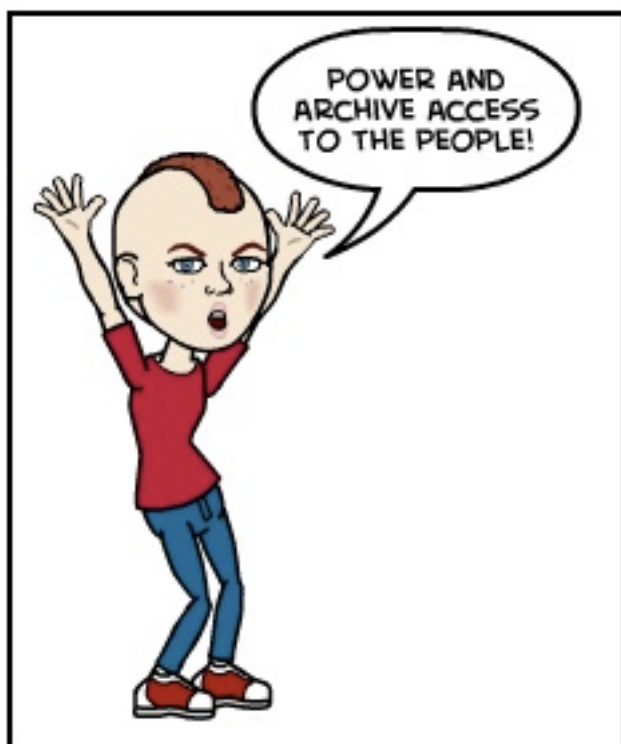


# Photographic archive in contemporary cross-pressure



Maria Virtanen & Sofia Lahti,  
curators of collections  
The Finnish Museum of  
Photography

**Kræsj! Brytninger i fotoarkivet**  
Landskonferanse fotobevaring  
Oslo 5<sup>th</sup> May 2014

THE FINNISH MUSEUM OF **PHOTOGRAPHY**

**A mini-drama**  
**Featuring:**



**Olivia the Open Data  
Activist**



**Mikael from the  
Ministry of Culture**



**Paula the Photographer**



**Henrik the History  
Enthusiast**

**...and last but not least:**



**Maria-Sofia the Museum Curator**

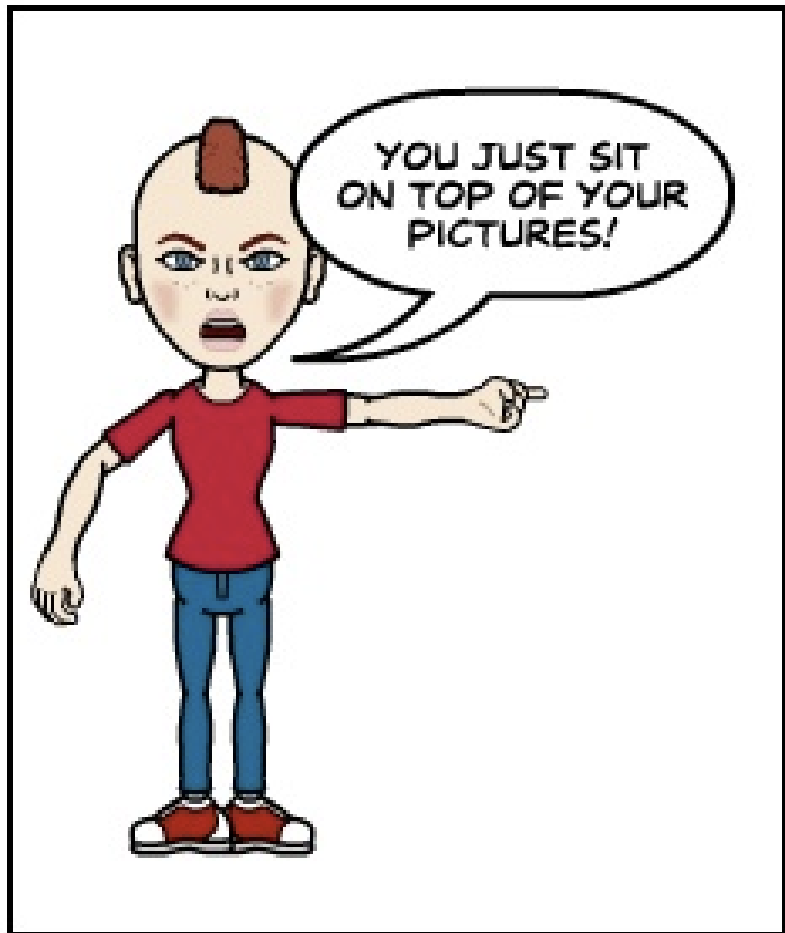
# Henrik the History Enthusiast gets to open the conversation



He is searching images for his blog with history theme and wondering:

*Why are digital images from a photo archive not free to download and use, although there is other kind of digital heritage available for free?*

# Olivia the Open Data Activist supports Henrik



**She is annoyed:**

***Exactly! That's the question. Why is the Museum not giving people free access to the digitized visual heritage?***

# Maria-Sofia, the curator, hears the word “museum” mentioned



**She joins the  
conversation:**

*Thousands of  
images are there  
for you. You can  
browse them for  
free.*

# Browsing is not good enough fo Henrik – he wants to use the images



He also has other  
reasons to be  
dissatisfied:

*But they are so small  
files! And what about  
those awful  
watermarks that you  
put on top of the  
pictures!*



## Maria-Sofia tries to offer a solution:



*If you need bigger files, you can buy them. And only some, not all, of the museums use watermarks.*

# Buying is not an option for Henrik



He is able to find the images elsewhere:

*There's plenty of free photographs online. I refuse to pay for the use of the images. If your images are just for sale, I don't need them!*

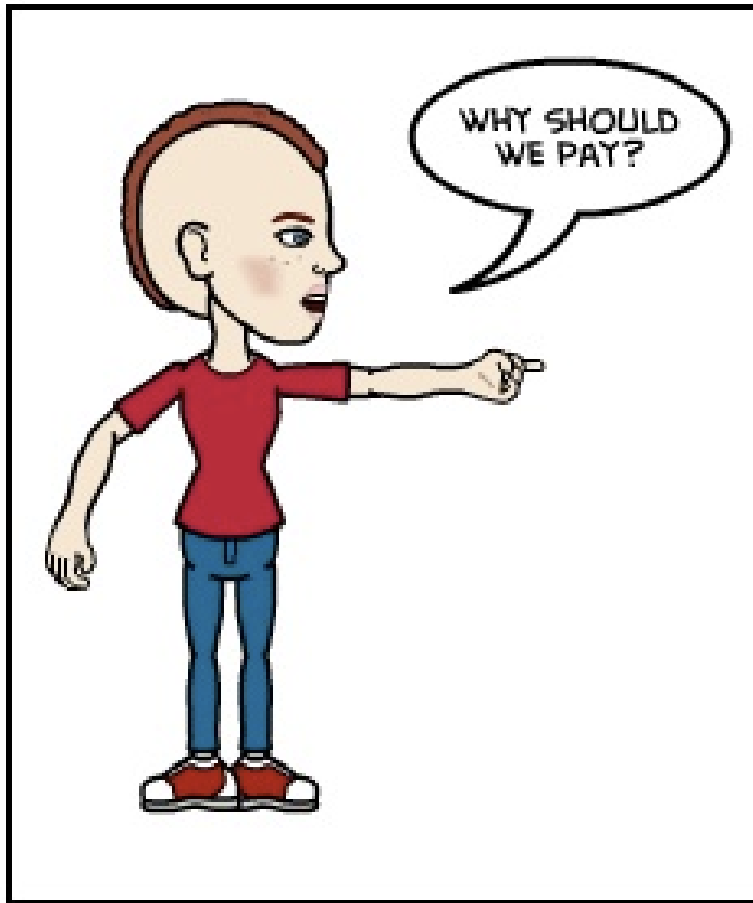
# Maria-Sofia points out why museums need to make income



...for example by selling images:

*Preserving, storing, conservating, digitizing and cataloguing don't happen by themselves: they take time and money, too.*

# Olivia the Open Data Activist is not convinced



**She wants to know what the museums are for:**

***But isn't that your duty to take care of our common heritage? And don't you get public funding to do exactly that?***

# Maria-Sofia agrees with Olivia



**...but it is not that simple:**

***Yes, taking care of the heritage is our duty. But museums are expected to create some of their income by themselves. Selling image services to customers is part of that. Isn't this so, Mikael?***

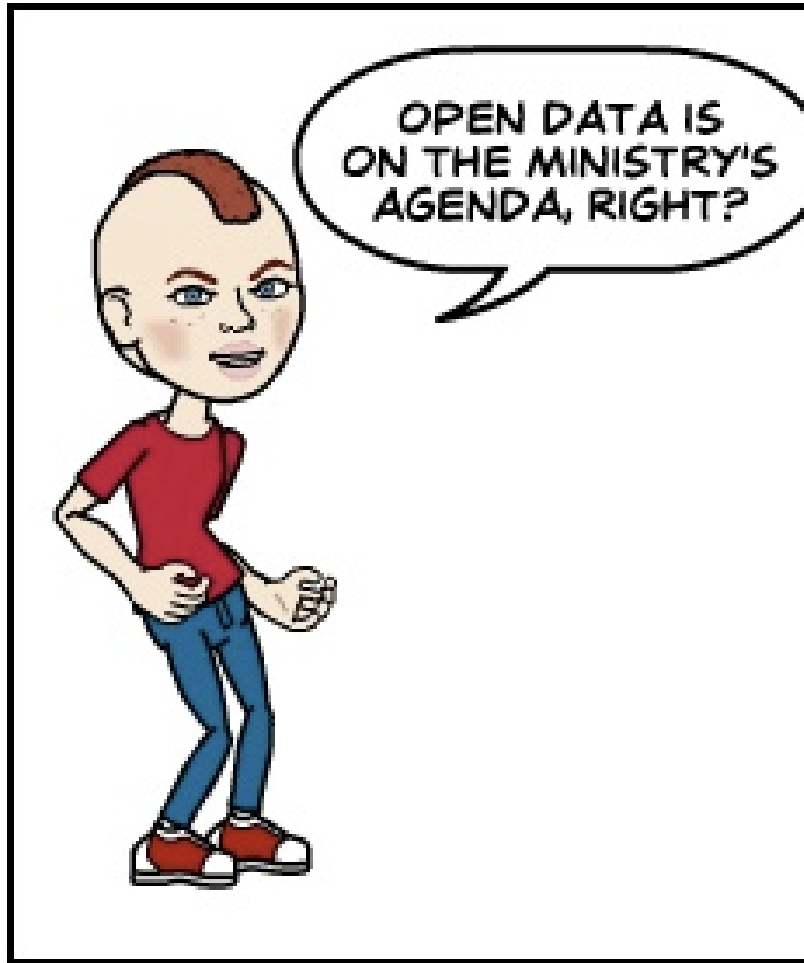
# Maria-Sofia turns to Mikael from the Ministry of Culture:



**Mikael admits that Maria-Sofia has a point, but....**

***Yes, we expect museums to be at least partly responsible of raising their own funds. But we don't specify how they should do it. Sponsors maybe?***

# Olivia also has something to say to Mikael



...about  
government's  
program:

*Isn't it also on the  
Government's official  
agenda to promote  
open data?*

## Mikael tells that Olivia is right :



*Yes, you are right. Our policy recommends open data to boost the economical growth. We also hope museums will use their resources for this.*



# Maria-Sofia has mixed feelings

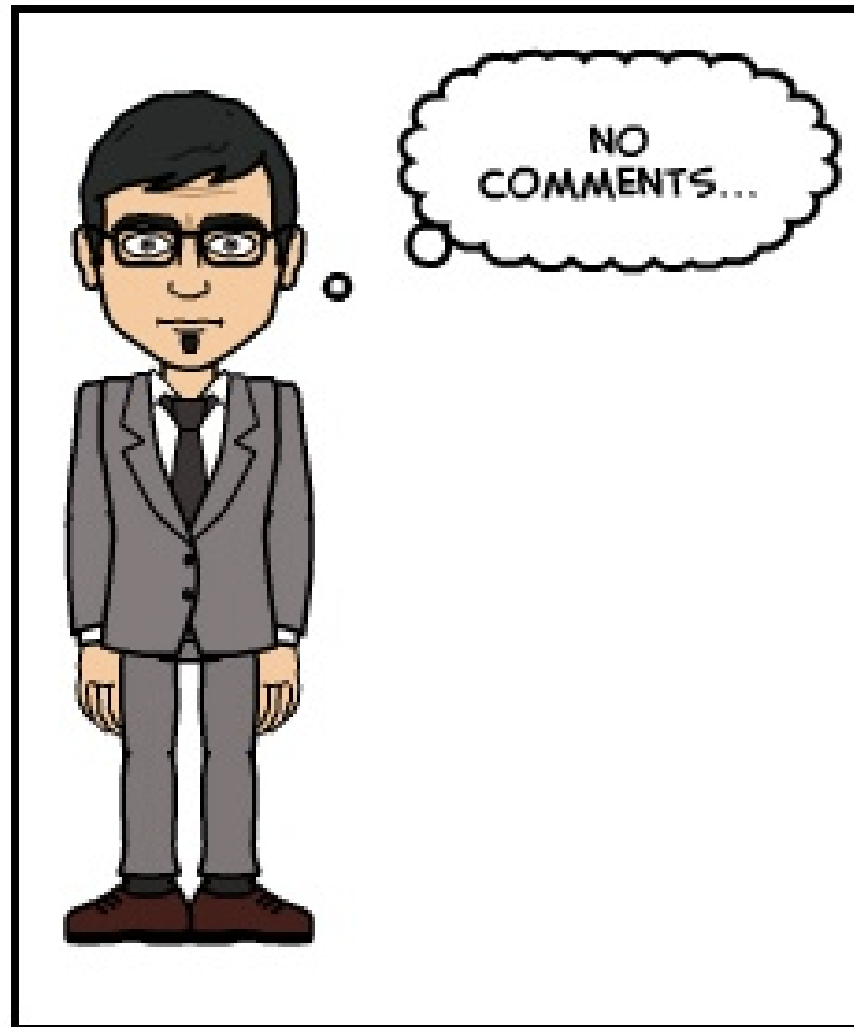


She thinks to herself:

*You expect us to make miracles without any budget!*

But she also has nothing against the open digital heritage:

*We believe in the open data too. We try to do our best.*



# For Olivia, this is a question of power



*People have the right to make their own interpretations of history by using the materials from the archives. By keeping the materials behind paywall or even digitally inaccessible, you restrict that power.*

# Maria-Sofia reminds



...about the legal issues:

*You have a point there. But museums have responsibilities towards the images and their makers, too. We must respect copyrights and third-party rights.*

# Olivia is aware of the legal issues



But what about the use of images with no known copyright restrictions:

*Museums are so overprotective with their materials, it seems as if the worst-case scenario for them would be to have people using their archives!*

## Maria-Sofia repeats that things are complicated:



*Of course we want our archives to be used! We are keeping and digitizing them for the people. But it isn't always simple. The laws are complicated, and we have different kinds of agreements.*

# Paula the Photographer joins the conversation



She has lately been worried about her copyrights:

*I'm glad to hear that somebody remembers the copyright. I'm trying to make my living, and I think I deserve a payment when my pictures are used.*

# Maria-Sofia agrees but reminds



...that there are images with no copyright restrictions:

*Indeed. The only kind of pictures we could release for open use are the ones free of copyright restrictions.*



# Maria-Sofia is a bit depressed



But she is starting to have ideas:

*Argh! Nobody understands me! I want to release images even if it's complicated. Why don't we try taking small steps first?*

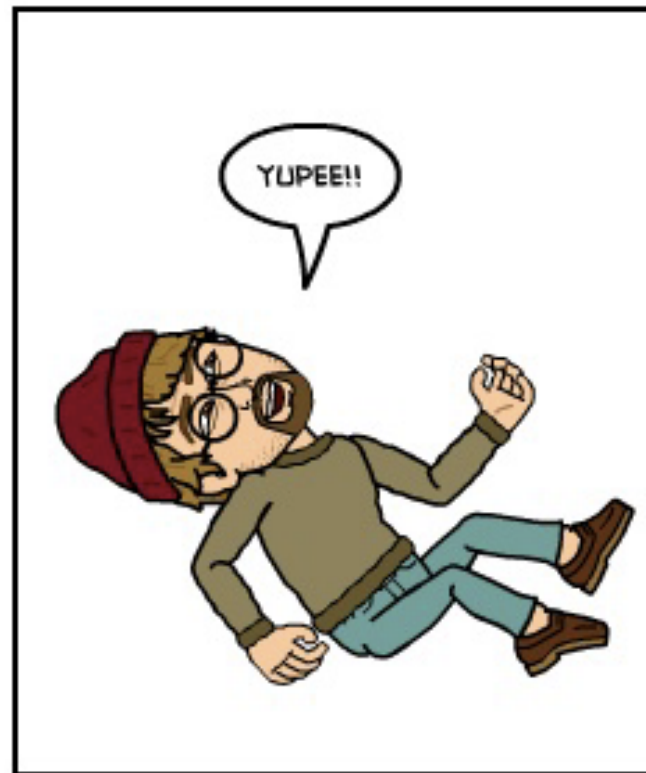
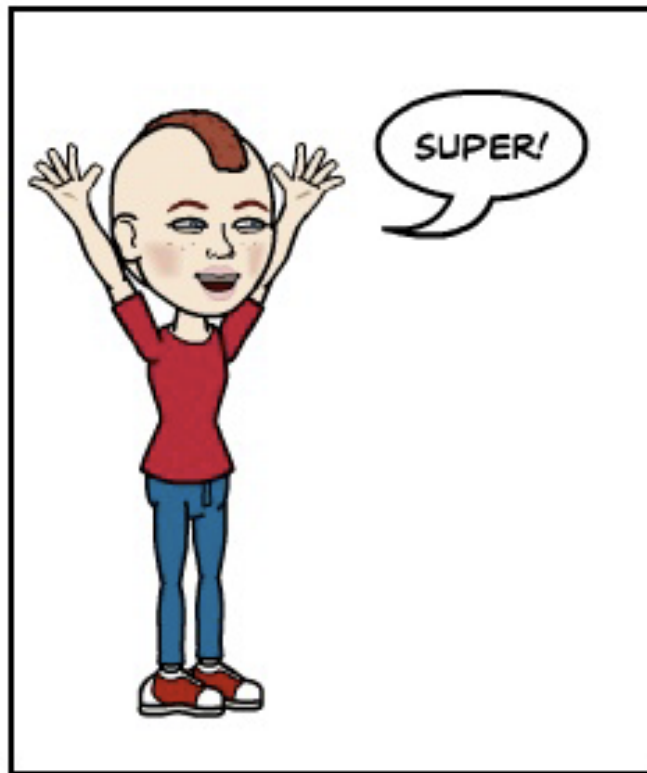
# A couple of months later Maria-Sofia returns



She has news:

*We have released a set of old photographs online. Check out our museum's new Flickr photostream! We are even taking part in Flickr Commons.*

# Olivia and Henrik are pleased



# Paula is not pleased at all



Museum has made  
available large files - and  
that is not all:

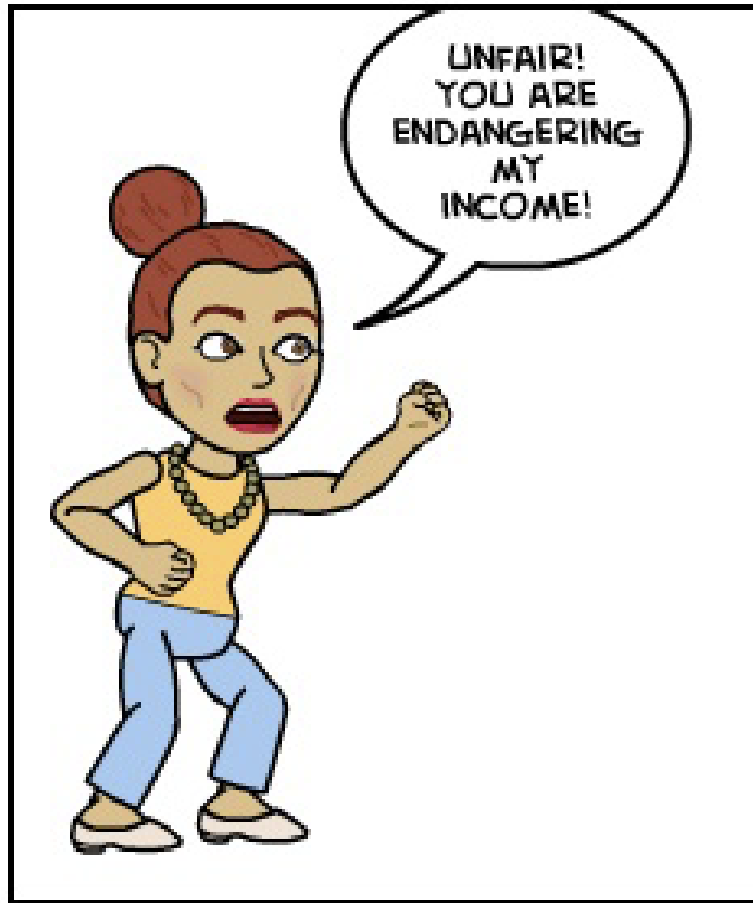
*What are you thinking?!  
Free use even for  
commercial purposes?  
Can't you see that this is  
our national heritage!  
Somebody could take  
advantage of them!*

# Allowing commercial use is nothing new to Maria-Sofia's museum



*Pictures have always been available for commercial use, too. They have just been sold for a fee.*

# Paula has a feeling that something unfair is done:



*You are endangering my income and sabotaging the competition by giving valuable pictures away for free! Now nobody wants to pay for professional photographs anymore.*

# Maria-Sofia claims free images are for everyone



And even Paula is welcome to use them:

*Relax! Paula, these old photographs are not your rivals. You can use them, too, to create something new – even commercially, if you want!*

# **Maria-Sofia's museum has taken the first steps in opening up the digital heritage**

## **Next steps may be:**

- releasing images with different kinds of rights statuses at the user interface of the National Digital Library in Finland (using different kinds of Creative Commons licenses)**
- involving and engaging the audiences: crowdsourcing, educational programs, co-curating**

**The journey in digital waters is continuing.**



**Thank you!**

**And thank you [www.bitstrips.com](http://www.bitstrips.com) (for cartoons for non-commercial purposes).**

**Questions or comments?**

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