Book proposal: *Born Digital Archiving in the Nordic Countries (to be published in 2022/23)*

This book proposal is a product of the research network 'Digitization and the Future of Archives' (funded by the Independent Research Fund, Denmark (IRFD)). The network brings together researchers and professional archivists primarily from the Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland), but also from Britain, Canada and Australia.

Since the 1970s the Nordic countries have systematically and consistently pursued digitization in the public sector, including in public archives. Nordic digital archiving relies on standards, legislation and regulation to ensure adequate and preservable digital records are created, kept and transferred into archives.

Despite its longevity, Nordic digital archiving is not well described in the archival literature. Nordic approaches to regulating, funding and administering digital archives have proven as resilient as Nordic solutions to technical challenges including format management, metadata flow, and user access. Nonetheless, the Nordic countries find themselves at an inflection point. Established traditions must rapidly evolve in the face of new record forms, ubiquitous computing and sustained, exponential growth in data creation. Discussions within our research network demonstrate a profound interest outside the Nordic countries for information about the Nordic model, and have reinforced the need for Nordic archivists to be part of international dialogue around digital archiving challenges and solutions, as Nordic approaches shift and evolve.

The aim of this publication is to provide a foundation for continuing dialogue between Nordic archival traditions and international archival theory and practice, particularly in Australia, Canada, Great Britain and the United States.

Background & motivation

Challenges and opportunities in digital archiving are to a great degree the same all over the world. Archival practices, however, are firmly rooted in national traditions and settings, with distinct standards, vocabularies, definitions, rules and regulations. We have an opportunity to learn from each other, but first we must understand our distinct traditions and practices.

The Nordic countries have led the Anglophone world in terms of digitization and the reliable and routine capture, preservation and access of digital records, as evidence and heritage; however the Anglophone world has a much longer tradition, and more developed literature, in archival theory. While Anglophone countries are more liberal (or neo-liberal), Nordic countries have a tradition of pragmatism supported by strong regulation by the state. Nordic countries pioneered digital administration in the public sector, starting in the 1970s, including strategies and practices to

preserve born digital materials in public archival institutions. While the focus in Nordic countries has been on the needs of public sector administrations, the Anglophone tradition has focused on users and developed critical perspectives on appraisal and the role of the archivist in society.

Devon Mordell recently proposed that the liberatory potential of archiving, as articulated by Terry Cook and others, might be brought fully into the digital age by viewing archival records as 'big data'.[1] Mordell suggests ever-growing quantities of data and increasing societal dependence on digital technologies are opportunities to deploy and further develop critical archival theory. We offer a Nordic perspective on questions raised by Mordell, while taking a critical look at Nordic traditions through the lens of international archival theory.

Contributors, contributions the editorial process

All editors are members of the research network; themes of the book emerged from discussions in the network, and many of the authors of individual chapters are network members. To ensure balance and diversity of perspectives, we also issued an open call for contributions.

The book will be divided into sections that include two types of contributions: long pieces (L), in the form of a traditional research article (about 8000 words), and short pieces (S) of a more descriptive nature (2000 – 5000 words) where experts in a certain field will describe specific solutions or approaches with due attention to technical details. Through an iterative process of writing, editing, and group discussion, we aim at a certain homogeneity in the various sections, despite differences in subject matter, practical or theoretical approaches, and length. Throughout we aim at a balance between articulating specific aspects of the Nordic model in detail while identifying areas in which the model must change, and imaginatively exploring new directions.

An editorial board will supplement the main editors to expedite the editing process while bringing a necessary breadth of knowledge. Network meetings will be used to workshop the individual chapters and sections, thus bringing together scholars with an international profile and Nordic practitioners to comment on the contributions. Additionally, two author workshops will be organized (at least one meeting digitally). The editors and editorial board will ensure the quality and coherence of the individual submissions and the volume as a whole.

Editorial board and editors:

Greg Bak Greg.Bak@umanitoba.ca

Ann-Sofie Klareld ann-sofie.klareld@kultur.lu.se

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[1] Devon Mordell, "Critical Questions for Archives as (Big) Data." *Archivaria* 87, no. 87 (2019): 140-161.

Anneli Sundqvist annsu@oslomet.no

Marianne Paasch paasch@dps.aau.dk (editor)

Marianne Rostgaard rostgard@dps.aau.dk (editor)

<u>Timeframe & Deadlines</u>

Open call deadline: September 10, 2020. Feedback from the editorial board October 1.

Deadline first draft versions: April 10, 2021

First author workshop: mid/end of May, 2021

Authors should expect a deadline for contributions, October 1, 2021

Second author workshop: November 2021

Final deadline for contributions: February 2022

We aim on publishing in late 2022/early 2023

Proposal outline

Title: Born digital archiving in the Nordic countries

SECTION ONE: Introduction to the Nordic model of record-keeping
Section editors: Greg Bak & Marianne Rostgaard [we suggest section editors as a way to divide the editing job among the board of editors]

Introduction: A look from a friendly outsider (Greg Bak) (L)
The chapter will set out what is intriguing about the Nordic model, with an emphasis on its long-term stability since the '70s, contrasted with the fits and starts of digital archiving in North America e.g. the long tradition for digital archiving and finding (pragmatic) solutions to essential archiving issues such as preservation of records.

Chapter 1: The Nordic Model (L)
The historical background for the Nordic archival tradition, characterized by a strong presence of the state, a pledge to accountability, transparency and citizen's right to access, early, perhaps even first movers, in digital administration in the public sector etc. The strong state and trust in the state, but also strong decentralized government. Digitization of the public sector as an important driver (from DK: Marianne Rostgaard)

Chapter 2: The Origins and Evolution of the Nordic Model (L)

Lays out the basics of digital record keeping in the Nordic countries; identifies regional/national differences. Addresses both the underlying technology and the regulatory framework (national laws regulating public archives)

SECTION TWO: Record keeping practices, legislation and standards

Section editor: Ann-Sofie Klareld

To be included in this section: Record keeping practices, theory, legislation, standards, metadata, description etc. (further suggestions within the theme are welcome).

Chapter 3: Record keeping legislation – recent challenges

Norway and Sweden are currently in the process of revising the legislation regulating public archiving. The chapter should take its point of departure in the general discussions that at one and the same time is the reason behind the proposed changes and the principled discussions raised by this revision (and not nitty-gritty details in the proposed laws)

Chapter 4: From custodianship to process management - the development of Finnish recordkeeping

The transformation of Finnish archives management. There clearly are Nordic roots (*meaning of basic concepts, registry practices, freedom of information, strong position of the National Archives, classification schemes similar to Swedish models*) and similarities to developments in international archival theory (*functional classifications, proactive role of the archives*). However, what has taken place precedes international developments (e.g. rise of *functional classifications*) and seems to have endogenous roots. There are also fairly extreme features compared to international developments (*automated records processes supervised by records management plans*). Pekka Henttonen, Tampere Univ/Fin

Chapter 5: Record keeping practices in the public sector

Ann-Sofie Klareld (SE), Marianne Paasch (DK) have both written their PhDs on record keeping practices (in Sweden and in the Danish municipalities)

Chapter 6: Standards in the Nordic Model

SIARD and other standards - METS? Format standards?
Comparison with key international standards, especially OAIS, TRAC/TDR and PREMIS?

SECTION THREE: A critical perspective on appraisal and preservation strategies

Section editor: Marianne Paasch

To be included in this section: What to keep when the amount of digital data is ever growing? The issue is on the one hand to preserve and later to be able to retrieve and preserve the bigger and bigger amount of digital data, but also make data available to different groups of users including indigenous populations, adoptees, former children in public custody etc. and support their right to a voice. Appraisal, preservation, autenticity, description **(further suggestions within the theme are welcome).**

Chapter 7: Current appraisal practices; a critical look at the technologies and the legal framework

Chapter 8: Reinforcing authenticity of archived data through parallel archiving/The records continuum model and the migration strategy
Asbjørn Skødt (DK/Danish National Archives)

Chapter 9: Reaching out? The Danish West Indies archives at the Danish national Archives and the citizens of the Virgin Islands
Marianne Paasch (DK)

SECTION FOUR: The role of the archivist and the archive in a digitized society – new directions & new possibilities
Section editor:

To be included in this section: user perspectives and use of social media etc. crowd sourcing and users' archival practices as a possible key to organize access to records/archival data? Articles that look to future possibilities within the field are also welcome. **(further suggestions within the theme are welcome).**

Chapter 9: Collecting photos from social media

Chapter 10: New user groups
The linked lives project at the Danish National Archives? Records/archival documentation used e.g. in medical research or other projects where archival records are transformed or enriched or used as 'big data'.

SECTION FIVE: The digital challenges to the archival profession and the future of archival education in the Nordic countries

Section editor: Anneli Sundqvist

To be included in this section: Archival education, digitization, pedagogy, de-colonization of archival education (further suggestions within the theme are welcome).

Chapter 11: Archival education in the Nordic countries.

Digitization mean that public archives have been assigned a much more pronounced role as both the memory of government and the society. Devon Mordell raised the questions of how to preserve the liberatory potentials of archiving in today's digitized society? Archival education has to span insights in data management with cultural memory considerations. How may these potentially different demands be bridged in future study programs? (From Norway: Anneli (may cover both N and SE)

Chapter 12: Teaching Digital Archiving and Archival Decolonization: views from Canada and Denmark

Greg Bak (CA) and Marianne Paasch (DK)

Reflections and conclusion: A Second Look from a Friendly Outsider

Main contributions and lessons from Nordic archival traditions – and looking to the future – the importance of how we can continue to seek out a dialogue between archival traditions to the benefit of archival communities everywhere. What is the most salient questions raised by this anthology?