

# Electronic archiving of documents

**The National Archives Service has introduced an ingestion and service system for electronic material (VAPA). Using this system, government organisations can transfer their electronic documents to permanent archives. Through the archiving service, material will be made available to organisations themselves. At a later date, it will also be accessible to researchers.**

VAPA's implementation is based on the goal expressed by the KuntaTI-ME report, of creating a joint information system for the public sector. The requirements for electronic records management and storage are specified in the SÄHKE regulations of the National Archives Service.

'Our original aim was for the National Archives Service to offer an electronic storage service and receive material meeting the requirements of the SÄHKE regulations. As the project progressed, further aims included efficiency and the use of materials as part of organisations' management processes. Naturally, we are also seeking cost savings. The BC calculator, for example, has been created in order to help specify these,' comments Development Director **Päivi Happonen** of the National Archives Service.


## Filing shelves will be a thing of the past

In its initial phase, the service is aimed at government organisations. The first customers will probably be the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Interior and the State Treasury, which took part in the pilot project. Investigations are under way on the possibility of opening the VAPA service to the municipal sector.

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ce will largely depend on whether an organisation's information systems meet the required standard. 'Using the service is free of charge for government organisations. In the initial years, joining the service will largely depend on whether an organisation's informa-

 **According to Development Director Päivi Happonen of the National Archives Service, the project's success was due to the commitment of all participants. This enabled agreement on various matters and staying within schedule and budget.**



tion systems meet the required standard. Personally, I hope that the service can be extended beyond the state administration. In my opinion, limiting the system to the state administration would run counter to the spirit of enterprise architecture and the current act on the interoperability of information systems in public administration,' Päivi Happonen explains.

We also aim to transfer fairly recent material to the service, for example documents whose processing was terminated a year ago. In the paper-based world, documents are not transferred to the National Archives until 40 years after being processed.

– 'Organisations using the service can substantially reduce their expensive paper archiving volumes and save on licensing costs. They will no longer require physical buildings, with kilometre after kilometre of shelves for storing material in paper format. Reductions are inevitable in the public administration's workforce – digital storage of information will prove helpful in this too,' Päivi Happonen points out.

### **Tieto's strong references**

According to Päivi Happonen, Tieto was chosen as the system supplier because its solution was the best alternative in terms of economy and functionality. Tieto and its subcontractor had strong references for archiving projects, for instance from an archiving solution in Estonia. In addition to Tieto, a number of other suppliers participated in the service's implementation, for example in its testing and auditing stages.

– 'In my opinion, the co-operation was a success. The schedule was very tight and, on a number of occasions, we had to think hard about how to cope with all of the unexpected issues. With all of the participants extremely committed, we managed to agree on matters and keep to schedule and budget,' Happonen enthuses. ■

### **The National Archives**

The National Archives directs the operations of the National Archives Service. It also guides the archives and records management of the central government administration, while acting as a national central agency and a research and development centre within its field of expertise. The National Archives acquires and preserves the records of authorities and private individuals, obtains archival materials central to Finnish history and promotes their use in research.

### **The challenge**

The objective was to create a long-term storage service for use by the government administration and, later, by the entire public administration. No equivalent service has previously been implemented in Finland.

### **The solution**

VAPA is based on the SDB (Safety Deposit Box) product, complying with Tessella's OAIS standard. The product is used by a number of international customers as a long-term archiving solution. Tieto's participation in the development of enterprise architecture within the government administration guarantees that the management of electronic materials and their permanent archiving are developed as part of enterprise architecture, particularly in terms of interoperability between information architecture and systems.

### **Added value**

VAPA's task is to safeguard the storage of materials in a reliable and secure manner for several centuries. Centralised storage and structural uniformity of information form a digital service network, which corresponds excellently to structural and economic changes in the public administration. The National Archives assumes responsibility for storage, releasing organisations to focus on their core operations. At the same time, expensive paper archiving will be reduced.

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