Implementing Interoperability
Availability of Public Administration Documents

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The background

Finland has one of the least corrupted public sectors in the world and the current legislation on openness states non-classified public administration documents must be available to the general public.
Finland is also supposed to be quite advanced in implementing digitalisation.

The Finnish public sector is required…
- To ensure and handle the long term preservation of public administration documents (*the Archives act*) and the documents in question are defined by the law (*see below**)
- The public sector is required to make non-classified public administration documents available for the public (**Act on the openness of government activities*)

Current situation

The spirit of the law is not actually fully complied with. There are several examples of public authorities blatantly refusing to hand over official non-classified documents. The Finnish parliament being the latest case…

Thus, *the act on openness* is like a box of chocolate: you never know what you will get…
- One can request documents from the public administration but…
- One must know which agency the request must be made to (i.e. which agency created the document and is responsible for it), and…
- One never knows if the documents will be made available or not (journalists take note)
- One might end up in court to get an official ruling on the 'openness'
- The documents are seldon delivered electronically

A simple solution (really…)

Just comply with the legislation, and…

Make the public administration documents available online
1. A search interface (duh…)
2. Database with metadata and fulltext documents (the non-classified stuff)
   - **Use SÄHKE2 format*** (already in widespread use)
   - Classified material can be made available to relevant parties via strong ID
3. Direct inquiries to relevant authorities if documents not found
   - HINT: Could be implemented as a web service
4. **Use persistent ID's with a (national?) resolver service*** to indicate identical documents in case several authorities handle the document

* These are the parts related to (semantic) interoperability

Thank you

Comments? Questions?

Relevant legislation
- [The Archives act](#)
- [The act on Openness of Government Activities](#)
- [The act on Information Management Governance in Public Administration](#)