

# Content development efforts in the NLF's historic newspaper and journal collection: re-OCR, Named Entity Recognition and layout analysis

Kimmo Kettunen

The National Library of Finland

Mikkeli unit

**Leverage from**  
the EU  
2014–2020



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund



THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF FINLAND

# Background

- The National Library of Finland's Mikkeli unit has digitized historical newspapers, journals and ephemera published in Finland since 1998.
- The present collection consists of about 14 million pages mainly in Finnish and Swedish.
- Out of these about 7.45 million pages are freely available on the web site [digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi](https://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi) (user interface in English & Swedish available)
- The time period of the open collection is from 1771 to 1929. Years 1920–1929 were opened in January 2018.

# NLF's Mikkeli Unit



- A digitization factory about 220 km north-east of Helsinki
- Ca. 40 employees
- Digitizes about 1-2 M pages of newspapers and journals annually
- Also other production

# NLF's digital humanities efforts with the newspaper and journal collection

- Besides producing and publishing the digitized data all the time NLF has been involved in research and improvement of the digitized material during the last years. We ended in July 2017 a two year European Regional Development Fund project and started another two year ERDF project in August 2017 → **Digitalia** (together with South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences)
- NLF is also involved in research consortium **COMHIS** that is funded by the Academy of Finland (2016–2019) and utilizes the newspaper and journal data in its research of historical changes of publicity in Finland.
- EU Horizon Project **NewsEye** started in May 2018 - NLF is one of the partners and provides data for the project

# Data improvement and new ways to use the data

NLF has so far performed e.g. the following:

- Word level quality analysis for the Finnish part of data
- Open data delivery package of 1771-1910 newspapers and journals (available from [digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi](http://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi))
- Several improvements for the Web interface (time-line, notebook property etc.)
- Ground truth data of Finnish for new optical character recognition (open data)
- A new OCR process with Tesseract 3.04.01
- Named Entity Recognition evaluation collections (two phases: initial trial and present with GT OCR data)
- Layout analysis/article extraction work in progress

# Historical Finnish Newspaper & Journal Web Collection: Digi



DIGI.KANSALLISKIRJASTO.FI

14,086,207 PAGES



## NEWSPAPERS

Digitized 7,138,296 pages.  
Free use 4,075,080 pages (57%) (-1929)  
In copyright material 3,063,216 pages (43%) (1930-).



Welcome to the Finnish history and old times with the help of digitised newspapers!

The National Library has digitised newspapers published in Finland from 1771 to 1929. They are available online. Some newspapers published after 1929 have also been digitised and are available in [legal deposit libraries](#).



## JOURNALS

Digitized 6,818,568 pages.  
Free use 3,379,086 pages (49%) (-1929)  
In copyright material 3,439,482 pages (51%) (1930-).



1918-1929 PUBLISHED NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS FOR USE IN 2018

© 2001-2018 NATIONAL LIBRARY OF FINLAND / CENTRE FOR PRESERVATION AND DIGITISATION | PRIVACY POLICY | FAQ | TERMS OF USE | OTHER DIGITAL COLLECTIONS | 23302A7

Odottaa palvelinta osoitteessa www.facebook.com...



THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF FINLAND



# Three themes of the talk

- Quality of Optical Character Recognition/improvement of OCR
- Named Entity Recognition (NER) on historical Finnish data
- Layout analysis/article extraction work with the data

# Quality: general problems of digitization in old newspaper collections

- Old newspaper collections are hard for digitization (paper and print quality, wear&tear, typeface etc.)
- In the output of the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) process errors are common especially when the texts are printed in the Fraktur (blackletter) typeface.
- E.g. Newspaper collection of British Library has a mean word correctness rate of **about 78 %** (19<sup>th</sup> Century Newspaper Project, <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/july09/munoz/07munoz.html>)
- Errors lower usability of corpora both from the point of view of human users as well as regarding potential text mining applications.



# Quality issues of the OCREd Digi data

- Scanning of the contents of Digi was started in the early 2000s
- OCR software etc. was not on the same level then as now
- Quality of the originals has varied quite a lot
- Mostly Fraktur typeface used till the end of 19th century and early 20th century in Finland:
- → quality of the collection is varying due to OCR errors

- Aamulehti 17.9. 1905

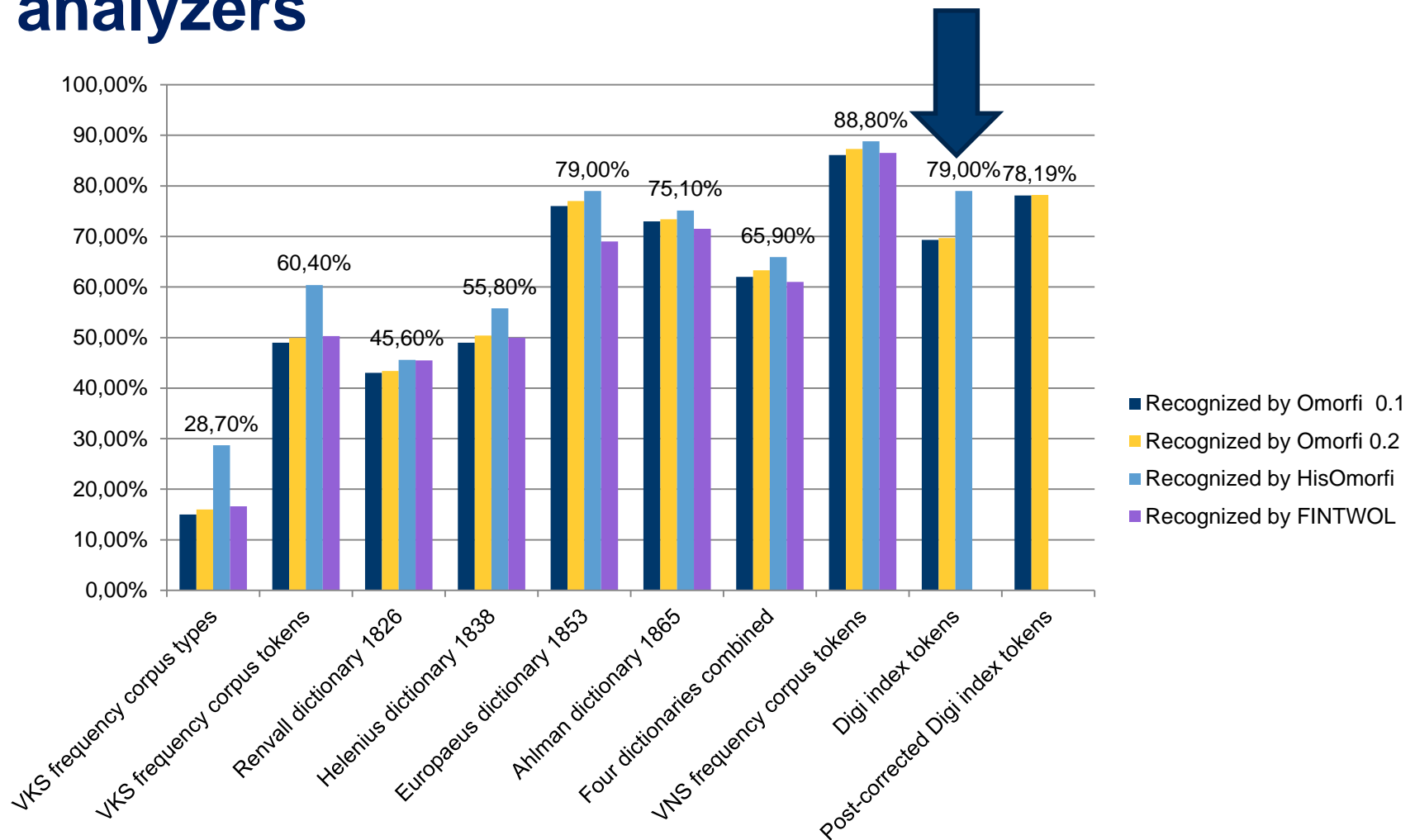


Ruhtenin jää asema nyt aivan toiseksi kuin silloin. Japani on tunnettu nyt suurvoimaksi sen sijaan, että Simonofetsja sitä kohdeltiin kuin poikamullista, jonka oli pakko hylkiä toverinsa kauluksesta. Japani on nyt saanut lujan jalansijan Aasian mantereella Korean ja Port Arthurin herrana eikä sen voimaa jää kukaan tuntevammaksi Mandchuriassa. Tuhansittain japanilaisia liemiesiä ja teollisuuden harjoittajia on sinne jodan aikana asettunut löytäen sieltä edullisemmat vaihtoehdot kuin liian taajaan asutuilla saarilla. Maafanta on ylen rikas luonnon antimisista ja ankara linnoitus sen eteläisessä niemessä muodostus japanilaisten tässä heidän mannermaa-valtansa keskusteeksi, josta pelon ja tunnioitusten tunne kaikkialle leviää.

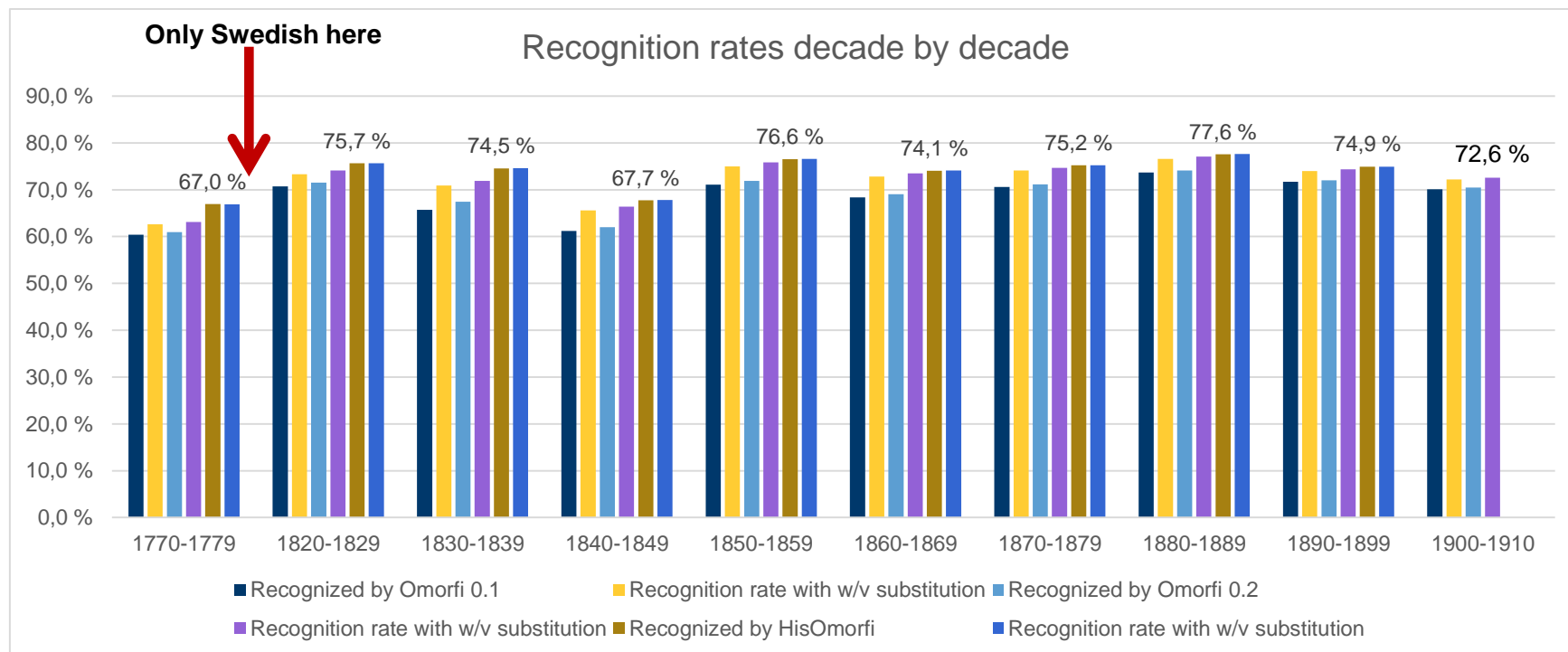
# Quality assessment

- The Finnish part of the collection 1771-1910 has about 2.40 B words!
- Huge amount - what can you do? (evaluation based on samples or try to assess all?)
- We took four modern Finnish morphological analyzers (FINTWOL and 3 versions of Omorfi) and ran all the word data through them (word data taken out of the web collection's index)
- For comparison we used hand edited comparable word data available from the Institute for the Languages of Finland (VKS\_korpus, VNS\_korpus and four dictionaries from the 19<sup>th</sup> century: data is smallish, but the only available: largest c. 4.86 M, dictionaries 25K-90 K)

# Word recognition rates: 4 morphological analyzers



# Recognition of newspaper data decade by decade (word tokens)



# Caveat – recognition ≠ correctness misrecognition ≠ uncorrectness

- *mli* mli Num Roman Nom Sg → probably an OCR error
- *huu* huu Part
- *tain* tai N Gen Sg → wrong division to two parts based on hyphenation, should be *huutain* which is unrecognizable, although it is a correct form in 19<sup>th</sup> century Finnish
- *Hei* He Pron Nom Pl → should be *heidan*, unrecognizable (*heidän* would be correct)
- *dan* +?
- *Samoin kuin* +? → not recognized because written as a compound, OK otherwise
- *Ylöskannetaan* +? → not recognized because written as a compound, OK otherwise

# Ways to improve the quality

- 1) **Re-OCRing** → ABBYY FineReader's Fraktur licensing policy/pricing impossible with new AbbyyFinereader, we are moving to open source Tesseract OCR.
- 2) **Post-correction** with software: FIN-CLARIN: about 9-~~X~~ % units recognition rate improvements so far (Omorfi 0.2, HisOmorfi)
- 3) **Crowdsourcing** (i.e. human correction): not feasible due to large amount of data

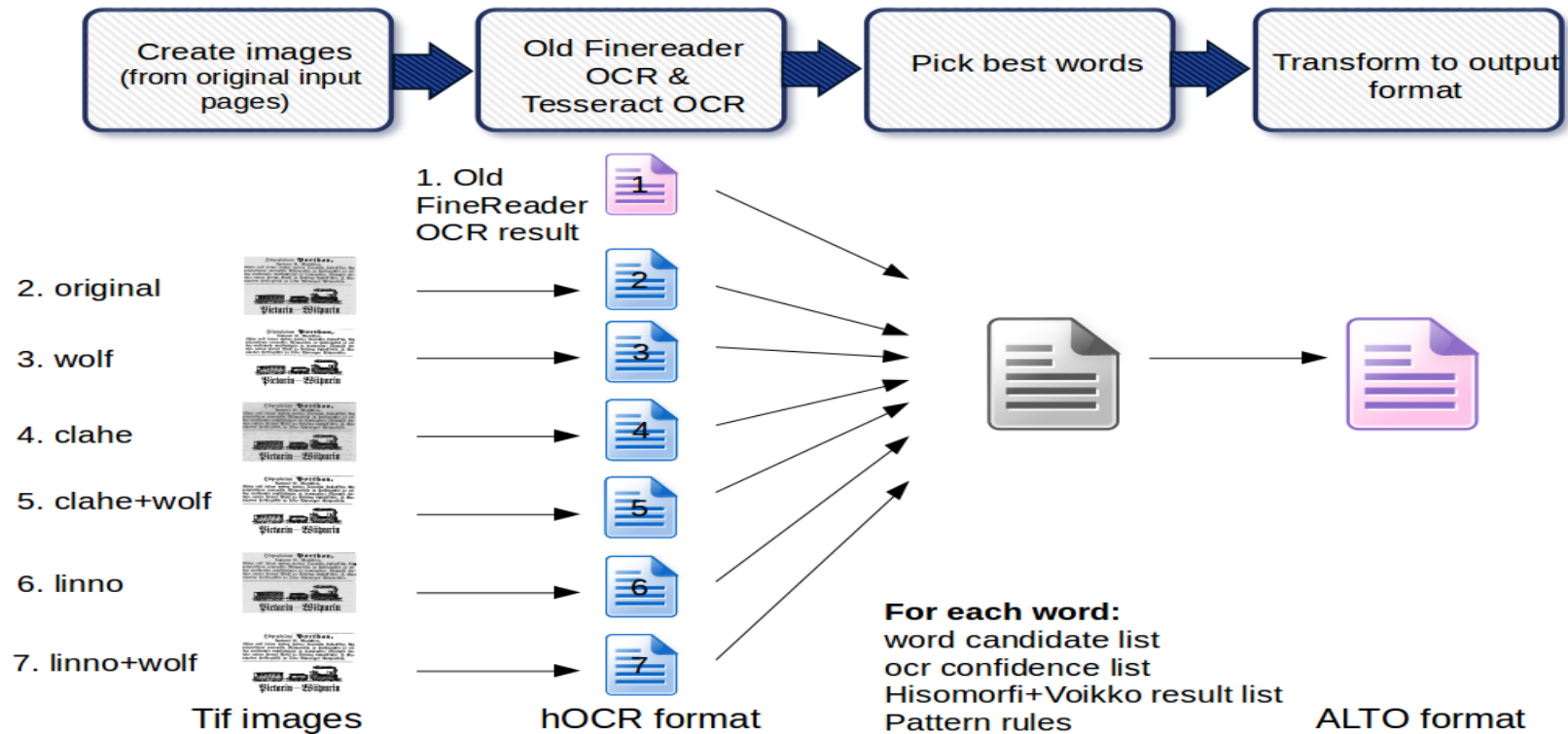
# The new OCR process

- A new Fraktur font model was taught for Tesseract (using an existing German Fraktur as basis)
- A pipeline of image improving process was established
- OCR with Tesseract 3.04.01 (+ existing Abbyy FineReader v.7/8 results)
- Choosing the most probable word candidate from several suggestions
- Transformation of the output to ALTO XML



# The new OCR process

## OCR improvement process



# Results - a 500 K ground truth word list – precision and recall results (latest)

Words without errors 374299  
Words with errors 131008  
Errorless not corrected 366043  
Sum (lines 1 and 2) = 505307  
True pos 99071  
False negs 31937  
False positives = 8256

Recall = 0.76  
Precision = 0.92  
F measure= 0.83

Correction rate = 0.69

# Results of 500K GT: character and word error rates, character accuracy

	re-OCR of NLF	Current OCR
CER	2,05	6,47
WER	6,56	25,30
WER (order independent)	5,51	23,41
CAR	97,64	92,62

# Uusi Suometar 1869-1890: average gain 14,7 % units in word recognizability

Year	Current OCF	Re-OCR 2	Increase in word recognition
1869	69,4 %	86,59 %	17,18 %
1870	66,98 %	85,54 %	18,57 %
1871	72,81 %	87,27 %	14,46 %
1872	75,09 %	88,25 %	13,16 %
1873	74,61 %	87,04 %	12,43 %
1874	72,70 %	86,09 %	13,39 %
1875	70,62 %	85,52 %	14,90 %
1876	71,50 %	85,51 %	14,01 %
1877	72,09 %	84,79 %	12,70 %
1878	70,78 %	84,70 %	13,91 %
1879	73,52 %	86,09 %	12,57 %
1880	70,11 %	85,85 %	15,74 %
1881	67,98 %	84,26 %	16,28 %
1882	62,41 %	82,94 %	20,53 %
1883	70,19 %	82,17 %	11,98 %
1884	69,60 %	81,67 %	12,07 %
1885	68,11 %	82,53 %	14,42 %
1886	68,21 %	82,12 %	13,92 %
1887	65,25 %	82,16 %	16,91 %
1888	70,27 %	82,52 %	12,25 %
1889	65,71 %	81,41 %	15,70 %
1890	64,69 %	80,71 %	16,02 %
			<b>14,69 %</b>
			<b>Average</b>

# NER – Named Entity Recognition

What?

- Names of **persons, locations, organisations** are important factual data in texts
- They can be recognized automatically to a reasonable extent (70-90+ %)
- They can be used in information extraction out of the data
- Names of persons and locations are used heavily as keywords in text searches of on-line databases. **Many times even 80 % of keywords are names.**

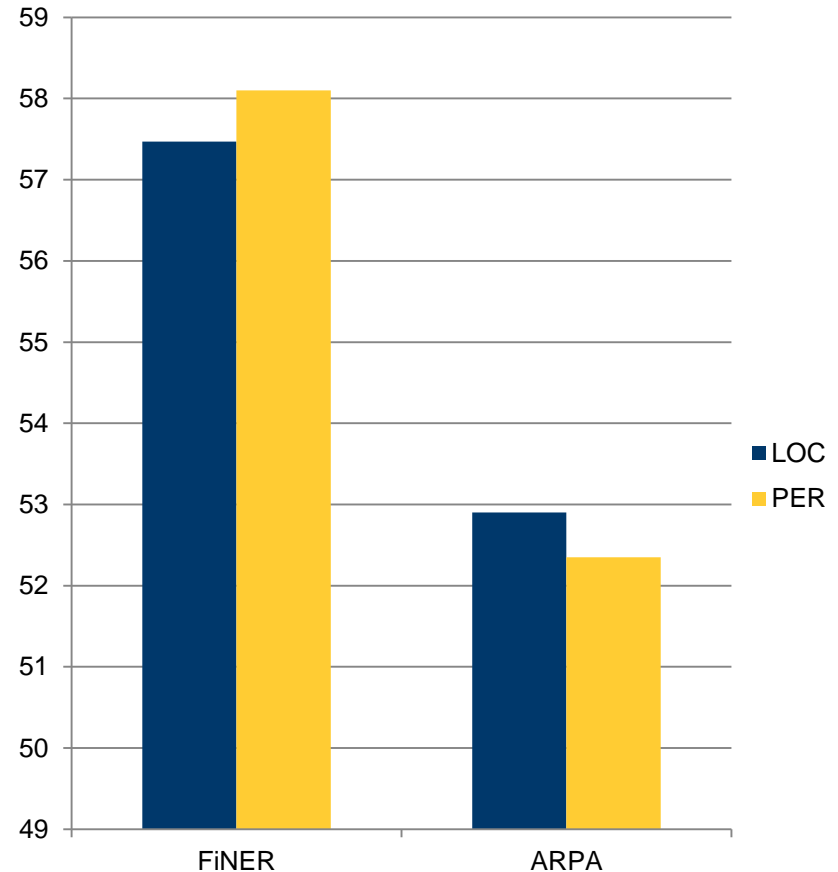
# An example of text with names

Edellä sanotun tarpeen vaatimana ja kun ei täällä ole mallikelpoista maanviljelystaloa, jonka puuttessa» poistamiseksi toivomme että usei»mai»ittu koulu perustettaisiin hra O. L, Vumeruksen omistajalle Kupiala» tilalle Rantasalmen pitäjään, eikä lärmikylään Joroisissa, koska lärmikylä jo kaumcmman aikaa nykyisen omistajansa jalomielisestä ja paljon uhraivaiscsta toimesta un ollut, ja luonnollisesti tulisi edelleen olemaan PohjoiS-samolaisille monien kokeittensa ja mallikelpoisen maanviljcll,ksen

- 6 names, 2 of them spelled right

# First NER trials with the OCRed newspaper data

- There are tools for doing NER for Finnish, but they are usually for modern language
- We evaluated first 5 different modern tools with an evaluation collection of about 76 000 words (manually tagged by T. Ruokolainen)
- Results were not very good: F scores 0.52-0.58 (scale 0.0-1.0)





# A new start with Stanford NER package

- We created a new training and evaluation collection of ca. 450 000 words
- Used trainable Stanford NER machine learning package to learn names from about 380 000 words that had been marked manually and semi-automatically
- Results quite good

# Results of Stanford NER

- Ideal results with manually corrected data

TABLE I. PRECISION, RECALL, AND F-SCORES FOR EACH NAMED ENTITY CLASS ON THE GROUND TRUTH EVALUATION SET

Class	Precision	Recall	F1	# found	#gold standard
LOC	0.8872	0.8566	0.8716	1764	1826
PER	0.8408	0.7801	0.8093	1118	1205

- Realistic results with achievable OCR: a 9-10 % unit drop

TABLE II. PRECISION, RECALL, AND F-SCORES FOR EACH NAMED ENTITY CLASS ON THE OCR EVALUATION SET

class	precision	recall	F1	# found	#gold standard
LOC	0.8527	0.7322	0.7879	1485	1826
PER	0.7856	0.6631	0.7192	1017	1205

# Results of a LSTM-CRF (Lample et al. 2016)

- LSTM (long short-term memory), recurrent neural network model: state-of-the-art, receives very similar results with Stanford

Class	Precision	Recall	F1	# found	# gold standard
LOC	0.8598	0.6884	0.7646	1471	1826
PER	0.8212	0.6822	0.7452	1022	1205

# What to do with NER in a historical newspaper collection?

- NER is a tool that needs to be used for some purpose
- Two basic uses:
  - Enhancement of browsing in large collections
  - Linking names to knowledge sources (DBPedia, Wikipedia, bibliographical sources, geographical sources etc.)

# An example of browsing enhancement

- La Stampa 1867-2005

<http://www.archiviola stampa.it/ww.archiviola stampa.it>

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying [www.archiviola stampa.it](http://www.archiviola stampa.it). The page content is organized into several sections:

- Autori**: Stefano BarTEZZAGHI(23), Lorenzo Mondo(21), Marco Belpoliti(20), Nico OrenGO(17), Lietta Tornabuoni(14), altri...
- Persone**: Italo Calvino(1340), Calvino(531), Einaudi(318), Moravia(87), Primo Levi(84), altri...
- Luoghi**: Italia(540), Torino(393), Roma(358), Milano(242), Parigi(190), altri...
- Organizzazioni**: Mondadori(128), La Stampa(105), Einaudi(84), Rai(69), Bompiani(62), altri...

The main content area lists several articles by **ITALO CALVINO**:

- ITALO CALVINO**  
ITALO CALVINO I NOSTRI ANTENATI II.VISTWTKIMMry/ATO II, HARMSK RAMMNTK 11.CAVAIJKUK INKKISTKN'TK  
StampaSera 27/11/1985 - numero 302 pagina 2
- Italo Calvino**  
Italo Calvino Una pietra sopra. Discorsi di letteratura e società. 19\_55-1980. « Gli struzzi », L. 6500.  
StampaSera 04/04/1980 - numero 86 pagina 5
- ITALO CALVINO**  
ITALO CALVINO ULTIMO VIENE IL CORVO 7/ suo primo libro di racconti 256 pagine. 15.500 lire Nella collana Gli Elefanti sono pubblicati ancheW cavaliere inesistente · Il visconte dimezzato · Il barone rampante · Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno · Le Cosmicomiche · Ti con zero — Una bambina ebrea in ...  
StampaSera 04/10/1988 - numero 253 pagina 3
- ITALO CALVINO**  
ITALO CALVINO ULTIMO VIENE IL CORVO // suo primo libro di racconti 256 pagine. 15.500 lire 15.500 lire Nella collana Gli Elefanti sono pubblicati ancheW cavaliere inesistente · Il visconte dimezzato · Il barone rampante · Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno · Le Cosmicomiche · Ti con zero Una bambina ...  
StampaSera 04/10/1988 - numero 253 pagina 3
- ITALO CALVINO**  
ITALO CALVINO Gli elefanti CALVINO Narratori moderni Sotto il sole giaguaro 100 pagine, 15.000 lire I nostri antenati \*16 pagine, 30.000 lire Cosmicomiche vecchie e nuove 320 pagine, 22.000 lire IL\_ sentiero dei nidi di ragno 20\* pagine, 12J000 lire Il visconte dimezzato IO\* papine, 10.800 lire ...  
StampaSera 14/05/1987 - numero 126 pagina 3
- ITALO CALVINO**  
ITALO CALVINO escono ora nella collezione Gli elefanti  
StampaSera 11/06/1988 - numero 142 pagina 4

At the bottom of the page, there is a section for **Articoli più letti** with options **Da tutti** and **Da me**. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 10:39 on 27.9.2017.

# Layout analysis / article extraction

- Newspapers are usually digitised page by page (scanner takes a "photo" of the page)
- Page images serve as the basic unit of whole processing
- → Trouble ahead!
  
- Page is not any kind of informational unit, only a typographical/printing unit
  
- Pages consist of different parts: text (news items, titles), pictures etc.









# Problems

- Number of columns may keep changing even in a single number (and definitely every few years)
- Layout varies: advertisements and other pictures keep popping up in the middle of the text
- Different style of column structure in different parts of page
- ....

Currently best layout analysis software get about 85+% of the layout right in complex layouts/historical data (ICDAR competition from several years)

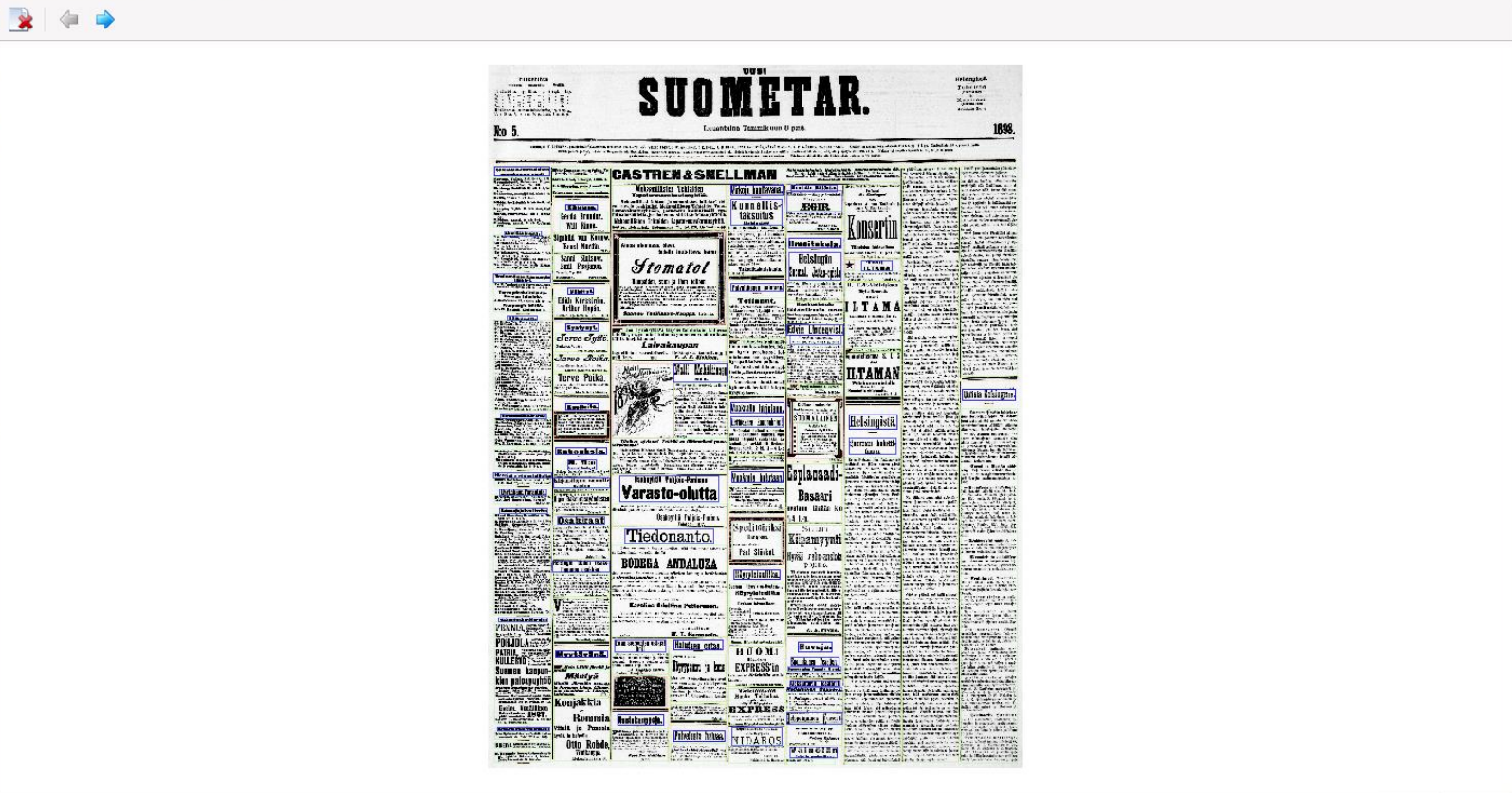
# Article extraction trials at the NLF

- We are collaborating with University of Rouen, LITIS laboratory
- PIVAJ software: a machine learning software, that learns layouts and article separation from training data
- We have made a 224 page manually marked collection out of Uusi Suometar for PIVAJ
- We are trying to train PIVAJ to separate articles from pages of Uusi Suometar
- Results still forthcoming...



# A simple layout page marked with PIVAJ's annotation tool

The screenshot displays the PIVAJ web application interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'File', 'Edit', 'View', and 'Help' menus. Below this is a toolbar with icons for 'Archive manager', 'Page viewer', and 'Page segmenter'. The main content area shows a document with several columns of text. Annotations are visible as small boxes and lines overlaid on the text. A sidebar on the left contains various tool icons for navigation and editing. The bottom of the interface shows a URL bar with the path '/home/kk/Dropbox/pivaj-archives/uusi-suometar-experiments/1869/01/04/ac-00002.tif' and a zoom level of 21%.







# In conclusion

- NLF has multilingual newspaper and journal data from 1771-1929 available on the web: [digi.kansallikirjasto.fi](http://digi.kansallikirjasto.fi)
- We have been working with data and usability improvement since about 2014 in different projects
- NLF is part of the NewsEye consortium providing data and looking forward to have useful results out of the project



# Thank you for your patience

Kimmo.kettunen@helsinki.fi



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

Leverage from  
the EU  
2014–2020



THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF FINLAND