

FROM GENERAL THESAURUS TO GENERAL ONTOLOGY

Experiences from the National Library of Finland

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NATIONAL LIBRARY THESAURI

The National Library of Finland is responsible for the development and updating of four Finnish thesauri:

- **YSA** (Yleinen suomalainen asiasanasto)
 - Finnish General Thesaurus
- **Allärs** (Allmän tesaurus på svenska)
 - Swedish translation of YSA
- **MUSA** (Musiikin asiasanasto)
 - Finnish Music Thesaurus
- **CILLA** (Specialtesaurus för musik)
 - Swedish translation of MUSA



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PRODUCTION OF GENERAL THESAURI

- The development of general thesauri is a mandate of the National Library
- Swedish versions produced in co-operation with the Åbo Akademi Library
- YSA in use since 1987
- Allärs in use since 1996



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USE OF GENERAL THESAURI

- **Current use:**
 - over 12.5 million terms searched per year
 - YSA nearly 9 million
 - Allärs over 3 million
- **Not only libraries but widely used also by other organisations**
 - e.g. The national government document metadata standard (JHS 143) recommends the use of YSA in the <DC:Subject> field



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MAINTENANCE AND ACCESS

- The general thesauri are maintained within the ILS
 - Authority records within the National Bibliography and Discography databases
 - MARC authority format
- Access to authority records separate
 - First: Thesaurus CD-ROM
 - Currently: separate search database (non-standard)
 - Future: fully integrated ontology library server ?



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CO-OPERATION PROJECT

- The National Semantic Web Ontology Project in Finland (FinnONTO), 2003-2007
- NLF a partner since 2004
- NLF has provided
 - the basic data (YSA terms)
 - also expertise in the development and testing of the General Upper Ontology and the ontology server
- Will continue within the National Semantic Web 2.0 project (2008-2010)



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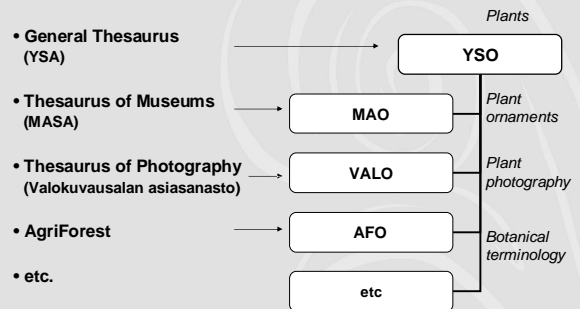
YSA to YSO : WHY?

- *"So, it's a blueprint of the world, is it?"*
- **Need for a general upper ontology to serve as "semantic glue" for special ontologies**
 - Rough estimate: one third of the terms in special ontologies overlap with general terms
- **The general thesaurus provided the basic terms for building a general ontology**



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THESAURI to ONTOLOGIES



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NEXT STEPS

NLF main interests for the project period 2008-2010:

- **General Upper Ontology**
 - analysis of feedback > revisions
 - calibration of YSA and YSO > implementation of new YSA terms
 - reconstruction of Swedish version
- **Development of integrated ontology server**
 - further development of user interface and APIs
- **Securing assets for ongoing maintenance and development after the project phase**



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Asiasana (en): thanks
Asiasana (fi): kiitokset
Asiasana (sv): tacksägelser



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