



Digital Long-term Preservation in the National Library of Finland

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Outline

- background
- Materials that need preservation
- Challenges of digital preservation
- The "National Digital Library" Initiative

Background

- As a national library, the NLF is responsible for preservation of Finnish published cultural heritage.
- Materials must be preserved for an indefinite time – “for ever”
- More and more of the cultural heritage exists only in digital form.
- “Digital Dark Age” – what will be left to future generations?

Digital materials that need preservation

- Legal deposit of online materials
 - web archiving by the NLF
 - Materials deposited by publishers
- Legal deposit of audiovisual recordings (CDs, DVDs)
- Digitization of the Library's collections
 - Newspapers
 - Journals
 - Books
 - Ephemera
 - Sound recordings

Challenges of digital preservation

- How to preserve the original bits (bit-level presentation)
 - Digital data is easily damaged or deleted
 - Damages are not easily observed
 - Human errors are a major threat
- How to preserve usability
 - Technology becomes obsolete
 - How to read old file formats?
 - How to use old memory devices like floppy disks?
 - How to run a computer game from 1990s?

We need more than computer memory

- Digital preservation must be active, not passive. We cannot store digital materials away but they need constant care.
- Metadata is one of the key factors in preservation. Without good metadata preservation makes no sense
 - Descriptive, bibliographic metadata (e.g. a photo: who is the person in the photo)
 - Technical metadata (e.g. how it was digitised)
 - Administrative metadata (e.g. who owns it)

National cooperation on Preservation

- National Digital Library Initiative:
<http://www.kdk.fi/en/long-term-preservation>
- Libraries, museums, archives are planning a shared long term preservation system
 - How to prepare data for preservation
 - How to curate data over long periods of time
 - How to make it available
- Also decisions of standards, minimal requirements for metadata, minimal requirements for technical requirements, etc.