

# Archiving City Goes Digital: Case Mikkeli, Finland

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## Archiving City Goes Digital

Mikkeli is a small city (pop. 50.000) in eastern Finland, but it is the second city in archiving in Finland. In digital archiving and preservation the goal is to be the first. In the city of Mikkeli there are three archiving/library units: The Central Archives for Finnish Business Records (ELKA), National Library's Centre for Microfilming and Conservation (National digitization centre) and Provincial unit of the National Archives for Southeastern Finland. In close co-operation with those above Mikkeli Polytechnic has got a couple of projects to create knowledge and start up a digital repository in Mikkeli. Projects, worth close to 4 million Euros including the new building to move in June 2005, are funded by EU and national sources. The four organizations together with the City of Mikkeli are on the way to reach the above described goal.

Mikkeli Polytechnic started the activities with digital archiving during the last years of the 20th century. The plans realized with Digitization Lab projects, which started in 2001 and ended in October 2004. These projects were planned to build the basic infrastructure and knowledge for digitization, preservation and digital repository. When these DigiLab projects were closed last October there was a digital repository unit in Mikkeli Polytechnic with IBM storage system, servers and software for the archiving services and more than ten persons working for the digitization and preservation services.

The archiving software is build from three modules. The IBM storage is managed by Tivoli software, and the archiving core software is called X - Archive, a product from a Finnish company Avain Technologies. The archiving core creates application independent XML - files for metadata and documents and can use digital signature as verification of the archiving material. For the archivists and researchers the PKI tools are used in recognizing and for the personal digital signatures. On top of X - Archive there is a search engine, uploading and metadata tool designed by Finnish company Profium Oy. The product called SIR (Semantic Information Router) is used in saving the metadata in RDF and the semantic web tools like ontologies are used in search functions. For health care sector the PACS software is from Swedish company Sectra.

The concept for Mikkeli Preservation Center is unique. Until now we haven't heard another "General Repository" of this kind. The infrastructure and knowledge created in DigiLab projects is now shared with PACS (radiology) services for the provincial health organization ESSHP and Suomen Terveystutkimus, the leading Finnish company providing mammography screening, as well as with two EU - funded preservation and archiving project, called Elkad and Kunda.

In the project Elkad, worth 0,5 million Euros, there are two main targets: first is to digitize and preserve audiovisual material hold in ELKA and the second is to create means, methods and practices to receive, manage and preserve born digital archive material collected from the companies in Finland. Elkad project is going to digitize 1300 hours of analog material, of that 750 hours sound and 600 hours moving picture: video, film or analog multimedia (slide shows with the separate sound recording, etc.). Audio and video tapes are in danger to lose their content and usability and therefore it is an important task now to save the information to the next generations. The audiovisual part of the project will create 12 terabytes of data, at least.

The methods to receive born digital material are the only way to save business records and other archiving material for the future. Until now companies have provided to ELKA their records in paper, but the option to get that information on paper will be limited even in Finland, the land of paper mills. To be able to continue preservation of business information in change to digital is a key issue for ELKA and its customers, the Finnish universities and other research organizations. There is born digital material for the project coming from the forest giant UPM - Kymmene and Yleisradio, the national broadcasting company. There are four types of born digital material received in this project: digital pictures, digital memorandums, technical project material (documents and drawings) and a database.

Kunda is a project in where a digital archiving model for small and medium - sized local authorities (cities, towns and municipalities, in total 444 of those in Finland) will be created. With the Kunda project one local authority, Pieksänmaa, can centrally archive and locally use born digital material. Beside the practices and methods for the management of born digital documents, the digitization of 81 shelf meters of paper archives is included in the project plan.

When it is done and when another archive with the same amount of material will not be digitized, can the costs and usefulness of digitized archive material will be studied in reserarch projects beside the main project. The project has just now started and it will be closed September 2006.

All the projects are to create methods and means to be able to use in the future activities. During these projects Mikkeli Polytechnic, a College with 4000 students, will also create training programs, both short courses and more permanent education. There will be training courses in OpenCollege program based on the Project Elkad and the target for Kunda is to have a specialtraining program of 20 credits (40 ECTS) for all interested students in all fields of study in Polytechnic and for the archivists as continuing

training program concering digital preservation of documents.

### **Biography**

**Osmo Palonen** is Project Manager in Mikkeli Polytechnic. Mr. Palonen started his career as journalist in the beginning of 1970's in newspapers. He started with IT-systems in newspapers late 70's. 1989 Palonen started with Honeywell selling, developpeing and managing press control and production management system projects. In 2003 Palonen joined Mikkeli Polytechnic to start-up digital preservation and archiving projects and services with customers and partners. Palonen re-started studying history and IT in University of Tampere in 2002.