

110 years of Finnish audio heritage

A plan for analog and digital preservation

Pekka Gronow

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Audio heritage

- Audio heritage is the part of our cultural heritage which consists of recorded sound. Its principal forms are
 - **radio programs**
 - **published records** (78rpm, vinyl, CD, etc)
 - **archival and private recordings**

There are no clear-cut borders between national and international heritage

- ¼ of Finnish radio programs are in Swedish
- Estonian history in Finnish radio archives: a documentary radio programme made in Tartu, 1939 
- Lithuanian music in the record library: a Lithuanian-American record (Juozas Olsauskas) from 1936 
- Lost Finnish singers: are the missing recordings of Alma Föhström in any European audio archives

The radio archives

- The YLE radio archives were founded in 1936, and now contain over 300,000 programs
- 1935-1949: 971 programs
- 1950-1959: 5,481 programs
- 1960-1969: 26,256 programs
- 1990-1999: 161,132 programs

Goals have changed over the years...

- The goals of the archives have changed over the years, and there has never been a strict archiving policy. Many programs have only survived by accident
- There was no legislation on radio archives until 2008
- Private commercial radio, in Finland since 1985, has hardly been archived at all

Enter KAVA

- KAVA (Kansallinen audiovisuaalinen arkisto, National Audiovisual Archive) was created in 2008 on the foundation of the old national film archive (Suomen Elokuva-arkisto)
- KAVA has the task of archiving national radio and television programs and making them available to researchers
- It is still unclear what KAVA can do with older materials. At the moment, only YLE has them

The YLE radio archives

- An internal "company archive", no systematic access to outsiders
- Entire contents (well, 99%) catalogued on-line
- All formats: acetate discs, analog tapes, digital DAT tapes, CD-R discs, multi-track tapes, sound files etc
- All types of content: news, documentary, drama, sports, music, religion, etc

The YLE digital audio archive

- The entire radio archive will be digitised for preservation and access
- 48Khz/24bit wav files on tape robot, bit-reduced streaming copies for easy reference
- online access within the company WAN, a "self-service" archive
- new programs mostly "born digital"

A typical catalogue document, showing online access to audio: a documentary from Mazirbe, Latvia, 1939. "All Livonians are now gathered here".

Radioarkisto

Radioarkiston Rark2-kanta RARA

Dokumentti 8 / 450

OTSI: **Liivin rantaa ja Liivin kansaa. Mikrofoni ja L. A. Puntila käyvät heimokansamme liiviläisten luona.**

AKBA: MLH
ENSI: 19390926
VERK: 00 Tuntematon
KEST: 003150
TALT: ARK-3429-2
DLAA: ARK-3429-2 DIG-266210-0 [Esikuuntelu](#) [Laatuääni](#)
HENK: Labsvirs J / Äänessä
Heporauta F A / Äänessä
Moilanen / Äänessä
Stalte K / Äänessä
Puntila L. A. / Äänessä

AKES: 003150

LISA: Dokumentoitu arkistokortin pohjalta.

SISA: Toimittajana L. A. Puntila.
Äänityspaikka Mazirbe, **Latvia**.
Puntilan mukaan koko Liivin kansa, toistatuhatta henkeä on kokoontunut talonsa vihkiäisiin 6.8.1939.
Talon piirtänyt suomalainen arkkitehti Erkki Huttunen.
Varoja on saatu Virosta, **Latviasta**, Unkarista ja Suomesta.
Latvian hallituksen edustaja, osastopäällikkö J Labsvirs vihki talon.
Rehtori F. A. Heporauta: Suomen heimojärjestöjen terveiset.
Naisen puhetta.
Lähetystösihteeri Moilanen (lähettilään sairauden takia): Riissa
olevan Suomen lähetystön tervehdys.

Start | Dok... | Roxi... | Untitl... | Pekk... | Unbe... | Asiak... | Micro... | Internet | 15:58

The digitisation plan

- **Prioritised formats:** acetate discs (all done), DAT tapes (all done), analog tapes (all before 1970 done)
- **Prioritised content** (regardless of format): radio drama, radio symphony orchestra (all done)
- Digitisation on demand (daily)
- Problem formats: multi-track tapes
- Plan completed by 2013 (?)

The record industry

- First Finnish records made in 1901, no systematic archiving until the 1960s
- Finnish Institute of Recorded Sound founded 1966 (no new accession since 1980)
- YLE also starts buying all Finnish records
- 1981: legal deposit of records introduced, National Library of Finland opens record archive
- many records still lost, especially from 1901-1917
- printed "Catalogue of Finnish records", 1901-1982
- online databases of Finnish records
- research access mostly thru National Library

Digitisation of Finnish records

- Priorities: all 78 rpm shellac records and commercial music cassettes
- YLE digitises frequently used records for internal use (c. 200,000 domestic and international tracks)
- No national plan exists for more extensive digitisation

Other audio archives

- There are at least 20 other audio archives in Finland, often connected to larger institutions, specialising in language research, folk and popular music, phonetics, oral history, local history, wildlife sounds, etc
- Most recordings are on analog tape
- Many archives have their own digitisation projects under way

Making our audio heritage accessible

- The digitisation of audio collections would make it technically possible to open the archives for wider use
- Copyright law limits access, but much material in historical archives is already in public domain. The RAITA database of the National Library as a public service
- YLE's "Living archive"
- A new law (2008) allows the extensive use of digital collections internally within the National Library and selected research libraries
- A future goal: online access to research audio collections across the borders