s no need for you to reinvent the wheel!” – international cooperation supports renewal

VESA-MATTI OVASKA

Senior Research Officer, Coordinator of international affairs

STRATEGIC GOAL 3.1.

The National Archives of Finland is engaged in active national and international cooperation with universities and other bodies in the development of digital research processes.

Estonia is known as an international state that has built a society with modern digital services and has successfully created a functional electronic voting system for government elections. Estonia’s public records and document management, archiving and information services have been transferred to mostly operate online. When Toivo Jullinen, the Deputy National Archivist of the National Archives of Estonia, was asked how this “miracle of Estonia” was achieved at the Forum of National Archivists, he said: “We didn’t have to develop the systems ourselves: we have been constantly keeping track of what’s happening around the world and have created a functional whole out of the best pieces.”

The new strategy of the National Archives of Finland invests in international cooperation. For us, the most important reference countries, in addition to Estonia, are the other Nor-

dic countries and other EU Member States. The trend of moving from regional cooperation to cooperation within large European networks has emerged in the past years in the Nordic countries. At the same time, Estonia is starting to participate in Nordic cooperation. English is increasingly used as the lingua franca alongside the Nordic languages.

The possibility to receive funding from the European Union for joint development projects and shared operational practices





The EBNA meeting of National Archivists organised during Finland's EU Presidency in September 2019. Photo: ICARUS.

has increased participation and competence exchange. The European Archives Group, a group of experts founded by the European Commission, and the leaders of EU Member States Archives meet biannually at a forum that steers cooperation. Part of the cooperation happens via associations and collectives, such as the DLM Forum, which heavily invests in promoting the production of joint European solutions for digital long-term storage and archiving.

The National Archives of Finland is participating in the work packages of the European Commission-funded E-ARK3 project in

*Senior Research Officer Vesa-Matti Ovaska.
Photo: Jussi Nuorteva.*

2020–2021. These work packages are aimed at developing an e-archiving reference architecture, archiving solutions for database information and the training required in these two areas. The work packages will provide material for the development of electronic archiving of both data from the public administration and digital private archives. Participation in European networks is important for a small country like Finland, as our resources for competence development are comparatively limited. Participating in these joint work packages will provide us with experience and good practices from the specialists of the network.

The International Council of Archives (ICA) brings together archiving experts, associa-

tions and institutions from all around the world. At ICA, Finland and the other Nordic countries aim at promoting digital know-how, openness of archives, freedom of information and the archives' duty of defending the rights of indigenous peoples. These focus areas are closely related to the operations of the Sámi Archives, located in Inari and belonging to the organisation of the National Archives of Finland. The National Archives of Finland is also famous for operating as an international safe haven for endangered documents in accordance with the 2015 recommendation of the UNESCO General Conference (*Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form*).

During the upcoming strategy period, international cooperation will be integrated to become an integral part of the continuous development of the different operations of the National Archives of Finland. As the coordinator of international affairs, I am proud to be able to export Finnish competence to my international colleagues and to learn new things that can then be put to use in our own work.

Facing the future – the National Archives of Finland is keeping up with change

ANNE WILENIUS

Development Manager at the National Archives of Finland, Chief Union Representative of JUKO ry.



STRATEGIC GOAL 4.2.

The competence and training of the personnel focuses on the management of the digital operating environment, networked operating methods and the ability of the National Archives of Finland to carry out its services on a national scale.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4.5.

Internal and external communication provides customers, stakeholders and employees with a reliable, updated and positive view of the operations of the National Archives of Finland.

The National Archives of Finland's role as a societal influencer was completely transformed during the last strategy period. As a social scientist, I am delighted by the fact that in its new role, the agency has become more welcoming to citizens and taken its position as a provider of reliable information and participant in social debate.

Development Manager Anne Wilenius.

Photo: National Archives of Finland.

The materials of the National Archives provide a comprehensive view to the Finnish society and the parties operating within it throughout the times. We cannot solely rely on what is true right now in the future either – it would be the end of Nordic democracy. History helps us understand our society and ourselves. This understanding is built with information from the past.

Our exhibition and publishing operations reach a large audience, consisting not only of researchers but citizens too. The most permanent part of our operations is formed by our diverse and high-quality content and print products. Our publishing operations particularly will reach readers in the years to come still. I consider the increased digitalisation of our exhibition and publishing operations our greatest challenge in the coming years, but at the same time, I also see it as our greatest opportunity. We cooperate in projects with universities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, libraries and archives as well as many associations. This cooperation is constantly providing us with new and interesting points of view to the matters handled in the projects. It is fun to share those points of view!



A poster exhibition prepared by the National Archives of Finland for the commemorative event for the 100th anniversary of diplomatic relationship between Japan and Finland. The exhibition was on display in Tokyo and Suzuka in 2019. Ambassador Pekka Orpana on the left. Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The challenge and cornerstone for our external communications during the upcoming strategy period will be our role in the Finnish society. Our materials recount stories from the past hundreds of years. They form our identity and act as one of the basic pillars of our understanding of our society. This helps us understand change, but also creates the continuity that connects each generation to the next. It brings security and helps us define our place in this complex reality that is constantly changing.

As a chief union representative, I find it important that our strategy and the guidelines set by our management are clear and accessible to our whole personnel. Determination and the desire to work toward common goals is a central factor for success and job satisfaction. We all have to constantly

Administrative Director Immo Aakkula and HR Manager Anita Patoluoto engaged in a heated hula-hoop competition at the National Archives of Finland's pre-Christmas party in 2019. Photo: Jussi Nuorteva.

learn new ways to operate in our work. Our organisation's operational capabilities are defined by its weakest link. Due to this, all personnel must be included in the development of new tools and new ways of working. Learning something new takes time – and that time should be provided. In the long run, there is no denying that widescale competence is beneficial to us. It ensures the quality of our work and makes it more effortless as well as fun!



THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF FINLAND STRATEGY 2025

Vision

The National Archives of Finland is the leading expert and information service organisation in the management of the lifecycle of public information and a broad infrastructure for scientific research. The National Archives advances the transfer of official and private materials in electronic format, the customer-driven digitisation and diverse use of cultural heritage documents, data management based on artificial intelligence and modern scientific methods, open access to data and sustainable development.

Values

The values of the National Archives of Finland are based on internationally recognised human values, as well as the ethical principles of the archival sector and the research community. The key values guiding the operations of the National Archives are:

- *Openness and confidentiality*
- *Impartiality*
- *Independence*

Service promise

In 2025, the National Archives of Finland will provide its customers with diverse and secure electronic services that make use of the opportunities offered by AI and semantic systems. It will be a globally advanced and active organisation that develops and utilises new ways to use and archive public information sustainably and cost-effectively. It preserves nationally valuable analogue and digital cultural heritage documents for the next generations. It will strengthen the expertise and professional pride of its personnel and advance cooperation with stakeholders and ethical operating methods that support sustainable development.

The changing operating environment

Finland strives to become a pioneer in digitalisation and IT development, both in public and private sectors. The goal is to make Finland's public sector the best in the world. Operations will be developed in a more customer-driven direction by improving shared services in the public sector and the engage-

ment of customers in their development. Public services should be digitally available to people and companies by 2023. A shared development and service strategy will be defined for the public sector.

A key requirement when developing public activities and services on customers' terms is that information flows as smoothly as possible between data systems in the public sector. This requires that information is only collected once, after which it is openly accessible to all authorities. Public organisations will open public interfaces to their data systems. This will reduce administrative silos and the multiple saving of single information. Furthermore, this will improve the effectiveness of public services and reduce costs. Customers will have quick and reliable access to the services they need. Customer service will be provided in shared service outlets in the public sector.

Laws and the development of administration will aim towards digital services, the ability to reform and sustainable development. The communication issued by the European Commission in the spring of 2018 regarding common European data area offers opportunities

for new business and innovation, strengthens democracy and civil society, improves the effectiveness of administration and diversifies the data resources available to education and research. The competitiveness of both the EU and Finland will be improved by providing open access to public and private data.

The EU will advance common European solutions for data management and ensure the permanence and reliability of digital data. The goal is that public and private services are easily available to users online by using the one stop shop principle. Digital data produced in the public sector will be centrally available for societal decision-making, scientific research and people's data needs in accordance with harmonised principles. The common European practices for data management and archiving set by the EU for its member states will also be implemented in Finland.

In national and international operating environments, the requirements set for sustainable development will be in an increasingly important position. The development of the national economy, Finland's competitiveness and the stability of the public economy will enable the

goals to be reached. However, the state's high debt ratio will make it more difficult to invest in large-scale changes. This is why changes require public operations to be made even more productive by improving shared strategic planning and shared services. A broad and long-term open access to public and private data will produce significant financial and societal benefits. Interoperability will also extend to archived data and to data systems of archives that serve people and the authorities.

The management of the data lifecycle will be central and regulated. The National Archives of each member state will be responsible for the central management of the data lifecycle in accordance with international practices, as well as for the archiving of societally and scientifically important data and its availability for different purposes. The National Archives of Finland will develop and implement information management in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and its Information Management Board. A successful implementation will significantly increase the reliability of public data accessible to researchers and decision-makers and strengthen the societal impact of archived data.

Modern digital methods will modify research and service processes and set requirements for the permanence of material in usable format. The effective use of large masses of data calls for expertise in and the use of AI, semantic methods and other modern data management tools both in research and the production of services. Advanced computer reading will revolutionise the ways of searching for data from large data volumes. Separating data from its platform and new opportunities to merge and analyse data will especially change traditional research not only in human and social sciences, but in other scientific fields, as well. Digital materials and electronic publications will comprise the basic model for producing and using scientific data.

Making archived data available for research in electronic format and for everyone will extend through all layers of society: trust, engagement, democracy, non-discrimination, continuous learning and the production of wellbeing services.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES – MODERNISATION AND ENGAGEMENT

1. The most essential party to the lifecycle management and archiving of public data

● STRATEGIC GOAL 1.1.

Clear steering responsibilities for the lifecycle management of records and data.

Steering related to the management of public data, long term preservation and archiving at the National Archives of Finland will cover the entire lifecycle of records and data. Archived (permanently preserved) records and data will be defined at the beginning of the lifecycle of records and data so that its weight as evidence, reliability and maintenance can be secured by documenting different data processing phases and by producing the metadata required to verify the availability and accessibility. Steering activities and the authorisation to issue regulations will comprise part of information management steering covered by the Ministry of Finance.

The National Archives will participate in the preparation of the Information Management Board's recommendations. Cooperation in the development of the lifecycle management of records and data will also extend to universities.

● STRATEGIC GOAL 1.2.

Digital archiving is the primary archiving method in the public sector.

The National Archives of Finland will advance digital archiving in the public sector by deciding on records and data to be archived in the public sector and by mass digitising the archived materials of the government.

Preparations for decisions on archived materials will be based on the appraisal and disposal policies and strategies, as well as on criteria for determining the cultural-historical value. Decisions made by the National Archives and its acquisition policy for private materials will secure a comprehensive, equal and sufficient view of society and its different parties. The determination of archived materials will take into account the requirements

set out in data protection laws and national and international guidelines that support good data management practices.

The National Archives will mainly receive archived records and data in digital format. The digitisation of materials that are received in analogue format and fall outside the scope of the mass digitisation roadmap will be advanced by establishing a specific central unit that nationally develops and implements the digitisation and management of special materials. The systematic transfer of born digital records and data will be started after the electronic archiving service is available. The services provided by the National Archives will enable authorities to directly search for their own data.

Systematic and sufficient funding for mass digitisation will be ensured in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The purpose of mass digitisation is also to ensure that there is no need for the construction of additional archiving space in the public sector.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1.3.

The transfer of private archives valuable in terms of research and cultural history, a straightforward distribution of responsibilities between archives and shared operating methods ensure a diverse and reliable overview of Finnish society and its parties throughout history. The transfer of electronic private materials and the digitisation of analogue materials increase the availability of materials and support societal impact.

Alongside official archives, private archives comprise an important channel in documenting society. Materials from private archives will be received by government subsidised archives, municipal and university archives, as well as a group of other archives. Government subsidy decisions for which the National Archives of Finland is responsible and the opportunities offered by the Advisory Committee on Private Archives for the national coordination of the procurement policy will support all sectors and increase their effectiveness and purposefulness.

An increasing volume of materials will be received in electronic format. It will be necessary to receive digital materials so that a genuine and probative overview of current and future society can be formed. Electronic materials are created by using several different programs, and making them available in an easy and standard manner will call for investments in new expertise and new operating methods. The digitisation of received and archived analogue materials will increase the availability of private archives and prevent their marginalisation, while the operating environment prefers electronic data management and publication.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1.4.

The Archives Act will be amended to correspond to the needs of the digital public sector. International models form the basis of the new foundation. The right of the National Archives of Finland to purchase or copy nationally significant private materials will be secured by maintaining the current authorisation provided in the Archives Act.

When amending the Archives Act, the steering and regulatory responsibilities of the National Archives of Finland will be clarified, the position of the electronic archives service as a shared public sector service will be defined and criteria for operating as an archive that supports public interests will be prepared. When preparing the new act, the principles and specifications defined for legal amendments in Sweden and Norway, as well as the fulfilment of common European practices of data management and archiving, set by the EU as a goal for its member states, will be addressed.

The needs for additional resources at the National Archives will be identified, and any additional resources will be secured. The right of the National Archives to acquire, purchase or copy private archives that are made available for sale or face the risk of destruction will also be maintained in the amended Archives Act. If exercised actively, this right will strengthen the opportunities of the National Archives to preserve central documentary heritage for future generations.

2. A pioneer in digital archives services

STRATEGIC GOAL 2.1.

95% of customers of the National Archives of Finland can use online services as the only service channel. Secure and easy-to-use services available in multiple channels are developed together with partners and customers.

Online services will comprise the primary service channel of the National Archives of Finland, and their use will be increased even further during the strategy period. The National Archives will boldly use responsible AI to enable the diverse use of materials and automated ways of producing metadata. With regard to development activities, any changes in international research and technological development will be monitored actively. Nordic and European cooperation will be closer, especially in the recognition of handwritten text and in other content recognition.

Service design will be a key focus area during the strategy period. It helps to make services simple, attractive and visually harmo-

nious. The user-friendliness of services will be developed together with customers and stakeholders.

The National Archives will work closely with other memory organisations in the development of digital services to ensure the interoperability of services. During the strategy period, the suitability of the AHAA system as the long-term metadata system of the National Archives and the use of solutions based on semantic web technologies in rapidly changing data management will be identified.

When amending the Archives Act, the role of the National Archives as a national producer of metadata services for archived materials will be defined. This requires additional resources.

The National Archives will ensure the continuity of its services during different incidents and prepare for increasing security threats.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2.2.

Online services of the National Archives of Finland support opportunities to search for and analyse data and data masses.

Search functions and the use of content-recognised materials and register data will be developed in a data-based direction. Service production will also address the development of opportunities to merge and use archived register data in cooperation with universities and research institutions. Permit practices will be changed to correspond to the needs of the research process. The ability to merge various registers data and its easy use in research and societal decision-making processes will be improved together with research organisations and key agencies and other parties in the sector.

Content recognition will be facilitated by the expertise of stakeholders and the opportunities offered by crowdsourcing.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2.3.

Retroactive digitisation corresponds to the needs of researchers and research projects. The National Archives of Finland advances customer and voluntary digitisation and offers digitisation as a paid service, particularly to public organisations. Crowdsourcing and volunteers are used while taking into account the secu-

...rity of the documents and the sufficient expertise needed from the individuals.

On an international scale, the National Archives of Finland has a large volume of digitised material, which has, in turn, enabled participation in national and international projects that advance the modern availability of materials. The retroactive digitisation of previously received materials will be systematically directed to correspond to the needs of researchers and research projects. Furthermore, a model will be built for ensuring cooperation and interaction in the prioritisation of different materials. Services will be offered actively to advance paid digitisation services and the digitisation of private materials. Digitisation activities will be distributed to all locations of the National Archives in stages. The goal is to secure the digitisation of regionally valuable materials for the needs of different user groups.

Photographic materials will increasingly attract different user groups. Their retroactive digitisation, providing them with metadata and open online availability will be advanced in cooperation with genealogists

and other partners. The National Archives will approach foundations so that they would address in their funding policies the importance of digitisation and the diverse opportunities to use digital information in research, education and culture.

3. Broad infrastructure for scientific research

STRATEGIC GOAL 3.1.

The National Archives of Finland is engaged in active national and international cooperation with universities and other bodies in the development of digital research processes.

The National Archives of Finland will actively participate in national and international research projects that develop the use of digital materials in research. Cooperation projects will particularly use the expertise of partners that increases the diverse use of materials and improves the services of the National Archives. This calls for participation in funding applications and proper expertise in the preparation of funding applications and in project management.

Projects will result in research infrastructures, the effective use of which requires cooperation with universities and research institutions. The purpose of the national infrastructure policy is to set responsibilities for the development and maintenance of the infrastructures required by research. The National Archives will produce an operating model for the transfer of research databases and for their connection to the service production of the National Archives.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3.2.

The National Archives of Finland monitors the development of research data management and improves the visibility and availability of its materials in different scientific fields.

As a result of content recognition, digital materials of the National Archives of Finland will produce data for research in different scientific fields. Climate change and the challenges set by sustainable development increase the need for an interdisciplinary approach and long-term time series of various materials. The National Archives will be engaged in close cooperation with universities in the development of research infra-

structures and the generation of data-based research opportunities and operating methods suitable for different approaches.

Stakeholder activities and targeted communication will advance the visibility and use of materials.

4. A competent organisation that develops its expertise in the long term

STRATEGIC GOAL 4.1.

The financial standing of the National Archives of Finland is solid and easy to forecast, enabling the long-term planning of operations, finances and HR policy so as to support the fulfilment of strategic goals. Paid services and external project funding account for at least 20% of the salary and expense budget on an annual level.

Operational and financial monitoring will be continuous and systematic, providing members of the management and the management team with up-to-date information about the status of operations and finances, as well as about the fulfilment of the goals set.

The engagement of the personnel in the management team will be expanded. This will generate a stronger shared overview of the goals and productivity of the National Archives of Finland among the entire personnel.

Administrative services will offer services proactively to different functions. A significant part of the resources of the National Archives will come from projects outside the scope of government budget funding. The National Archives will strengthen its project competence even further and focus its resources on the acquisition and management of external funding. The effectiveness of the use of facilities will be improved by means of external partnerships, addressing the principles of sustainable development, without endangering the preservation of nationally significant documentary cultural heritage.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4.2.

The competence and training of the personnel focuses on the management of the digital operating environment, networked operating methods and the ability of the National Archives of Finland to carry out its services on a national scale.

Digitalisation will change the tasks and competence requirements of the personnel of the National Archives of Finland. A competence survey based on strategic guidelines will be conducted at the beginning of the strategy period, on the basis of which the recruitment of new employees and training provided for the current personnel will be determined. Members of the management will be provided with training regarding change management and a coaching approach, so that they can support employees during changes, identify any individual development needs and develop the activities of the National Archives as a whole based on strategic guidelines. Management will focus especially on the flexible use of resources between service areas.

Introduction provided for new employees will be based on mentoring. Personnel training will focus on increasing digital capabilities and project competence, as well as on communication skills. The National Archives will strengthen its working community and support wellbeing at work.

Alongside digital services, traditional reading room services will continue throughout

the strategy period, while digitisation services, the digitisation of information service processes and the further development of electronic services will shift the focus determinedly towards electronic services.

Cooperation with the public sector and other archives services will increase to secure service resources and customer service. Savings will be allocated to analogue information services. Administrative services will emphasise the use of shared government services and cooperation with other public sector bodies. Furthermore, administrative services will develop procurement skills to support the goals of substance service areas. Resources will be allocated appropriately and cost-effectively based on national and international surveys and peer reviews.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4.3.

The goal of the National Archives of Finland is that no new archives spaces are built for analogue materials in Finland. This goal can be achieved by receiving materials in digital format, mass digitising public sector materials and digitising

previously received materials retroactively. The fulfilment of this goal is supported by a straightforward operating method for deciding on materials to be discarded and materials to be archived permanently on the basis of their cultural-historical and scientific value. Material management and effective logistics support purposeful operating methods.

The logistic material management system of the National Archives of Finland will extend to all analogue materials. The facility management program of Senate Properties will be used to plan and schedule the receipt and logistic planning of archived materials at a national level. During the strategy period, the National Archives will identify the usage rate and financial capacity of its analogue services. The use of facilities will be advanced by seeking partnerships from the public sector and by producing shared services with them.

A decrease in the Veikkaus lottery surplus will have an impact on government subsidies channelled through and by decision of the National Archives. The National

Archives, together with government subsidised archives, will produce a development plan based on the financial situation for the appropriate merger of the services of these parties and for shared facility solutions.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4.4.
Goals of sustainable development are addressed in all activities.

Global warming is a serious threat that endangers humanity as a whole. Combating it calls for determined solutions that support sustainable development. The National Archives will improve the effective use of its facilities on national and local levels. Furthermore, the National Archives will implement the strategy prepared by the government for shared public services in all its facilities.

Internal meetings will be held via remote connections. Videoconferencing systems

will be used as largely as possible, also when holding meetings with external stakeholders.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4.5.
Internal and external communication provides customers, stakeholders and employees with a reliable, updated and positive view of the operations of the National Archives of Finland.

External communication by the National Archives of Finland will be active and interactive. Its key purpose is to improve the visibility of the materials and services of the National Archives. Communication supports the management of the National Archives and advances the fulfilment of strategic goals.

The aim of internal communication is to encourage different locations to communicate their operations actively. Each location will have an appointed person responsible for communication, whose task is to

transmit information about key events and the advancement of stakeholder activities throughout the National Archives and locally.

Online communication will be the primary communication channel at the National Archives. The use of social media services will be developed systematically. A public dialogue is part of the research culture and supports the image of the National Archives as an organisation that follows its ethical values and research principles.

Planning will focus on ethical communication in a polarising society where two extremes often clash. The goal of all communication activities is to spread a strong image of the National Archives as a reliable organisation and a provider of customer-driven services with a good reputation. Successes will be evaluated regularly by participating in peer reviews and customer feedback processes in the public sector.



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