



DEACCESSIONING. SHARING EXPERIENCES FROM
FINLAND. MINNA SARANTOLA-WEISS AND EMILIA VÄSTI
(EDS.) MUSEOLIITTO 2016.

[HTTP://WWW.MUSEOLIITTO.FI/INDEX.PHP?K=12613](http://www.museoliitto.fi/index.php?k=12613)

GOOD PRACTICES FOR DEACCESSIONING 2014–2016

- The Historical Collections of the Tampere Museums
- The Museum of Technology (Helsinki)
- The Helsinki City Museum
- The Tampere Art Museum
- Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova (Turku/Åbo)
- HAM – Helsinki Art Museum

Publications:

- Kokoelmapoistojen hyvät käytännöt (2015)
- Kokoelmapoistojen hyvät käytännöt (2016)
- Deaccessioning. Sharing Experiences from Finland (2016)
- Deaccessioning and collections development in Finnish museums. *Nordisk museologi* 1/2017.



WHY DEACCESSIONING?

- Better care and secure conditions
- Clear collections profile
- The needs of museum pedagogy and hands-on activities
- Relevant use of resources (storage and exhibition costs, condition of space)
- Relevance for community and shareholders



“Deaccession has to be argued for much more than acquisition, even to one’s own colleagues. It is still regarded as a failure, loss or unprofessionalism.”

Survey on deaccession procedures, 2014.



STARTING POINTS

- TAKO-The national network for collecting and documenting
 - More information? Teemu Ahola, head of collections, Museum Center Vapriikki, Tampere
 - Email: teemu.ahola@tampere.fi
- Finna-portal for Finnish memory organisations
<https://www.finna.fi/?lng=en-gb>
- Survey on deaccessioning procedures

Funding and support:

Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, Finnish Museums Association, The National Board of Antiquities, The National Museum of Finland, The



PROCESS FRAMEWORK

1. Limitations and possibilities for deaccessioning internalized
2. Preliminary assessment
3. Deaccessioning assessment
4. Deaccession proposal recorded and addressed
5. Deaccession proposal accepted and sent for approval
6. Positive deaccession decision approved
7. Preparation of disposal according to chosen method
8. If necessary, survey of other disposal methods permitted by the approved decision
9. Disposal carried out and documented



SUCCESSFUL DEACCESSIONING

- The collections management policy
- Full understanding of the item
- The end of a deaccessioning process



THE COLLECTIONS POLICY

“All museums should have a policy defining authorized methods for permanently removing an object from the collections”.

ICOM Code of Ethics Article 2.15

DEACCESSIONING WITH REFERENCE TO COLLECTIONS POLICY AT HELSINKI CITY MUSEUM



Left: A tiled stove in Helsinki City Hall before dismantling in 1967. Above: Conservator and museum technician at the beginning of the inventory. Photo Jaana Maijala/HCM.



ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Collections policy:

- The municipal organization of the City of Helsinki
- Local businesses
- The life of the residents

Criteria:

- The maker of the stoves
- The designer or architect
- The place where in use
- Type of housing
- Style history
- The condition



FULL UNDERSTANDING?

“The removal of an object or specimen from a museum collection must only be undertaken with a full understanding of the significance of the item, its character (whether renewable or non-renewable), legal standing, and any loss of public trust that might result from such action).”

ICOM Code of ethics Article 2.14.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- Loss of public trust and negative publicity
 - Ethical problems?
 - The needs of communities
- What are the consequences if we don't deaccess?



SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS

1. Representativeness
2. Authenticity
3. Historical and cultural significance
4. Experiential significance
5. Community-related significance
6. Ideal state
7. Potential utilisation and usability

Assessing Museum Collections – Collection valuation in six steps. Cultural Heritage agency, Netherlands 2014; Reed, Caroline, *Reviewing Significance 2.0.* The Collections Trust, 2012; Häyhä et al, *Merkitysanalyysimenetelmä* 2015.



PARTICIPATORY INVOLVEMENT OF TRAM ENTHUSIASTS IN HELSINKI



The Karia motor tram carriage on its first day in traffic in May 1955 and in the collection center in 2015.



HELSINGIN
KAUPUNGINMUSEO

QUESTIONS FOR VALUATION

TYPICALITY	SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE RESIDENTS	SIGNIFICANCE IN THE HISTORY OF THE CITY TRANSPORTS	EXPERIENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE
<p>Is this tram ordinary or special?</p> <p>Special innovations?</p> <p>Does the collection include several similar trams?</p>	<p>How long was this tram model in use?</p> <p>Are/were there many similar trams in the city?</p>	<p>Is this tram associated with some important stage of tramway traffic in Helsinki?</p>	<p>Why do you find this tram interesting?</p> <p>Is there a specific tram or tram model that is more important for you?</p> <p>Do you have a story you would like to tell?</p>



CLASSIFICATION OF UTILITY TEXTILES IN THE TEXTILE COLLECTIONS OF TAMPERE MUSEUMS



CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

- Why and how has the object been included in the collection?
- Contextual information?
- Other objects of similar type in the collections?
- Typicality?
- Special features (eg. the manufacturing technique?)
- Condition of the object?
- Possible hands-on use?
- What would be a suitable number of dresses or curtains to represent different fashions and life styles in the collections?



673 dresses

-> 270 deaccessioned objects

-> 100 to hands-on collection

600 window curtains

-> 250 deaccessioned objects

-> 100 to hands-on collection

6000 tablecloths

-> 3000 deaccessioned objects

-> 500 to hands-on collection

-> 2 500 used as material

A textile project for elderly people with a decorated fence in a park as result. Photo Anne-Mari Lehto/TM.



THE PROCESS NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED

“A thorough deaccessioning process will have the result that deaccessioning needs will be recorded but there will be no time to carry out deaccessioning. The deaccessioning decision can require much more time than cataloguing an object”.

Survey on deaccession procedures, 2014.

WHAT METHOD OF DISPOSAL HAVE BEEN APPLIED IN YOUR MUSEUM (SEVERAL METHODS USED IN EVERY MUSEUM)?

- Destroying 89 %
- Internal transfers (hands-on collection, exhibit props) 77 %
- Transfer to another museum 48 %
- Utilization as material (conservation, spare parts, museum pedagogy) 23 %
- Recycle?
- Sale?

EMPTYING STORAGE FACILITIES AND RECYCLING AT THE MUSEUM OF TECHNOLOGY



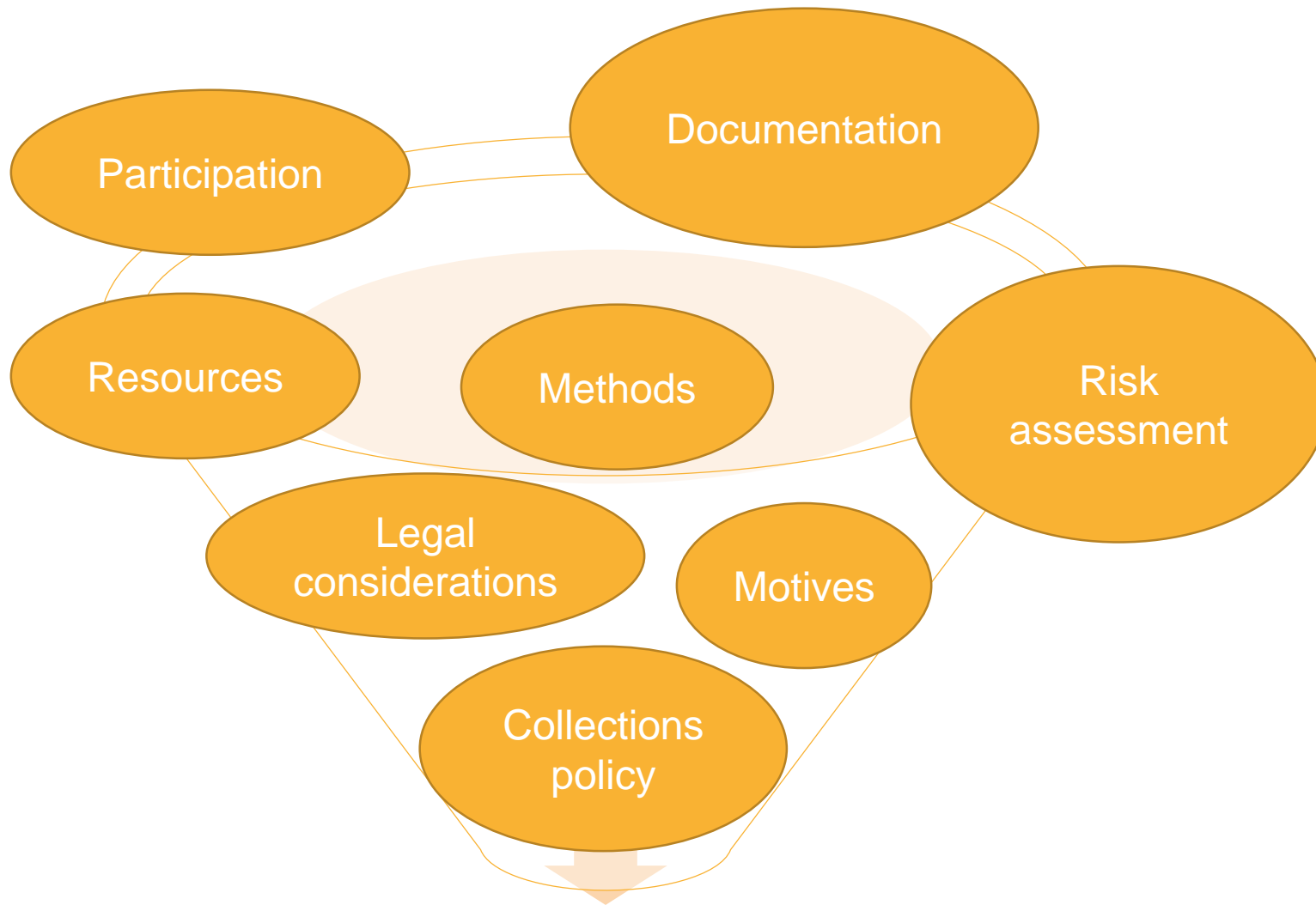
500 objects = 14 tons of wastemetal. Museum of Technology.



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SALE OF COLLECTIONS? MARKET VALUE CONTRA MUSEUM VALUE





Ethical deaccessioning, significant collections and a happy community



Thank you!

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CITY MUSEUM