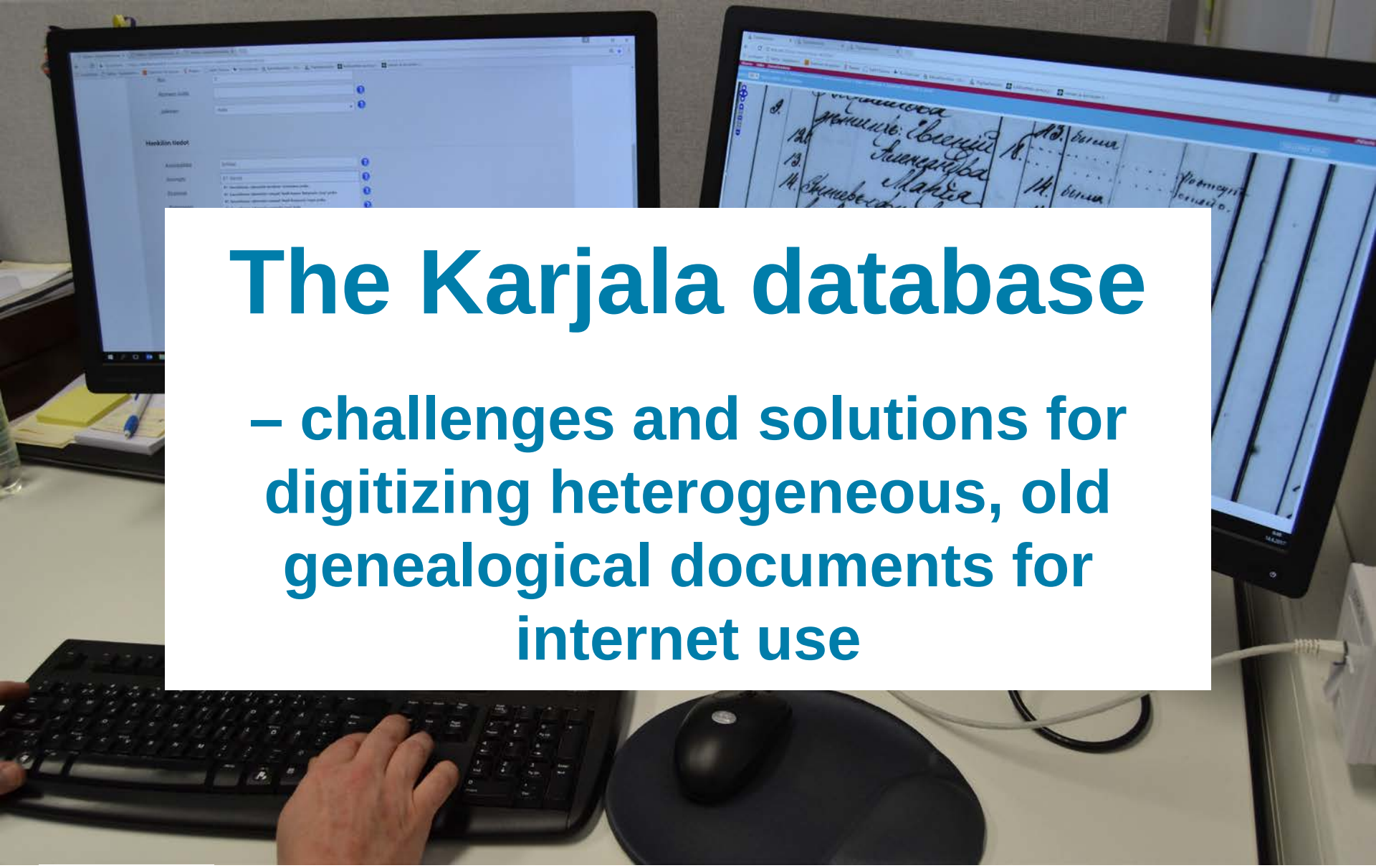


The Karjala database

– challenges and solutions for digitizing heterogeneous, old genealogical documents for internet use

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

IFLA Satellite Meeting 2017: Digital Humanities
15 – 17 August Berlin

XAMK
South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences

Authors

- Jarmo Saarti, Library director, PhD
  jarmo.saarti@uef.fi
- Jari Ropponen, Project Manager, M.A.
  jari.ropponen@xamk.fi
- Satu Soivanen, RDI Advisor, M. Sc. (Econ.)
  satu.soivanen@xamk.fi

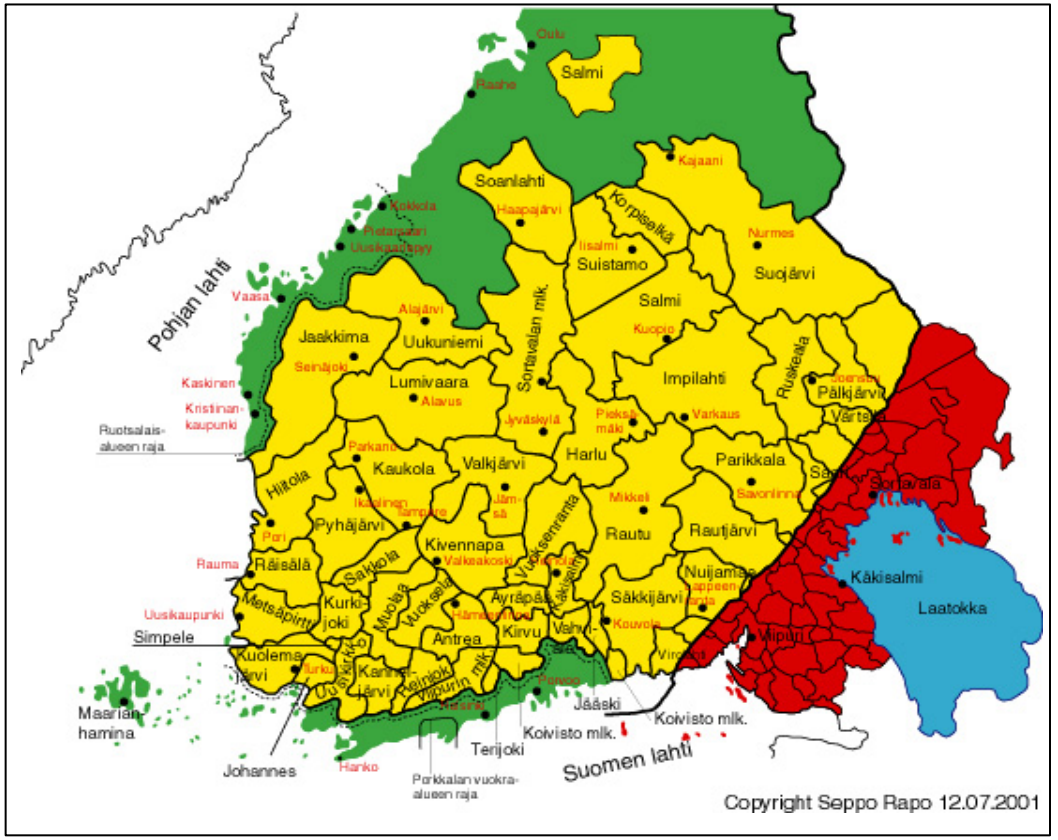
UNIVERSITY OF
EASTERN FINLAND

South-Eastern Finland
University of Applied Sciences

What is ceded Karelia

- Because of the wars, about 410 000 people from Karelia had to move to other parts of Finland

- Finland had to cede Karelia to the Soviet Union as a result of the Paris Peace Treatment in 1947

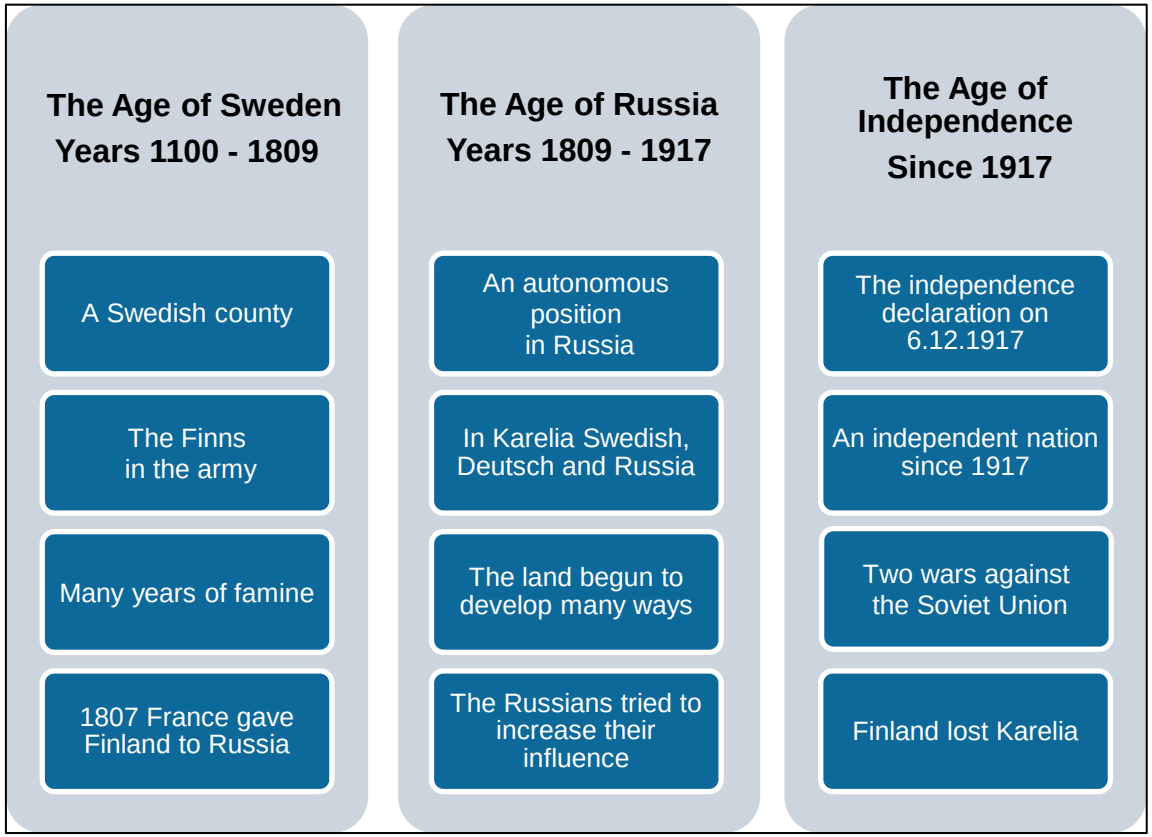


UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences

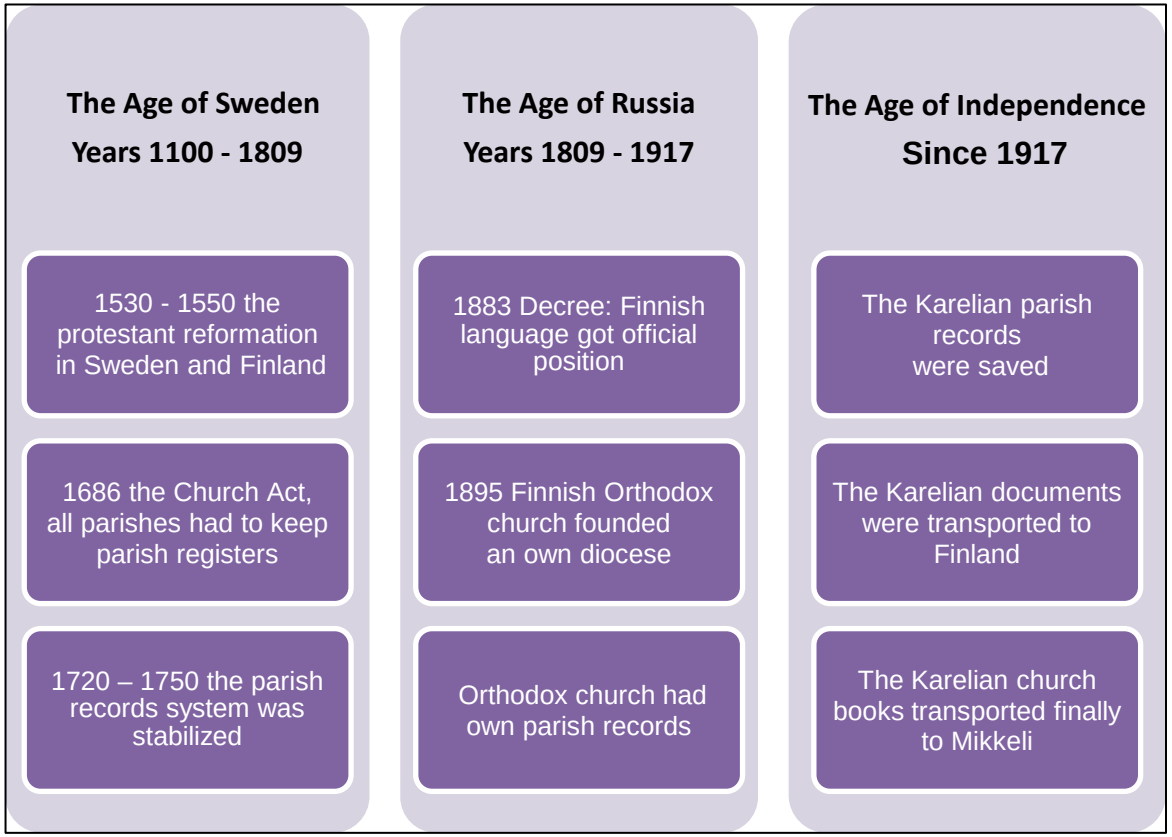
Backgroud of the documents digitized

- The Swedish regime begun 12th century
- Finland got an autonomous position in Russia in years 1809-1917
- An independent nation since 1917
- Finland lost Karelia after two wars against the Soviet Union



Functions in the parish life of Finland

- The Church Act 1686, the parishes had to keep registers
- The parish records since 18th century
  - Births Records
  - Marriage Records
  - Death Records
  - Records of Migrations
  - Catechetical Lists
  - Lists of Children
- The evacuation of the Karelian church books finished to Mikkeli



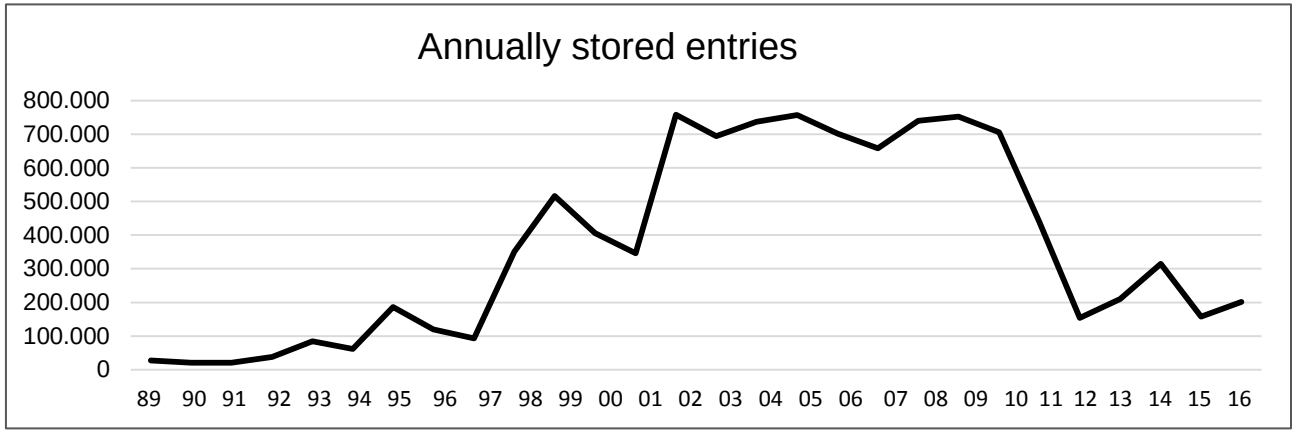
UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

XAMK
South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences

Resources for the database project

- The annual sum of workers was over 30 in 2005-2010, together already 600 workers

- The annual sum of data entries was about 700 000 in 2002-2010, by now 10.3 million entries digitized

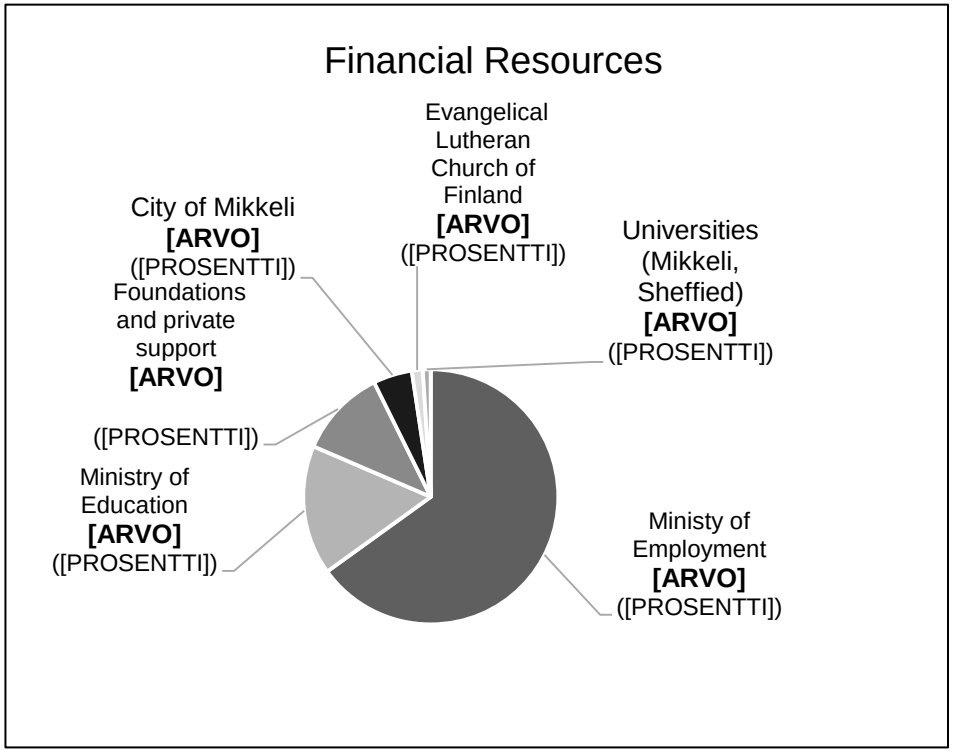


UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences

The financial recources of the project

- The Karjala database project has got support since 1988, the sum of money will grow up nearly to 9 million euros by the end of 2019.
- The main sponsor is the government, the support of the ministries of Employment and Education is about 82 % of the funds

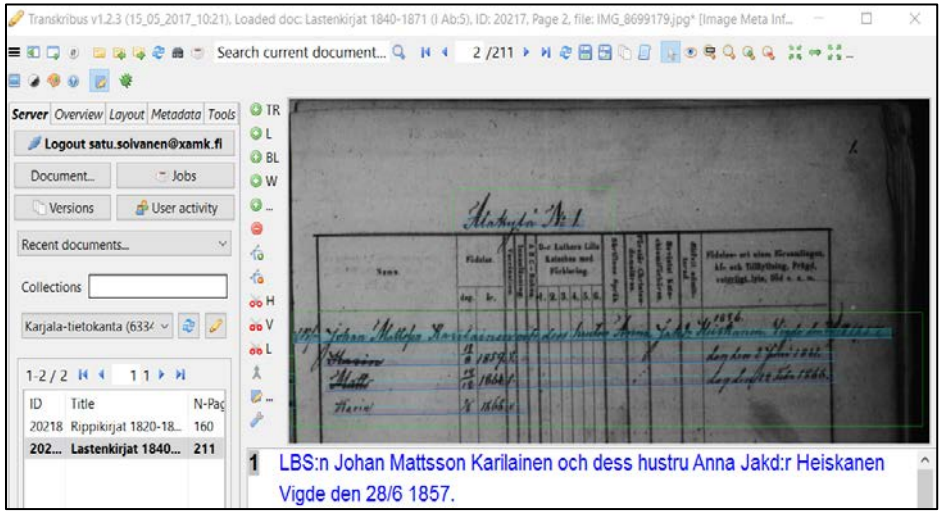


UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

XAMK South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences

The difficults of recording parish records

- The scripts varies from time to time and from parish to parish
- Several languages – Swedish, Finnish, Russian, Latin, German
- The church registers are handwritten with ink and a pen, the texts are difficult to read



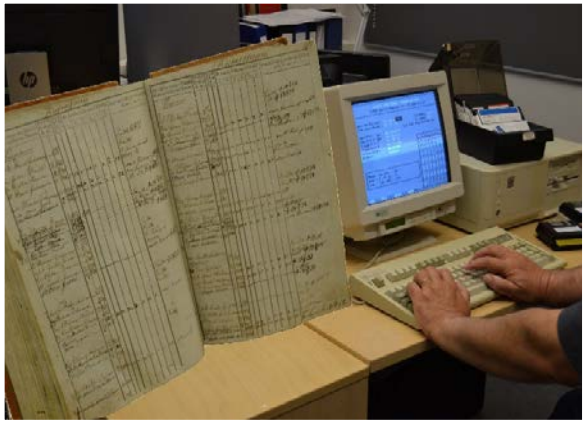
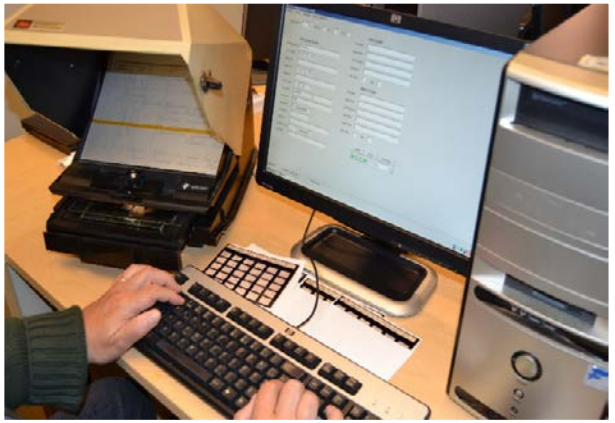
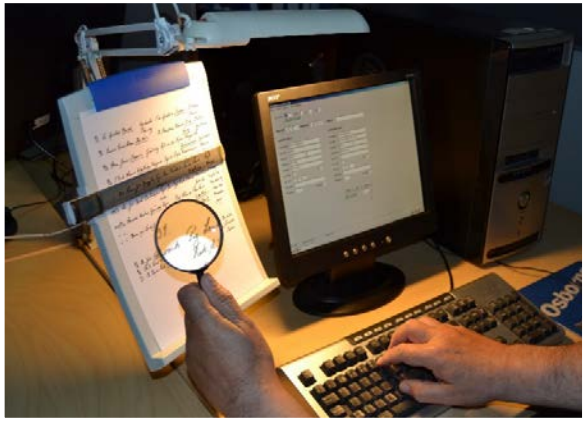
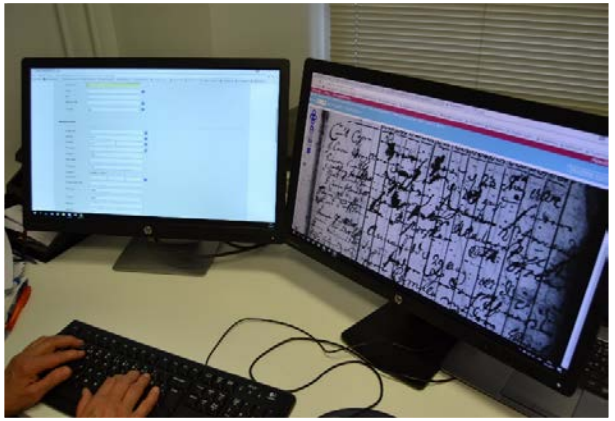
- To help the reading of these old handwritten records, we have begun to examine if it is possible to exploit the international READ (Recognition and Enrichment of Archival Documents) –project.

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences

Digitization process

- The data was stored from the original books (1988-1991)
- The source material was on microfilms (1992-2010)
- The handwritten copies of the parish registers were used (2011-2012)
- The source material is on internet (2013-)

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

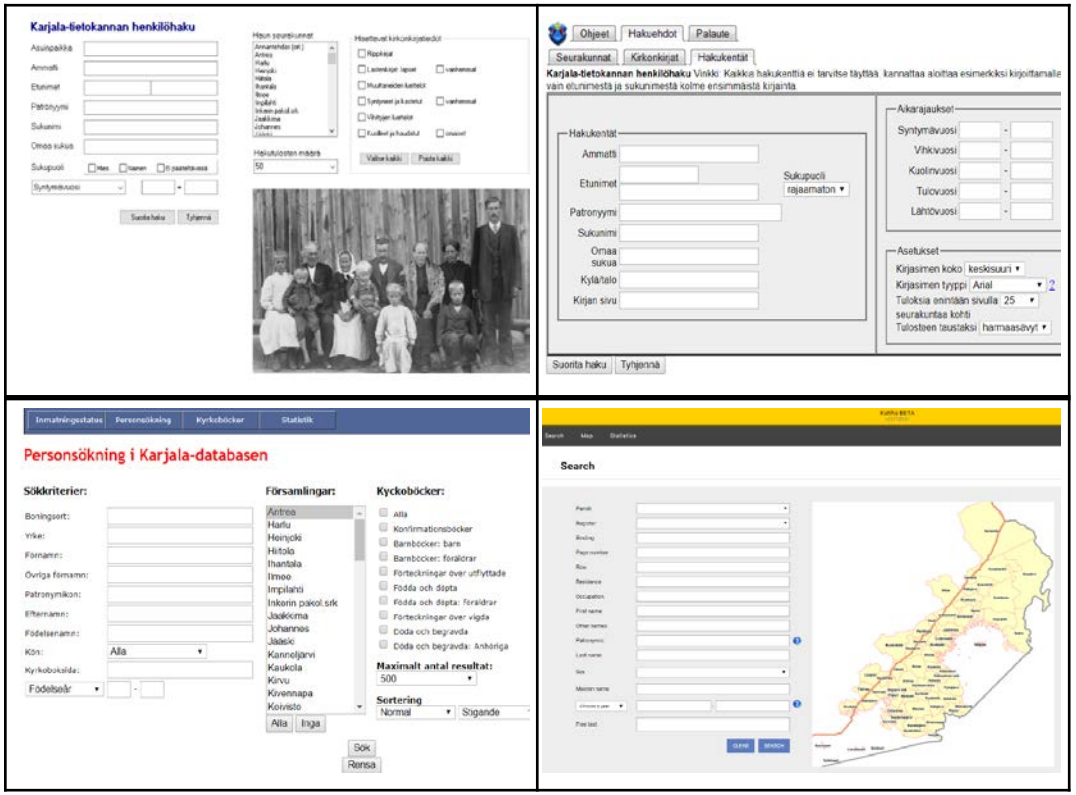
XAMK
South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences

Database for research and information use

- Migration study — Loehr, John: Learning from our past – The effect of forced migration from Karelia on family life. http://human-life-history.science/learning-our-past-effect-forced-migration-karelia-family-life
- Human life history — Pettay J, Lahdenperä M, Rotkirch A, Lummaa V: ”Costly reproductive competition between co-resident females in humans”. Behavioral Ecology 27 (6):1601-1608. (2016) https://academic.oup.com/beheco/article-lookup/doi/10.1093/beheco/arw088
- Genealogical research — Malmi, Eric: AncestryAI is an application which uses machine learning to infer family trees and enables visualizing and searching the inferred trees. https://users.aalto.fi/~emalmi/ancestryai_www.pdf

Technical evolution of the database

- The Karjala database was made with dBase program and the User Interface (UI) for Windows was ready in 2004 (UI with a picture)
- The first internet version was created in 2008 (UI with sheet tabs)
- The second net version was made in 2013 (UI also in Swedish)
- The modern net version was developed in 2015 (UI also in English)



https://katiha.mamk.fi/User.action?addLocale=en
The Karjala database access

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

XAMK
South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences

Thank You

www.uef.fi

www.xamk.fi