

ANNA-KARIN RABE¹

BIYANTO REBIN²

Digitalization - a hot research topic for students

Digital technologies offer many opportunities in the LAM (Libraries, Archives and Museums) and Digital Humanities sector, and the current technological improvement rate is spurring exploration. One example is how physical cultural heritage institutions are transformed into the digital sphere, enabling people to consume and enjoy culture regardless of physical location. Digital technologies are also fundamentally changing how we preserve, sort, present, and access information, and consequently how we interpret the world. Search engines have for example moved from being largely directory-based, and thus controlled by human editors, toward automated indexing where information is classified, sorted and presented based on statistical relevance (best guesses). This creates fast and flexible knowledge management systems, but also increases the risk of bias and filter bubbles. Users also have very limited insight into the logic behind the decisions and how information is sorted, and sorted out, and it has been argued that information

¹ Anna-Karin Rabe is a student member of the editorial board for *Tidskrift för ABM* and a master student in Library and Information Studies in at the department of ALM at Uppsala University
Email: annakrabe@gmail.com

² Biyanto Rebin is a student member of the editorial board for *Tidskrift för ABM* and a master student in Digital Humanities at the Department of ALM at Uppsala University
Email: biyanto.rebin@gmail.com

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literacy education should extend to AI literacy for both users and information professionals.

The Department of ALM at Uppsala University offers two master programs, one in Digital Humanities and one in ALM (Archives, Libraries and Museums). An overview of master theses published at the Department of ALM in 2023 shows that new information carriers, technologies and behaviors are key topics of interest for students in both the Digital Humanities and ALM programs. Below you find a selection of theses investigating these issues, grouped in themes identified by the authors of this editorial. There are many more interesting findings to explore, so please visit [the Diva search portal](#) for a complete overview of all theses.

Digital access

[Natanya B. Newton, Piecing Together the Past - A Study about the significance of digitally accessing family records between Australia and England, and the key players responsible](#)

Natanya B. Newton investigates the importance of accessing archival information between Australia and England and how the international gaps between countries can make ancestral research difficult. The results show that Australians studying family history rely on access to England's records because their pasts are otherwise incomplete. The study also shows that ancestral research needs both archivists, genealogists and librarians who can find and connect the information.

[Jacob Leimar, Digitizing a minority and its history : A study in accessibility and digitization in Jewish cultural heritage collections and Holocaust memory](#)

Jacob Leimar explores the challenges and considerations of digitizing Jewish cultural heritage and Holocaust memory collections in Sweden. The thesis argues that digitization offers new opportunities to make these materials more accessible, but that there are also challenges, such as funds limitations and regulations. Lemar also argues that the newly established Swedish Holocaust Museum is placed in a unique spot in challenging the current status quo in making cultural heritage deemed vulnerable accessible.

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[Feiye Yin, Investigating Experience of Mobile Application in Museum : The Case Study of the Nationalmuseum](#)

Feiye Yin explores how the context of museum visit frames the experience of usage of smartphone applications. This case study finds that the visitor's experience is complicated and can be affected by multiple factors. The outcomes of this study bring some insights into the visitor experience of using museum-related mobile applications. The four contexts for the museum visit are proved to be applicable for exploring this topic from the perspective of the visitors, and thus can be regarded as a lens for understanding the visitor experience of usage of museum applications.

Social media

[Monika Israelsson, "I do like the algorithm, for better or for worse": A phenomenographic analysis of the information landscapes of adolescents on social media](#)

Monika Israelsson studies adolescents' conceptions of information literacy on social media, with the aim of shedding light on their everyday information life and shared information landscape. The study shows that teenagers engage in a range of information literacy practices, which in part differ from the practices taught in information literacy education. The study also indicates a gap between the adolescents' information literacy practice on social media and the way they perceive information literacy and source evaluation.

[Matilda Eriksson, "To TikTok or not" TikTok:s usefulness for Swedish museums in appealing Generation Z](#)

Matilda Eriksson investigates to what extent Swedish museums perceive TikTok as a useful application to reach Generation Z, and how young people are influenced by social media in relation to museums. The study shows that very few museums in the studies selection group use TikTok, and that the majority of Gen Z informants would be

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motivated to visit museums if they were inspired enough by its content on TikTok or other social media. The results also indicate that there is a high possibility that the types of videos museums publish on TikTok will influence how Gen Z perceives them.

[Tong Liu, Exploring the online public spheres of Zhihu, a Chinese social media platform](#)

Tong Liu explores the discourse and sentiment characteristics of the thematic public sphere by analyzing posts around the topic of COVID-19 vaccine booster. The study showed that users were willing to use the platform for information confirmation, that the answers covered various presentations, such as videos and pictures, and that there were fewer professional people involved in the discussions. It also showed that the public sentiment was generally positive, but many users expressed dissatisfaction with the epidemic prevention measures and doubts about the effectiveness of booster vaccines.

Virtualization

[Ludvig Stone, The Most Boring Game in the World : A study of World of Warcraft as a means for social interactivity within an enclosed group](#)

Ludvig Stone explores the social facet of gaming through the lens of a World of Warcraft guild. By using Political Discourse Theory (PDT), the study found that respect for other guild members' time is the most important trait among players. This respect is primarily expressed through understanding that other members have lives outside of the game and therefore cannot devote the majority of their time to the game. The study provides insights into how social rules and codes influence gaming practices and the desirable behaviors among players.

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[Nikolaos Gkizis Chatziantoniou, From Pixels to Culture: Gamification and Extended Reality in the Modern Museum](#)

Nikolaos Gkizis Chatziantoniou explores the use of gamification and extended reality (XR) in the cultural sector, specifically in museums. The thesis examines the impact of gamification and virtualization on information dissemination, visitor experience, and challenges arising from the use of these technologies. It also looks at the role of digitalization in memory institutions and how gamification and virtualization can be used to preserve cultural heritage. The findings showcase that gamification and virtualization are not just generic additions to museum exhibitions, they signify the crossing towards a new type of learning, while experiencing culture more critically and shifting the focus not only towards the visitor but also to a new type of visitor.

Strategy and implementation

[Julia Unterstrasser, Linked Data and Libraries: How the Switch to Linked Data Has Affected Work Practices at the National Library of Sweden](#)

Julia Unterstrasser employs an interview study at the National Library of Sweden, the first national library worldwide that has adopted linked data as its core data-model, to provide deeper insights into how linked data is affecting the current work practices of library professionals from their own perspectives. The findings suggest that linked data is fundamentally changing knowledge and information organization in the digital age. Furthermore, the results of the study suggest that linked data is only part of a paradigm-shifting change currently happening in the knowledge and information organization community.

[Amanda Holm & Pernilla Hjelm Andersson, Contracting for digital archives: A study of Swedish municipalities requirement specifications](#)

Amanda Holm and Pernilla Hjelm Andersson investigate the contracting of digital archives for Swedish municipalities and the needs and requirements that govern this. The study concludes that there still are considerable steps to take before

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reaching an e-archive solution that can be used on a broad scale to accommodate many different needs and restrictions. At the same time, the development of long-term preservation systems for digital records would benefit from more standardized guidelines on a national scale.

[Aijia Zhang, Attributing Digitalization Decisions in Museums: A Multiple Case Study of Swedish Public Museums](#)

Aijia Zhang's study employs the Digital Curation Lifecycle Model to conceptualize the process mapping for digitalization projects and the attribution theory to identify the internal and external factors affecting digitalization decisions. The findings indicate that the attribution of museums' digitalization decisions is complicated and can be affected by multiple factors and can be multiple attributed. The study underscores the importance of contextuality and underpins the emerging trend in museums' digitalization practices.

[Wilma Enström, Digital Differences within Cultural Cornerstones: A Case Study of the Digital Tools and Implementations at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm](#)

Wilma Enström explores the role of digital tools and implementations in the museum exhibitions and examines the potential discrepancies of both museum employees and visitors. Through interview, on-site observations, and one participatory observation, the study finds that digital tools and implementations are highly regarded as invaluable assets. The thesis contributes to the field of Digital Humanities by providing new insights into the effective utilization of digital tools in cultural heritage museums.

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