



Archives and libraries of the people, by the people, for the people: How to open collections by crowdsourcing at the special library

MARI EKMAN

Special Librarian,

Lapland Department, Rovaniemi City Library

Abstract

Archives and libraries have been a storage for the centuries. In the 20th century they were seen as memory organizations, where memories were stored, but also new ones were created. The next step for the librarians and archivists was to be active to collect many kinds of materials about the surrounding society, paying attention to minorities as well. The last step has been to open organizations to co-operate with the clients. Internet has given new kind of possibilities for the participation in the libraries, like crowdsourcing. In this representation I will talk about co-operation and participation and the roles which the librarian can have in co-operation.

There can be many kind of motivations for the library and for the clients to cooperate.

As a case study I will introduce a collection of rare maps which were donated to the Lapland Department at Rovaniemi City Library. The staff wanted that the maps will be findable, available and usable, so the library co-operated with donator and his fellow experts to make a traditional exhibition and also a webexhibition.

Openness In Memory Organizations

“Archives of the people, by the people, for the people”. Ketelaar means with this openness and availability of the archives, but also peoples’ right to oversee and control regime. The archives and the libraries are for people, and maintained by people, so the archives and the libraries should be open to the people. (Ketelaar 1992.)

Memory organizations are non-rival, public and open to everyone. The task and status of the archives in the surrounding community has changed along with the society. Terry Cook defines four paradigms for the archives and their relationship with the surrounding community. His theory can be applied to the collections of any memory organization. Archives and libraries have been a memory storage for centuries and in the 20th century they were seen as memory organizations, where memories were stored, but also new ones were created. The next step for the librarians and archivists was to be active and collect many kinds of materials about the surrounding society, whilst paying attention to minorities as well. The last step has been to open organizations to cooperation with clients. Internet, social media and crowdsourcing are key words in this co-operation. (Cook 2013.)

Crowdsourcing has many parallel terms: peer production, user-powered systems, user-generated systems, user-generated content, collaborative systems, community systems, social systems, social search, social media, collective intelligence, wikinomics, crowd wisdom, smart mobs, mass collaboration, human computation (Doan ym. 2011, 86).

Crowdsourcing continues such opening collections in which a big audience can take part in archival work. An important task for crowdsourcing is to bring various aspects to the collections. The inclusion of users enables the introduction of social media. By participating, the role of the archive as an active actor is raised in one’s own communities and enables democracy and open management. It is important to distinguish between the mechanical tasks directed to the general public and the tasks requiring specialized expertise from the experts. The inclusion of the users enables the introduction of social media. (Huvila 2015.)

Nichesourcing means crowdsourcing with a small group of experts or specialists. Not with just anyone. You have to differentiate between crowdsourcing and nichesourcing: crowdsourcing means usually the mechanical tasks to direct for a larger audience and nichesourcing the tasks which need the specific knowledge of specialists. This means different kinds of questions: The roles of the participators and staff of the memory organization. How to share the authority of the memory organization also how to control the quality. Motivation, for the participators and for the organizations. These are good questions to have in your mind when you are thinking of opening your collection by crowdsourcing. But the answers are not the same for every organization.

Questions About Authority And Roles

How much can you share organizational authority through crowdsourcing? Or by nichesourcing? Can the organizations keep their credibility if they share their authority? How much can the organization publish work done by crowdsourcing under its name without losing credibility or authority? The librarian is not a member of the peer society but a separate, controlling actor. Except the organization but also the librarian has to share his or her authority with the society. (Yakel 2011).

The question of authority is followed by the question of the roles:

- The librarians plan, the participants follow
- The librarians plan, the participants analyse plans and share material
- The librarians and the participants co-operate

- The librarians coordinate, the participants are free to work with the material (Bonney & Simon. Here: Oomen & Aroyo 2011).

You can control credibility of your reputation, or you can be more open and transparent. You can build cultural heritage together with the participants. But you must think about the authority and then you have to think about the quality: How to control the quality? You can control through instructions, images of the desired quality or correcting afterwards. Or you can separate the participants' work from the professional work, and then the participants' work is published under their own names, not under that of the organization's. You can use a freedom of responsibility such as "the site administrator is not responsible for the accuracy of the site". The client can then notice, which information is authorised. (Huvila 2015, Oomen & Aroyo 2011, Yakel 2011)

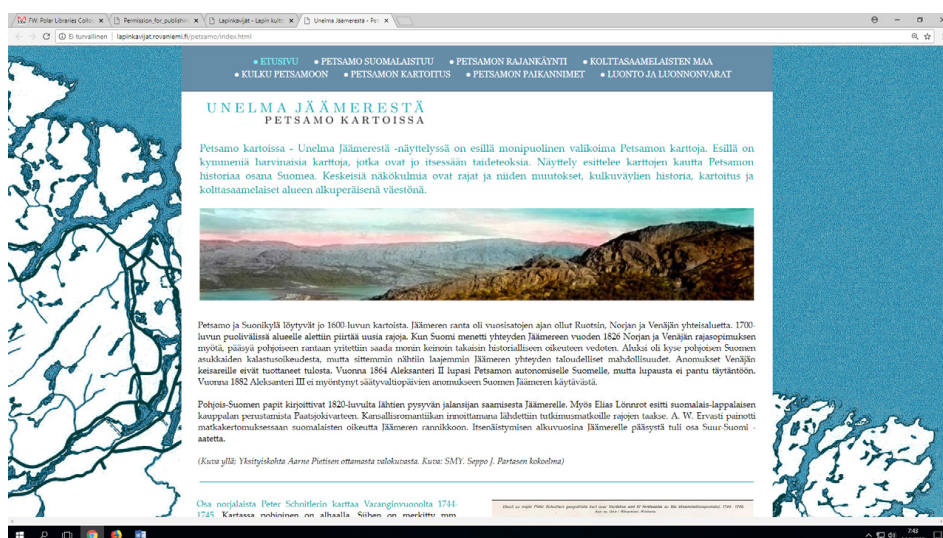
About The Motivation Of The Participant And The Organization

Motivating participants is a key challenge in crowdsourcing. There can be many kinds of motivations for the organization and for the participants to co-operate. It is important to motivate and get loyal participants. The motivation for the participants can be an interest in the subject, a sense of duty to the community, achieving a goal and reputation. The participants are motivated by their own interest in the subject and various incentives, not the archive's tasks. Many of the initiatives taken by archive enthusiasts are part of a joint fellowship with the subculture enthusiasts. (Huvila 2015, Oomen & Aroyo 2011.)

The motivation for the organization is to get resources, clients' views, making contact with the clients. Nichesourcing means also marketing your collection and service to the specialists. (Oomen, Gligorov & Hildebrand 2014). Organizations are motivated by crowding, including getting expert knowledge. In this case, the division of professional and participant roles is more equitable and more confidential. Authority can be handed over to the specialists.

The Petsamo Maps In The Lapland Department

As a case study, I introduce a collection of rare maps which were donated by a long-time client to the Lapland Department at Rovaniemi City Library.



The maps are about Petsamo, a large area which was legally part of Finland only for 24 years, from 1920 to 1944. Finland had wanted a gateway to the Arctic Ocean for decades, and the Petsamo area has had Finnish colonies for a century at least. The Skolt Sami people were the native people, they had been there for centuries. All the people moved to Finland after the war. Petsamo has a mythic history and still today books about Petsamo are written in Finland.

The donated maps from the 1920s and 30s were forbidden after the second world war. The Soviet Union ordered them to be destroyed. So, the maps were rarities which people could not look at and research. The National Land Survey of Finland has digitalized Carelian maps but the Petsamo maps are not expected to be digitalized any time soon, because they are marginal maps compared to the maps of lost Carelia.

The staff would like the maps to be accessible, available and usable, so the library co-operated with the donator and his fellow experts to make a traditional exhibition and also a [web-exhibition](#). These experts were mainly retired professional or amateur historians and involved because of family or other personal reasons.

The maps were “silent” without text, so we decided to make a larger web exhibition. The maps themselves are for the researchers but to get more people to know these maps we decided to write texts to help to study the history and the historical maps of the Petsamo area. Through the donor and his fellow experts, we got more old maps to digitalize, from other organisations and private persons. Also, some maps from our own collection are as a part of the exhibition.

I would call our project nichesourcing because we cooperated with the experts. The librarians had a coordinating role, also we wrote complementary texts. The librarians had also a production role. The Lapland Department had a role to look after many truths. And we were “the active archivists”, we wanted to bring the views of the local indigenous people, the Skolt Sami people’s view into the web exhibition.

Our motivation was to get the maps and their information. The Lapland Department has developed a good network, which has helped us a lot with old maps. To open the collections, we were also at the same time marketing our collections. The exhibition was widely covered in local media and as a result we got more map donations.

The experts wrote articles, gave photographs and more maps to publish. Motivation for the experts was their enthusiasm with the subject: Petsamo, and maps and the history of Petsamo. They wanted to share their rare treasures. The experts knew more than us about this subject, so we did not have any quality control. And the Petsamo Association was also co-operating with us, and so the Lapland Department got more subject credibility and authority.

The nichesourcing was very fruitful. With the experts, but also with the other organizations: The Provincial Museum of Lapland, the Archive of the National Land Survey of Finland, the National Archives of Finland and many more gave us a permit to publish their maps and photos. For example, the motivation for the National Land Survey Archive was to open their collection giving us permission to publish their original, official material. They had no resources to publish these maps which were marginal nationally. And through co-operating with the national archives, the Lapland Department enhanced its authority.

I hope I was able to give you ideas for opening collections and thinking again about the roles, of authority and motivation. And ideas on how to co-operate and try new kinds of participation. Nichesourcing is a different way in which to cooperate and it does take resources, but it is valuable in a different way.

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Guillaume De l'Isle: Carte des Couronnes du Nord, 1788.
(Rovaniemi City Library / The Lapland Department)



Liinahamari. Topographical map (1:20 000), 1928 (National Land Survey of Finland. E. Lilja collection)

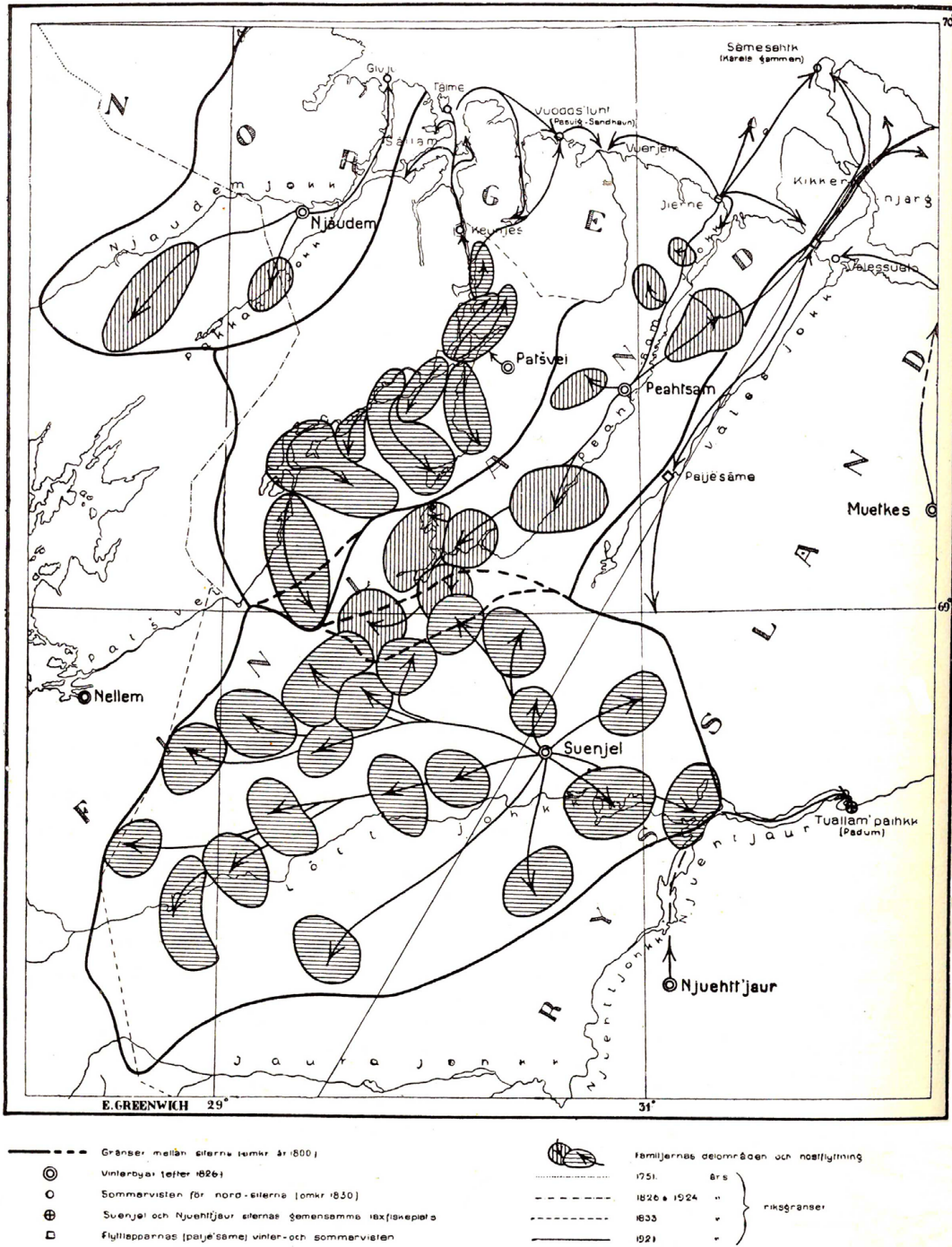


Fig. 71. Kartogram återgivande lappsiternas begränsning och driftsförhållanden.

The borders and the routes of the families in three Skolt Sami villages. (V. Tanner, Fennia 49, 1928)