How We Killed Our Most-Loved Service and No One Batted an Eye

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Replacing a well-loved service

- First, we did it the wrong way
  - Don't do it like we did!
- Then, we did it the right way
  - Do it like we did it!

The General Finnish Thesaurus YSA

- National Library's General Finnish thesaurus YSA was/is the most used thesaurus in Finland
    - Developed originally in the 1980's mainly for book indexing
        - Used in the indexing of the national bibliography
    - Monolingual, has a swedish equivalent Allärs
    - Structure tied to MARC21-format, for example use of MARC-subdivisions

VESA

- A dedicated site for browsing YSA and its Swedish-language counterpart Allärs
    - Also included the music domain thesaurus MUSA/Cilla

VESA

VESA

- Built in the 90s
  - Users were very used to it
- Single-purpose
  - Very functional design
  - Very fast
- Consistently our most-loved service in user surveys
  - No improvements needed!

VESA

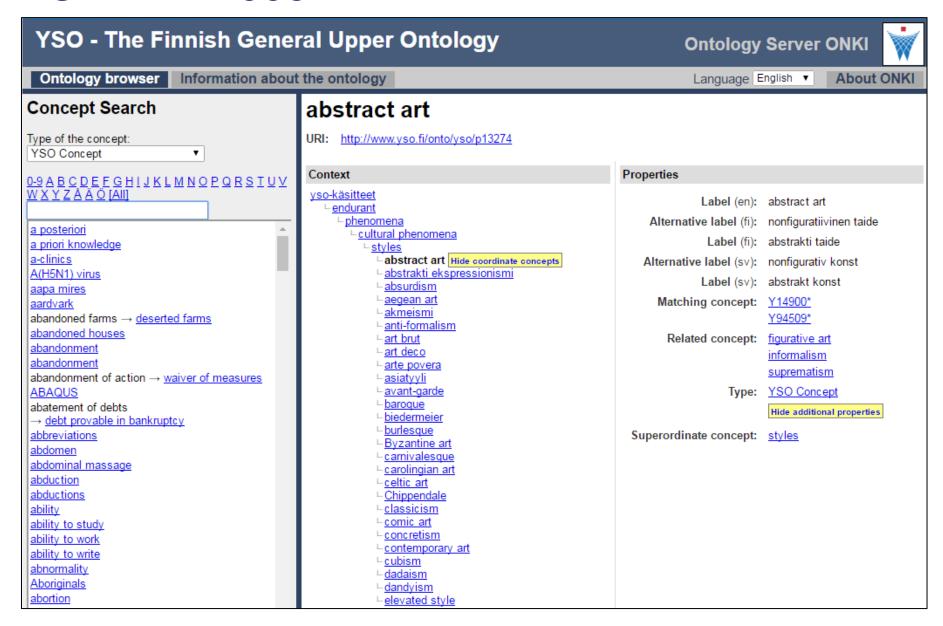- Started in 1999
  - Users were very used to it
- Single-purpose
  - Very functional design
  - Very fast
- Consistently our most-loved service in user surveys
  - No improvements needed!
    - Except that there was no proper support for linked data, no APIs in order to integrate the vocabularies into other systems, and the ancient software was more and more difficult to maintain

ONKI

- A general thesaurus and ontology service
  - Developed in the FinnONTO research project
    - Aalto University and University of Helsinki
- Several aims
  - Ability to handle moderately complex OWL ontologies as well as thesauri and classifications
  - APIs to allow integration into annotation and search systems
  - Part of the larger national linked data infrastructure
- From YSA to YSO (General Finnish Ontology)
  - From terms to concepts (identified with URIs)
  - A complete is-a hierarchy
  - Multilingual (Finnish, Swedish, English)
  - Machine-understandable semantics

ONKI1 - 2008

ONKI2 - 2010

ONKI3 - 2011

ONKI – weak points

- Designed by engineers for engineers
  - The design was refined over the versions to more accommodate the needs of the annotators
- A research prototype
  - Proof of concept
  - Not very reliable
    - Reliability isn't important for research
- Slated to replace VESA in 2011
  - Pulled back because of user feedback

Finto

- A project to build a production version of ONKI
    - 2013 ->
    - National Library of Finland
    - Funded by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Culture and Education

Finto - 2013

User groups

VESA - verkkosanasto/webbtesaurus

User group: (Annota-tors) → (End users)

finto Finnish Thesaurus and Ontology Service

User groups: (Vocabulary developers) → (Annota-tors) → (Application developers) → (End users)

Design principles

- Finto must be reliable and fast
- No extra workload for the annotators
- A lot of emphasis on usability
    - Tests with professionals
- Deep collaboration with people with real annotation experience
    - Several people in the project group
    - Active participation in the design
- Dug up information based on the VESA logs
    - An example finding: many users search for terms with the singular

User testing

- A limited pool of possible test subjects
  - Professional annotators are not very common
    - Various sub-categories
      - Books vs museum artefacts vs health documents
      - Finnish vs Swedish vs both
      - Annotation as main work vs annotation as auxiliary work
- Thorough planning
  - When to test?
  - Who to test with?

Test set ups

- Tests done on the test subject's own computer in their own office
- Tasks
    - An ordinary annotation task
        - Using their usual set-up
        - Using Finto
    - A specifically set up annotating a book with key concepts that are not present in the annotation vocabulary as is but that require the use of the search interface
        - Using Finto
- Recorded
    - Observations
    - Questionnaire
    - General interview

System Usability Scale

- The System Usability Scale (SUS) provides a light-weight tool for measuring usability
  - Ten questions
    - I think that I would like to use this system frequently.
    - I found the system unnecessarily complex.
    - Etc.
  - Score of 1-100 with 68 being average

Results

System	ONKI3	Finto test 1	Finto test 2	Finto test 3
Average	48	80	80	76

Patient long-term communication

- Presentations in various forums
- Emphasizing the fact that the user should get no extra workload
- New possibilities and general interoperability with systems outside of the library domain
- Full support for multilinguality
- A long countdown to the end
  - Once we were absolutely sure of Finto's performance

New features

- Modular design allows for additional features
    - Integration into the Finna search and access service to museum, archive, and library materials
- Suggestions system for new concepts and changes to existing ones
    - Originally done through email

Suggestions system

Uuden käsitteen ehdottaminen

| YSAn ja YSOn käsite-ehdotuslomake | suomeksi | på svenska |

Selaa ehdotuksia | Ehdota uutta käsitettä | Ehdota muutosta käsitteeseen

* merkityt kohdat ovat pakollisia.   Näytä ohje

Tyyppi: Käsite

Päätermi/asiasana: *

Termi ruotsiksi

Termi englanniksi:

Vaihtoehtoiset termit ja ilmaisut:

Yläkäsite YSOssa (LT): Hae käsitettä

Alakäsitteet (ST): Hae käsitettä

Assosiatiiviset (RT): Hae käsitettä

YSA/YSO temaattinen ryhmä: * Valitse ryhmä(t) listalta
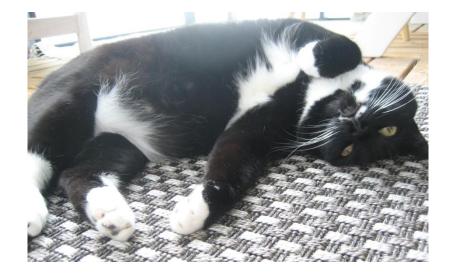
Suggestions system

- A simple web form codifying the necessary fields
  - A star rating for the suggestions – more fields filled, more stars
- Each suggestion opens an issue in GitHub
  - Allows for commenting on the suggestions
  - Powerful search tools
- Suggestions also go into a "suggestions vocabulary" in Finto where you can use them straight away
  - If the suggestion is accepted into the vocabulary, the URI stays
  - If it is not accepted, the URI is given a dct:isReplacedBy relation to a suitable other concept

Suggestions system

- Makes the work transparent
- Makes the suggestions easier to process but also makes sending them more streamlined
- Loved by the developers

The death of VESA

- VESA was finally unplugged in the beginning of 2016
  - Zero negative feedback

Thank you! Questions?

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