

PEER REVIEWED ARTICLE

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Examining the use of core terms in a records appraisal context – two Swedish examples

ABSTRACT

Records appraisal in the digital environment becomes a multi-professional enterprise, undertaken in the line of business, in which non-archivists play a vital role, but appraisal practices are not adjusted to this electronic reality. One aspect of this problem is the use and understanding of terminology. This paper presents a study on the usage of records-related terms in steering documents that affect records appraisal in Sweden. It uses a structured model for the analysis of steering documents. Used data sources are authoritative term databases and terminology report and steering documents from the three levels of regulations, i.e. Legislation and Regulations, Policy decisions and Instructions and Retention decisions steering documents from the Swedish National Archives and Stockholm City Archives, both archival authorities within their jurisdictions. The steering documents represents levels of hierarchical impact and are the foundations upon which appraisal is done and effectuated. Analysis of term frequency show change in vocabulary at level of hierarchy as well as development in time. Analysis of focus, characteristics and common features in definitions of terms show a variety of possible interpretations of the included terms, a result that affects appraisal and underpins a need for common corporate understanding in areas with multi-professional influences. The paper concludes that legal terms have impact on term use at regulation level, which lessens at lower levels, where vocabulary broadens. Difference is found between the two archival institutions studied, especially at decision level. Analysis of focus, characteristics and common features in definitions of terms show a variety of possible interpretations of the included terms, a result that affects appraisal and underpins a need for common corporate understanding in areas with multi-professional influences. An action suggested to mitigate risk is to form Communities of Practice for the task of records appraisal. One part of the task for these communities should be to agree upon shared concepts on used terminology that support electronic records appraisal. This would be a step where everyone involved develop a solid ground for the setting of the scope of appraisal. The idea of introducing

Communities of Practice for the records and archives appraisal task is wider than the subject of this article, and should be further developed.

Key words: Archival terminology, Records related concepts, Appraisal, Records appraisal, Archives, Records management.

Introduction

The problem in focus for this paper is a risk of erosion in value of completeness in the electronic archive, caused by archival paper thinking in the digitalized office environment. For archival control of records and archives formation, terminology impinges on the result.

Misunderstandings, miscommunication and lack of knowledge in appraisal issues can deprive the archive of value, as records, showing business activities and results are not included in the formal process of appraisal and retention decisions as the initial phases of appraisal process and decisions are not included in the formal process.

In the course of digitalization of the public sector, an enormous amount of records in electronic information systems sets organizations at risk of losing control over what is captured and kept in archives. Records appraisal is a basic and necessary process that forms the electronic archive by selection of what is created, captured and retained. Appraisal decisions involve several aspects of records value and use, such as evidential, informational and contextual values. In practice appraisal involves people in different roles in an organization. People involved in setting up business systems using IT, autonomous systems included, and people working in them are those that build and delimit the archive by making decisions on what is included and what is excluded. The question of appraisal is present throughout the workflow of records management when decisions are made that concerns status, classification and retention of records. The act of appraisal depends on how well steering documents communicates rules, regulations and guidance and these are essential to ensure that the right records are included in the scope of appraisal. Despite changes in archives formation due to digitalization, archival control of the appraisal process is normally involved only when a need for records in current business has diminished, and a wish to dispose is present.

The development of digitalization and the challenge of open data and open government, the possibilities of use and reuse of electronic records, bring the need of a wider scope in time and in function to the appraisal of electronic records and archives. The right not only to access but to use public records is stated in European laws on basis of the EU Public Sector Information (PSI) directive (Commission, 2003), the Swedish law (Svergies Riksdag, 2010) on further use of public records and the EU Inspire directive (Commission, 2007). Government statements are made across the globe as the Open Data Charter” a statement from the G7 leaders, (Group of Eight & G7, 2013). Records appraisal needs to broaden its focus from long term to “any time” perspective of value which includes access and usability (Hardiman, 2009).

In the digitalized office environment, the first occasion for appraisal is, in practice, at initiation of electronic information systems managing records (ISO International Standards Organization, 2016) (section 7.1), when the scope of appraisal is set in system-in-built processes, classification and records status included, that frames the scope of the archive. Appraisal is then repeatedly performed in business and records management activities.

In Sweden records appraisal and the formation of archives are regulated in The Freedom of the Press Act (Sveriges Riksdag, 1949) and in the Archival Act (Sveriges Riksdag, 1990) and further in ordinances and statutes. These are specified in policy documents and instructions. At executive level retention decisions are made by the archival authorities. Retention decisions and guidelines are the steering documents that communicate knowledge and understanding about appraisal, of legal requirements on recordkeeping, archival values and time perspectives and on the range of stakeholders and their needs.

Control of records management in the public sector is based on steering documents at different levels, from legislation down to final retention decisions. For the public sector in Sweden, the Archival Act (Sveriges Riksdag, 1990) determines the archive of an organization as being the sum of public records within the organization. “Public record” is the key legal term for records appraisal and it is equivalent to “archival record”. Control of archives formation is based on paper thinking (Klareld & Gidlund, 2017), not adjusted to the electronic reality of today. Differences are for example that paper records are seen as static documents with a specific shape and one creator, while electronic records have different shapes depending on function and perhaps in a multi organizational context of creation, capture and use. The appraisal decision process has not changed to adapt to the impact of digitalization. The electronic reality is however reflected in language by the use of records related terms such as information and data (Borglund & Engvall, 2014). Common understanding of records related terms used in steering documents within an organization and its partners becomes increasingly important for the scope and content of electronic archives and other electronic business systems managing records.

Control of records and archives formation in the public sector is the responsibility of archival authorities. In the path of digitalization, digitally born records are increasingly stored and preserved in e-archives. The function of paper records changes from originals to working copies and IT aspects of information systems dominate system development. In this situation archivists do not take a strategic role in the management of electronic records, which leads to a change in professional influence on a central domain of archival responsibility (Kallberg, 2013) (p21). The open data movement is an archival challenge in which archivists are not engaged (Engvall, Liang, & Anderson, 2015). This leaves a gap to fill – from a professional perspective this gap seems to be entered by technologists, system developers and system architects. As Kallberg notes; “professions that have the power to communicate the challenges identified and present solutions” will occupy the space that opens when archivists lose professional status in the trace of information technology development.

The use of records-related core terms in steering documents impinge on the scope and result of appraisal as the interpretation of the terminology used affects what is regarded as public records and therefore included in or ruled out of the scope of appraisal. Difficulties to communicate caused by differences in conceptual understanding can be an appraisal problem. "...archivists and IT personnel cannot communicate with or understand each other. They speak different languages and mean different things when they use the same words." (Runardotter, 2007). Appraisal is no longer exclusively done by archivists at the entrance of the long term archive, but executed by many in the line of business, partly incorporated by IT in business systems. The citation illustrates how records appraisal and archival needs, especially in electronic formats, are at risk because of miscommunication between involved parties. Besides terminology, miscommunication is also caused by "...different roles, archivists/registrars and IT personnel have different views of archiving as well as different time perspectives" (Runardotter, 2007) (p.52).

The use of the term "information" has increased and replaced "record" and "public record" when archivists speak and write about records appraisal and archives. An example is a study made on frequency and meaning of archival terms used in a Swedish National Archives project with main focus on requirements for long term preservation in e-archives, called eArd project¹. The study finds a broad and vague use of the term information in project documentation (Borglund & Engvall, 2014). "Information" is used in a general sense for records and its content.

From professional experience my view is that decisions of appraisal in the digitalized office environment, are made by people in the process of system design and further in the line of business. These decisions include assessment of informational value for possible creation or not, then whether to create and capture as a record and finally to assess whether to include the created records or not within the scope of formal process of appraisal and retention decision. Shared views on what sets the scope of appraisal and steering documents appropriate for the appraisal of electronic records are needed. This article investigates how archival institutions, still in paper thinking, communicate concepts that affects the scope of electronic records appraisal to public organizations.

The research question and objectives for the study

The use of records-related core terms is part of the problem described. Core terms, crucial for setting the scope of appraisal in Sweden, are the ones that can be used to replace "record", but are not synonymous. The use of records related core terms affects what is included or not in appraisal. This leads to the following research question:

- How can records-related terms in steering documents that governs the appraisal process for records and archives be interpreted and

¹ <https://riksarkivet.se/e-arkiv>

- how are they used?

The objectives for examining the use of terms are

- to validate impressions from experience of extended vocabulary related to records appraisal in the archival control of records and archives formation (appraisal) and
- to shed light upon the appropriateness of used terminology for the control of appraisal.

This sheds further light upon previous studies that showed lack of common understanding between parties involved in appraisal (Runardotter, 2007) and a vague use of terminology (Borglund & Engvall, 2014).

Method

Records-related core terms examined in this paper are:

Information, Data, Piece of information, Metadata, Record, Business information and Document in Swedish and in English.

They are chosen as they represent concepts to be assessed in the setting of a scope for appraisal. They can all be used to refer to a public record, but they are not synonymous, and may therefore cause confusion in interpretation with consequences for the scope-setting of appraisal.

The interpretation of two other concepts of importance for appraisal are also examined in this paper, as the overall focus for the study is a risk for erosion in value of completeness in the electronic archive. These are:

- “Informational value” and “Usability”.

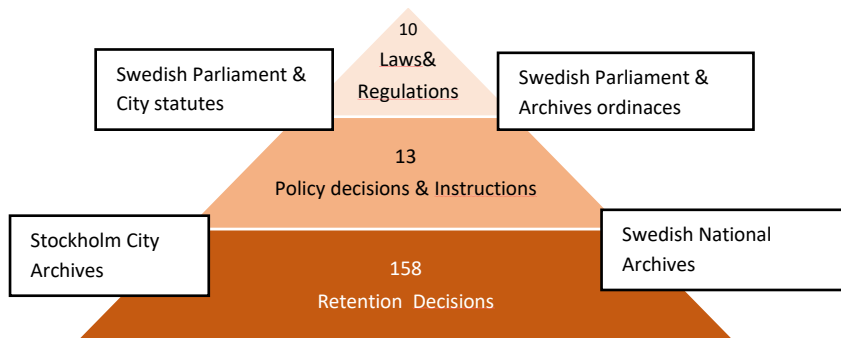
The first because it is one aspect of appraisal and the second as it expresses a central function of e-archives.

The investigation includes both Swedish and English. This seems relevant as a similar problem may appear in other countries and also because the archival discourse in Sweden is influenced by the archival discourse in the English language. English document titles of Swedish documents to English are my translations, as are Swedish definitions.

A commonly used Swedish term, “uppgift”, here translated to “piece of information”, is referred to only in Swedish due to the lack of appropriate translation. It is a central term in legislation connected to archives (Sveriges Riksdag, 1949). Instead an explanation of the term is used. The meaning of “uppgift” is a particular piece of information within a record or a particular record in a database. It is common in steering documents for legal reasons. For example when deciding issues of openness and secrecy, a record may be open, but a particular piece of information may fall under the Secrecy Act (Sveriges Riksdag, 2009). In that case the particular piece of information is redacted before consignment. In the case of retention, different records in a database may be given different retention periods, hence “uppgift” is frequent in the included documents of this study, sometimes replaced by “data”.

The knowledge base of the study consists of 181 steering documents as well as three terminology databases and one terminology report held by authoritative organizations. The steering documents represents levels of hierarchical impact and are the foundations upon which appraisal is done and effectuated (Figure 1). The archival authorities are those who decide upon retention decisions

Figure 1. Hierarchy of steering levels. Diagram after Kallberg (2013)



Demarcations

The steering documents included are 10 laws & regulations, 13 policy decisions & instructions and 158 retention decisions (Table 1). Apart from legislation, the steering documents come from the Swedish Riksarkivet (the National Archives) and Stockholms stadsarkiv (Stockholm City Archives), two archival institutions with similar roles and authorities to decide upon retention decisions within their jurisdictions, – the governmental and a municipality. The samples are limited to documents valid in February 2016 and available electronically, on the internet or in-house (Stockholm City Archives). In the case of National Archives the sample is every third valid retention decision.

Table 1: Steering documents included in the study. (My translations)

Laws and Regulations	Policies and Instructions	Retention decisions
Freedom of Information Act chapter 2	National Archives Policy for preservation and destruction: The Preservation the Present (1989)	National Archives: A sample of every third valid retention decision (RA:MS) available online in February 2016 (List added to references)
Archival Act	National Archives: Plan and Govern http://riksarkivet.se/planera-och-styra	Stockholm City Archives: All valid retention decisions available in-house electronically in February 2016 (List added to references)

Law on Further Use of Records From Public Sector SFS 2010:566	Account for Business Information (2012) (Redovisa verksamhetsinformation)
Ordinance RA:FS 1991:1 with changes 1997:4, 2008:4 and 2012: 1	National Archives: The Archive as Resource http://riksarkivet.se/arkiv-som-resurs
Ordinance RA:FS 2006:1 about records on paper	National Archives: Appraise and Destroy
Ordinance RA:FS 2013:1 About appraisal, retention and returnment of records at procurement	National Archives: To apply for Retention Decisions http://riksarkivet.se/vardera-och-gallra
Ordinance RA:FS 2015:2 About appraisal, retention and loan of bookkeeping information	Guideline: To Appraise and Destroy Information in Stockholm City.
Statute KFS 2015:27 for Stockholm	Stockholm City Archives: Checklist for Appraisal
Directions KFS 2007:26 to ordinances on Archives for Stockholm	Stockholm City Archives: Checklist for Application of Retention Decisions
Directions on the Handling of Electronic Messages for Stockholm	Stockholm City Archives Guideline: To Handling Digital Information; Step by Step.
	Stockholm City Archives guidelines: The setting of requirements on IT-systems
	Stockholm City Archives: Policy for the Stockholm e-Archive
	Stockholm City Archives: Guidelines on Jurisprudence on Stockholm e-Archive

The databases and report on terminology are the *ISO Concept Database (ICD)* (ISO International Standards Organization), the *Multilingual Archival Terminology (MAT)* (International Council of Archives & InterPARES) and *Rikstermbanken*, a national database for business terminology in Sweden (TNC). The terminology report *Begrepp och termer – definitioner och hierarkier* (Concepts and terms – definitions and hierarchies, [my translation]) (Persson & Svensson, 2011) is the result of a series of workshops held at the Swedish International Standards Institute (SIS) as part of the translation of ISO 30300 and 30301.

The organizations studied are two distinguished archival institutions, representing the three levels of steering hierarchy. The National Archives is chosen because of its influence not only at the national level but also on Swedish municipalities. The National Archives has a long history of relationship with the other organization, the Stockholm City Archives. Stockholm City Archives was contracted as an archival authority for regional and local governmental agencies between 1930 and 2015. The role of the City Archives has changed to that of a deposit for regional governmental agency archives². Other functions have been centralized to the National Archives.

Stockholm City Archives is chosen for its engagement in considerations for electronic records. The city was early in setting up a corporate city e-archive between 2007 and 2010. Its main purpose was to facilitate access to archives in addition to preservation. The Stockholm e-archive was to be the hub for shared information, containing both current and noncurrent records, with internet access. Preservation is seen as the means to access, not a self-sufficient goal. The e-archive project aimed to change views on the role of the archive in the city (Lundquist Svenonius & Björkman, 2008).

Analysis

The study is basically a functional text analysis (Hellspong, 2001) using mixed methods in an analysis of archival terminology in a comparative study. Quantitative methods are used for mapping the frequency of records-related core terms in steering documents and qualitative analysis to interpret possible meaning and definitions of the included core terms. Data sources for the analysis of meaning, use and frequency of records related core terms are steering documents related to the control of appraisal of records and archives, terminology databases and a terminology report.

The method for quantitative analysis is as follow: The number of the included records-related terms are counted by the search function in the available format (pdf and Word) in 181 documents. The result is analyzed in three steps: the total of all included documents from the whole period in question shows the total of each term and differences in frequency. The second step is separate analyses of National Archives and Stockholm City Archives. For reason of comparison between documents and organization, the results are weighed by dividing term

² Stockholms stadsarkiv diary number 1.1-6197 and 6201/2015

frequency with number of document pages. The total is then broken down by year to get a picture of possible change in vocabulary over time. A comparative analysis is made between vocabularies used by the two cases.

The method for qualitative analysis is as follows: Definitions of the included terms are searched for in three databases and a terminology report and selected out of relevance for records or archives management. The intention is to look for shared features in definitions to support interpretation of how terms may be understood. The analysis look for focus and characteristics or common features, and definitions of each term are grouped accordingly. Finally the analysis concludes by summarizing possible understanding or understandings of the intended meaning of each term.

Search for definitions are made to clarify concepts at an international and national level and to support interpretation of results. Quantitative method is used to illuminate consequences of term use in communication and understanding. It is also a way to look for any change that digitalization may have had on vocabulary. The analysis of steering documents, is inspired by Kallbergs' three level hierarchy model (Kallberg, 2013) of steering functions, as there should be logic between levels of regulation and effectuation. The levels are: "Laws & Regulations", "Policy decisions and Instructions" and "Retention decisions" (figure 1). The time frame is set from 2007 to 2016 which comprise a period of arising development of electronic archives in Sweden that included increased interest in issues related to electronic records in systems, among them appraisal issues.

Result

Understanding terminology

The possible understanding of terminology by people involved in records and archives appraisal, i.e. archivists, IT specialists, decision makers and others with influence on appraisal, was searched for in authoritative term databases and a report on concepts. The analysis intends to ground a unified understanding of concepts based on term definitions made by professionals mostly in records and archives and IT domains.

During analysis of term definitions, the list of terms included was modified for the following reasons:

- "Business information" is excluded because it is rare.
- "Business information" was introduced in the Swedish vocabulary with the translation of ISO 30300 and 30301:2011 as the translation of "record/s". "Business information" may also be understood in a broader sense to include non-documented as well as documented information related to business activities or of other importance for business or an organization. When handling records in electronic information systems, a broad understanding of the term, i.e.

including non-documented information, would help people in doing appraisal, as a broad understanding indicates the scope of appraisal.

- “Uppgift” was not found in the databases.
- On the other hand, “metadata” is added as an important concept in appraisal of electronic records.

The intention of the analysis is to ground a unified understanding of concepts based on term definitions from authoritative sources.

The search is based on the exact term, excluding combinations or variations, and with different definitions. For searches that gave a large number of hits, a selection of 150-200 is made. Most part of the selected definitions could be excluded as identical or as variations that were out of the scope of this investigation. Definitions are selected out of relevance from a general records management or archival perspective. The analysis look for focus, characteristics or common features in definitions in English and in Swedish and grouped accordingly. The results of the analysis and grouping are presented in the following tables, with comments.

Results are presented for each term, first a conclusion and then the underlying grouping. Terms are presented below in the following order: “information”, “data”, “metadata”, “record/s” and “document”, “informational value” and “usability”.

“*Information*” is found to be a general term for anything meaningful, true and interpretable and communicated. In the light of its universality and common use one may ask how appropriate it is to use the generic form of information in steering documents meant to be ground for operations like appraisal and retention decisions, singling out what is to be captured and kept as (public) records. An explanation would be required if to use the term.

The emphases of 21 definitions selected as relevant are shown in table 2.

Table 2: “Information”. Result of grouping analysis.

<i>English</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
Carrying a meaning, expressing facts	Something that is recorded
Enables interpretation	Communicated knowledge
Linked to computerization	Something meaningful

To summarize the definitions indicate that “information” carries meaning, meaning is connected to context and meaning is also connected to knowledge. Some definitions also include a notion of reliability when using words like facts, data and value.

The Swedish definitions (Rikstermbanken and Persson and Svensson 2011) are not explicitly connected to recorded or documented information – i.e. “records”, except for “linked to

computerization” which implicates that data is recorded. The groups “carrying a meaning, expressing facts” and “enables interpretation” expresses the existence of something that is possible to understand by a receiver. The meaning is decided by the sender, but is at the same time understood in the context of the receiver.

Definitions in English are often similar and influenced by each other. The group “Something that is recorded” express explicitly that information is recorded and one “collection of data”, implicitly expresses the same (International Council of Archives & InterPARES). The group “Linked to computerization” links information to knowledge in two of the three definitions and includes communication in the concept of information. The third adds meaning to a context of knowledge. This definition forms a bridge to the group “Communicated knowledge” which emphasizes that information carries meaning and value.

The analysis concludes that information carries meaning, expresses facts, enables interpretation and may be linked to automatic data processing – it is communicated knowledge and may or may not be recorded.

“Data” is found to carry meaning, a meaning that may not be immediately understood. Data needs to be in context and interpreted to be understood. Data is recorded and can be pluralized and processed.

The emphases of 16 definitions selected as relevant are shown in table 3:

Table 3: “Data”. Result of grouping analysis.

<i>English</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
Multiple data forms information (are building bricks of information)	Representations of facts, ideas, concepts or instructions, in a formalized manner suitable for transmission or interpretation that can be processed either by humans or by machines
Data are pieces of information (in a database) that can be processed	Information that can be processed
Unanalysed information	
Is defined as information	

To summarize: the Swedish concept of “data” is that data are facts that may be information, and as it may be processed it is recorded. The English concept of “data” is a single piece of recorded fact that may be pluralized and thus forms information if interpretation is possible.

The analysis concludes that data means discrete pieces of recorded facts that forms information when put in context.

“Metadata” was generally described as “data about data”, but can be differentiated depending on specialization “data about data that concerns...” (Table 4) and it is also defined as a “record”.

The emphases of 28 definitions selected as relevant are shown in Table 4:

Table 4: “Metadata”. Result of grouping analysis.

<i>English</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
General: data about data	General: data about data
For documents	For documents
For records	For records
For archives	--

Most of the Swedish definitions are found to be general - “*data about data*”, also when defined by organizations with a specific mission concerning records and archives such as the Swedish Royal Library and Digisam. The only really specific definition – “*information describing geographic datasets and geographical data services and make it possible to find, make inventories and use them*”³ (my translation) is a contribution from governmental work on the INSPIRE directive (2007/2/EC)⁴.

Another finding is that there is no definition in Swedish connected to archives, although fundamental and much effort is directed in international work to metadata for archival descriptions.

Some of the definitions in English not only define but also describe the functions and purposes of metadata. It is notable that metadata is also defined as a record, a definition that is essential for electronic records appraisal, as electronic records content and metadata may be separate stored. In addition the amount of metadata in IT-systems is larger and in more detail compared to paper. Only one definition connects “metadata” to “record”. A generalized definition that catches the essence of them all, including these of interest here – for records and archives management - would be a definition in English:

- data describing context, content and structure for *data* and its management (“data som beskriver sammanhang, innehåll och struktur för *data* samt hanteringen av dessa under aktuell tid”) (Posten Sverige ab 2012, [my italicization])
The difference to the records management/archives definition is small but significant:
- *data* describing context, content and structure of *records* and their management over time (Persson and Svensson 2001, ISO 30300:2011-3.1.6)

“*Record/s*” is found to be an ambiguous but fundamental concept (table 5). As understanding in most cases depends on purpose, the concept implicitly includes an intrinsic quality. Definitions in

³ In Swedish: ”information som beskriver geografiska dataset och geografiska datatjänster och gör det möjligt att finna, inventera och utnyttja dem”

⁴ See link: [Regeringskansliet, Miljödepartementet: INSPIRE – en infrastruktur för geografisk information i Europa | 2004, 3.3 Fackuttryck/termer](#)

Swedish focuses on the purpose or purposes of a record or on other characteristics; in English they also sets focuses on the character of a record as well as its purpose. The emphases of 34 definitions selected as relevant are shown in Table 5:

Table 5: “Record/s”. Result of grouping analysis.

<i>English</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
<i>The purpose of the record is important for the definition:</i>	<i>The purpose of the record is important for the definition:</i>
Evidence	Evidence
Line of business	Line of business
Action	Action (second purpose)
Memory	Accountability
Preservation	Identification regardless of quality or relevance
<i>Other focuses on character:</i>	<i>Other characteristics</i>
Collections	Any relevance
Structure/included components	
An entry	
By-product of information or activity	

The analysis finds that the purpose of records influences the definition. Purposes are connected to business or legal requirements. Evidence may be seen as an overall purpose for the capture of records in systems, the objective of other purposes listed above, and has been a theme in the archival discourse (Brothman, 2002).

In Swedish a judicial definition is grounds for defining and delimiting the archive, by the identification of “public record” among a group of “records”, the first step of appraisal. These do not mention any quality aspects of “record”, but look only at the judicial description in the Freedom of Information Act (SFS 1949:105 chapter 2, 2§).

According to the Swedish Archival Act (SFS 1990:782 3§) a public record is also an archival record, and any record taken into custody (i.e. captured and stored or archived within a system) is an archival record, hence “public record”.

Another definition, useful for any organization outside the public sphere, is one found in the database Rikstermbanken, is generalized because it uses organization instead of authority:

- Document with relevance for an organization (MSB 2013, case concepts) (my translation⁵). The most common purpose for creating records in English definitions is to secure evidence of actions and transactions in the line of business. Other purposes, like memory, preservation or action are implicit in the primary purposes. Some of these derive from Records management and archives near standards.

Structure is the prime focus when describing character. Definitions that focus on structure derive from IT-near standards. None of the definitions noted above derives from a legal act. The definitions in English are many and various, probably depending on the authors' professional context. Some are totally IT-focused and others not. Maybe the most generically applicable definition is one that doesn't look at the purpose of the record:

- Related data items treated as a unit (ISO/IEC 11321:1992[en], 4.33)

“*Document*” (noun) is a widespread term in daily talk, often thought of as a paper with text of some importance. The Swedish Academy, which has a responsibility for the care of the Swedish language (<http://www.svenskaakademien.se/>), gives four variations, all of which includes “evidence” and some kind of record (SAOL, 2015). Transferred to electronic format it is thought of in the same way, as an image of a paper. In some IT focused businesses “document” may be anything down to the smallest unit in a database. Document is also seen as a common word for “record”. In its broadest sense it includes any artifact. In the Swedish archival professional community, the term “document” is normally not used.

The analysis finds (Table 6), that most definitions are open and may be anything containing recorded information.

The emphases of 40 definitions selected as relevant are shown in table 6:

Table 6: “Document”. Result of grouping analysis.

<i>English</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
Recorded information, any format and/or medium	Recorded information (aggregation or collocation of information)
Focus on format or form	Recorded information kept as evidence
Focus on level of aggregation	Accountability
Paper based information	
Characteristics of usability	

Some definitions state that the recorded information can be treated as a unit.

⁵ Case concepts in Swedish: “Ärendehanteringsbegrepp”

Definitions that focus on the level of aggregation, describe a document as a separate item that can be put together with other item/s forming document sets. I relate this to IT aspects, such as a separate notation in a database. Paper based documents are implicitly a unit of recorded information.

The last group gives importance to usability such as communication, readable by humans or able to be stored and retrieved. The analysis concludes in a general understanding of “document” as

- Recorded information in any format and medium that can be treated as a unit, which may be aggregated

This is not equivalent to the definition of a record, as it lacks quality statement and requirement of structure such as including information content and metadata (only one of the definitions mentions this explicitly).

Two other fundamental concepts for electronic records appraisal are *informational value* and *usability*. How they may be understood also deserves to be given some thought within the context of this study as steering documents of Stockholm City Archives emphasizes “informational value” in appraisal work, and “usability” is a value with increased significances where the electronic format is concerned.

“*Informational value*” is found to be connected to 1) the need different stakeholders might have, privately or professionally, for information in records and their contexts and 2) the possibilities private stakeholders (as citizens) have to access information in records, for transparency purposes, for example interest in following up reasons and actions of political decisions that they are affected by. Access is also seen as the first and most important criteria of records value (Menne-Haritz, 2001).

“Informational value” has one entry in Swedish that uses the definition of public record in the Freedom of Press Act (SFS 1949:105) to explain “appraisal”: “an inquiry of records value for public control and for the needs of administration of justice, business and research” (my translation). This gives the following understanding of “informational value”

- Usefulness based on degree of accessibility and degree of need.

Thus, the initial conclusion. “*Informational value*”, in English shows two definitions in the MAT database, both expressing the same meaning: The usefulness or significance of records content. I here quote the more generic definition:

- The usefulness or significance of materials based on their content, independent of any intrinsic or evidential value (International Council of Archives & InterPARES) (from (Pearce-Moses, 2005)).

The ISO database includes one definition of value referring to information:

- “value of a quantity or property of a reference material, which is provided for information only”

The difference between the Swedish and English definitions of informational value is that the Swedish makes connections to stakeholders’ needs and access while the English definition looks at content significance without stating stakeholders’ needs or possibilities to access the information.

Finally, the Swedish National Archives appraisal policy (1998) goes into detail about records content value, in common with the ICA definition (Riksarkivet, 1995) that includes “...*the information they contain on persons, places, subjects, etc...*”.

The analysis conclude that the explanation given above on what information value connects to, is useful as general ground for the appraisal of records and archives.

“Usability” is found to be connected to access and to specified (user) needs. The ISO database has one entry specifically referring to records:

- “*property of being able to be located, retrieved, presented and interpreted*” (ISO International Standards Organization, 2012).

Another one is general and also useful for the understanding of the concept of records usability:

- “*extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use*” (ISO/IEC 24756:2009).

In this case the product would be records or records information. Finally a third definition very much like the second one:

- “*concept comprising the effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction with which specified users can achieve specified goals in a particular environment*” (ISO International Standards Organization, 2003).

These definitions put together give meaning to the Swedish approach to appraisal for retention decisions – appraising the value in terms of access and specified (business) needs is also to appraise usability.

For the purpose of appraisal of electronic records, usability gets a broader meaning as format, metadata and structure are vital for access in the sense presented above for usability (located, retrieved, presented and interpreted). Usability is also a matter of what can be done with that which has been accessed. An adequate understanding of “usability” for electronic records would be to modify the ISO/IEC 24756:2009 definition above, by changing “product” for “information”:

- “*extent to which information can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use*”.

Examining frequency of terms used in steering documents

The knowledge base consists of 181 steering documents.

Six records related core terms are included in the quantitative analysis. These are “data”, “document”, “record/s”, “information”, “uppgift ” and “ business information”.

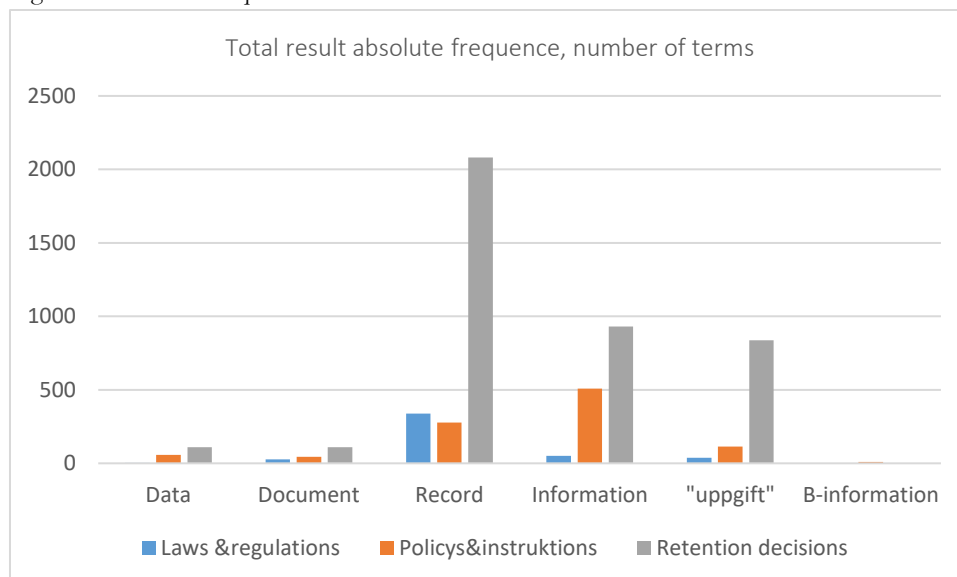
In the documents, the terms appeared in different forms, for example “real estate data”, “metadata”, “office document”, “building permit record”, and “bookkeeping information”. All forms that mean a record were included, while terms that do not, such as “information loss” and “data carrier” are excluded.

All the included terms is found to be used, but there is a big gap between the most and least common, that is between “record” and “business information”.

The following figures show the results of analysis from three perspectives; first absolute frequencies, showing how often a term appears, then in weighted frequencies for comparison between documents and organizations and finally weighted frequencies per year in retention decisions to show a possible change in term use during the period studied.

Figure 2 shows the total frequencies of all included terms in absolute numbers. As some retention decisions bares more text and are more repetitive when listing different types of records included in the decision, the number of each terms rises, and the opposite goes for laws and policy decisions, that are of general character. It shows that there is no doubt about which terms are preferred by archivists; “record” and “information”. As shown below, all the included terms are used in all kinds of documents, except for “business information”, which occurs in only policy decisions or instructive documents.

Figure 2: The total frequencies of terms in all included documents

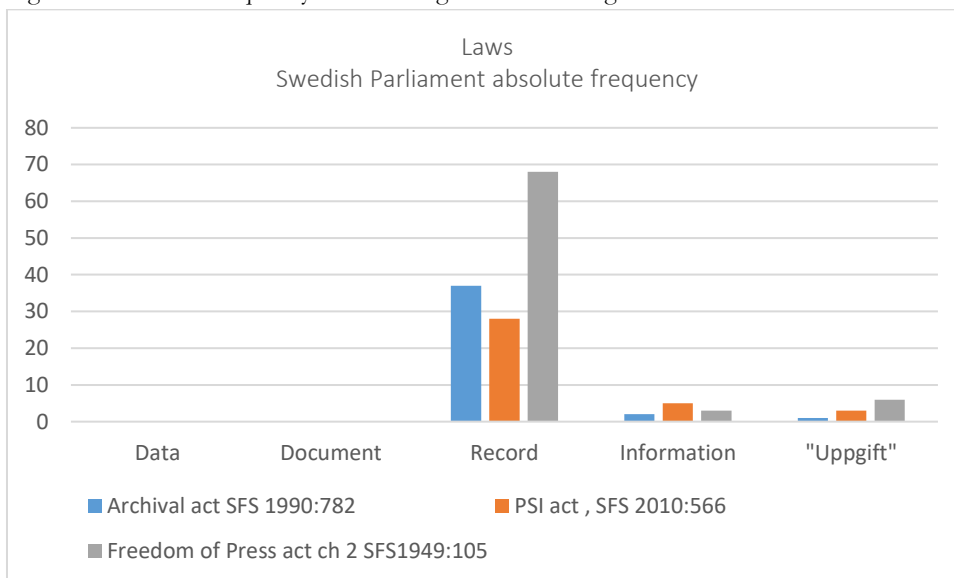


Laws and regulations

Laws & Regulations is the highest level in the steering documents hierarchy. It is a mix of laws, ordinances and statutes that affects records appraisal and archives and includes three records related legal texts; the Archival Act (ArkivL SFS 1990:782), the PSI-related act “Reuse of public Sector Records Act “ (my translation) “Lag om vidareutnyttjande av handlingar” (Svergies Riksdag, 2010) and the Freedom of Press Act (Sveriges Riksdag, 1949) (kap 2). The total content of the first two Acts is relevant to this study, the third Act contains just one records-related chapter, which is included here. They all show a similar vocabulary with “record” as the dominant term and little use of “information” and “uppgift” and total absence of data and document.

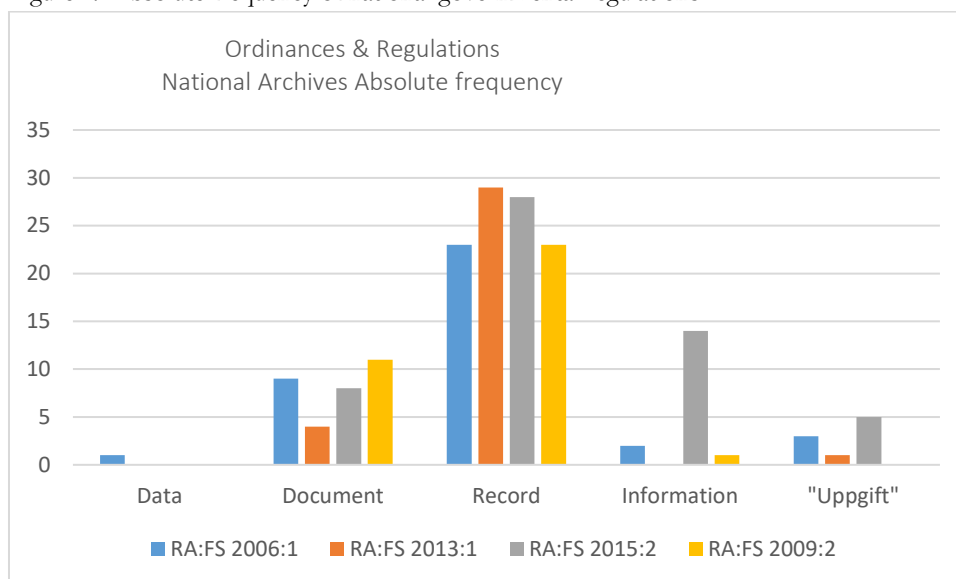
Figure 3 shows the result of analysis which indicates, that ordinances and statutes follow the use of terms and have a similar distribution of terms as the three Acts listed above.

Figure. 3. Absolute frequency of national governmental regulations: Laws.



The National Archives have the mandate to make complementary ordinances to the Archival Act for the governmental authorities in the public sector. The four ordinances included in this study are about paper records and archives management, about technical requirements and certifications, about accountant information and about technical requirements for electronic records. The result (Figure 3) shows more variation in vocabulary compared to the vocabulary in the Acts, but similarity in using “record” as being outstandingly the most common term.

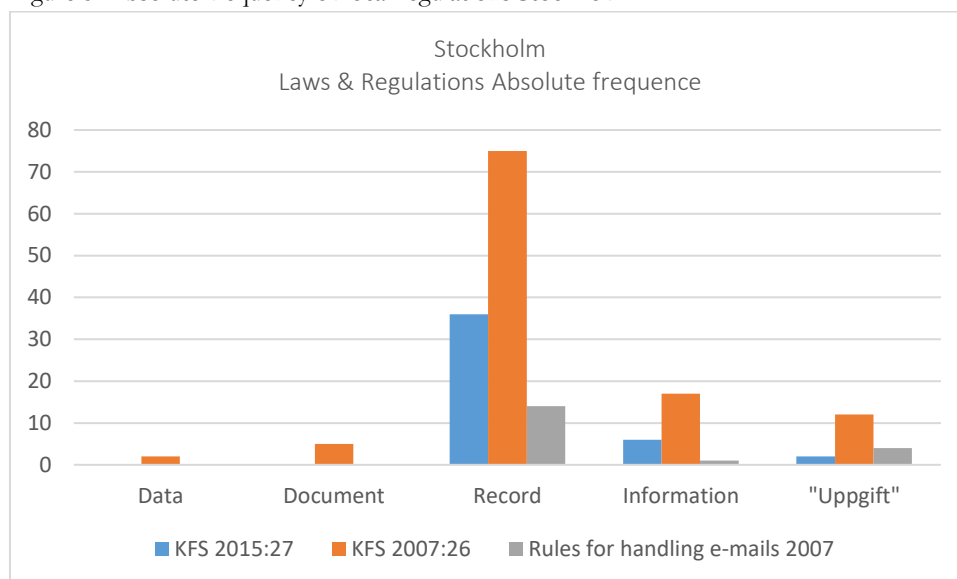
Figure. 4: Absolute frequency of national governmental regulations



Stockholm City Archives (figure 5) has the mandate as an archival authority to regulate the records and archives management of all its municipal agencies and companies⁶. The first two ordinances shown in the figure are general for records and archives management (2015:27) and supplementing directives (2007:26). The third regulates the management of e-mail. Stockholm shows a similar picture to that of the National Archives with “record” as the absolute dominant term, and “data” is rarely used. One difference is that the term “document” is nearly absent in the Stockholm vocabulary at this level, but quite common in the National Archives documents.

⁶ A municipal company is one that is own by the more that 50% by the municipality, in this case the City of Stockholm.

Figure 5: Absolute frequency of local regulations Stockholm



Policy decisions and instructions

The Policy decisions and instructions is the middle level in the steering documents hierarchy. It is a mix of general directions for decision-making and substantial advisory on procedures down to checklist level.

The comparison is based on absolute number of occurrences, and subsequently does not show any change or development. The reason is, as for laws and ordinances, that advisory documents are few and of generic character.

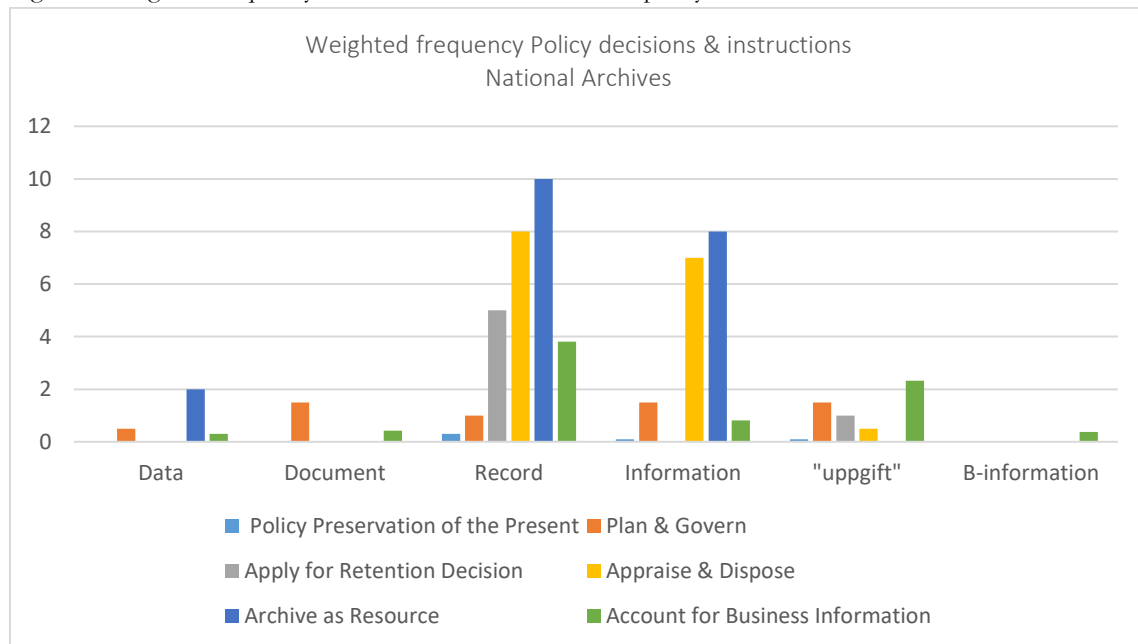
National Archives: Six documents are included. Four of them are very short, 1-2 pages, introducing texts presented on the website. The other two – the Policy “The preservation of the present” (Bevarandet av nutiden) and the guide “Account for Business Information” (Redovisa verksamhetsinformation) are more voluminous with 10 and 43 pages respectively. The documents are dated between 1995 (1) and 2015 (2). The two voluminous ones have an instructive character, while the others are short introductory information on the National Archives web-site. The presented dates are “last update” of the page, giving no information about what has been changed.

The result (Figure 5) shows “business information” as being very rare, even though it is in the title of a guide. This guide, “Account for Business Information”, singles itself out from the others by its broad vocabulary using all the terms included in the study. It also includes a definition of “business information” as “public record”. A broad vocabulary is also found in the guide “Plan and govern” (Planera och styra), which includes all the terms but business information. “Apply

for retention decisions” (Ansök om gallring) restricts to “record” and “uppgift”, while the remaining three documents uses “record”, “information” and “uppgift”.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from this result, but the picture shows an increased use of “information” as well as of “record”. The most interesting aspect of the result is that besides “record” and “information”, “uppgift” is common and “data” is the most used term in the guide “Archive as a Resource” (Arkiv som Resurs).

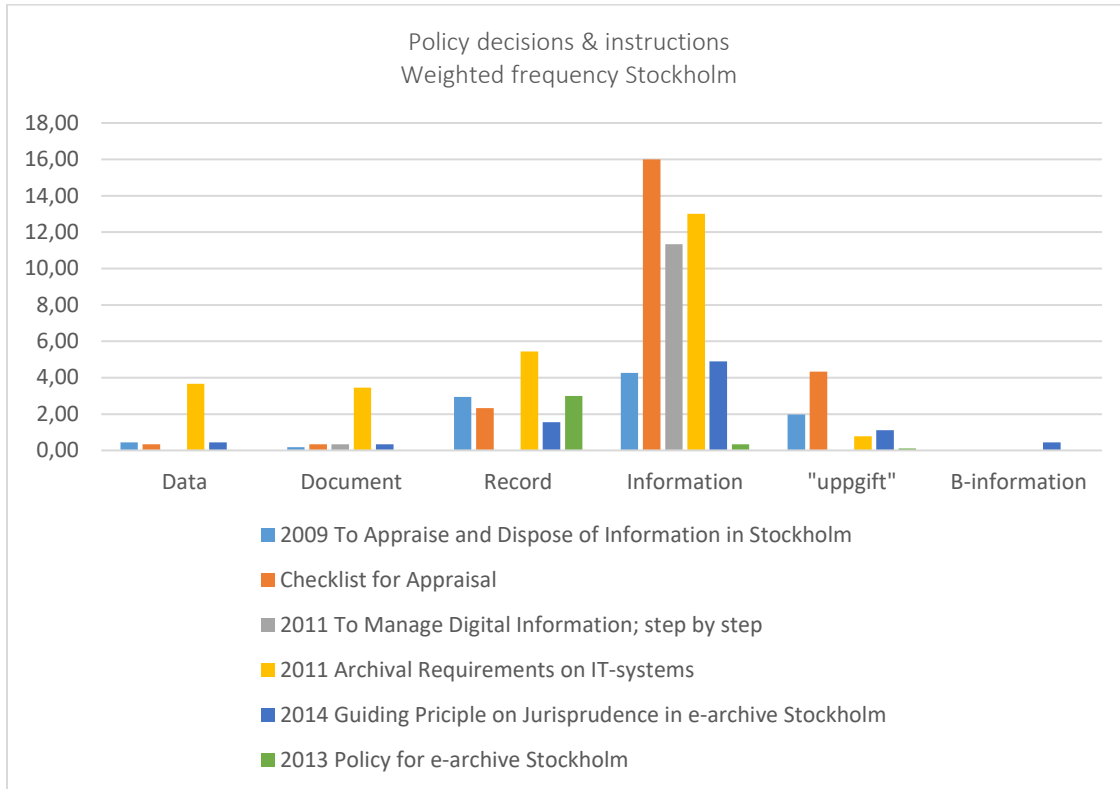
Figure 6: Weighted frequency of terms in National Archives’ policy decisions and instructions



Stockholm City Archives: Six documents were included (Figure 7). One policy, two instructions and three guidelines. Four of these documents focus on electronic records. In this case all are dated except for the checklist. The result (Figure 7) shows a change in vocabulary where “record” decreases and “information” increases over this short period of time from 2009 to 2014.

“Information” is the most used term. The most frequent use of “data” is found in “Requirements for IT-systems” (Arkivkrav på IT-system) a difference from other documents. In this case, the use of “data” may show an effort to communicate with IT-specialists.

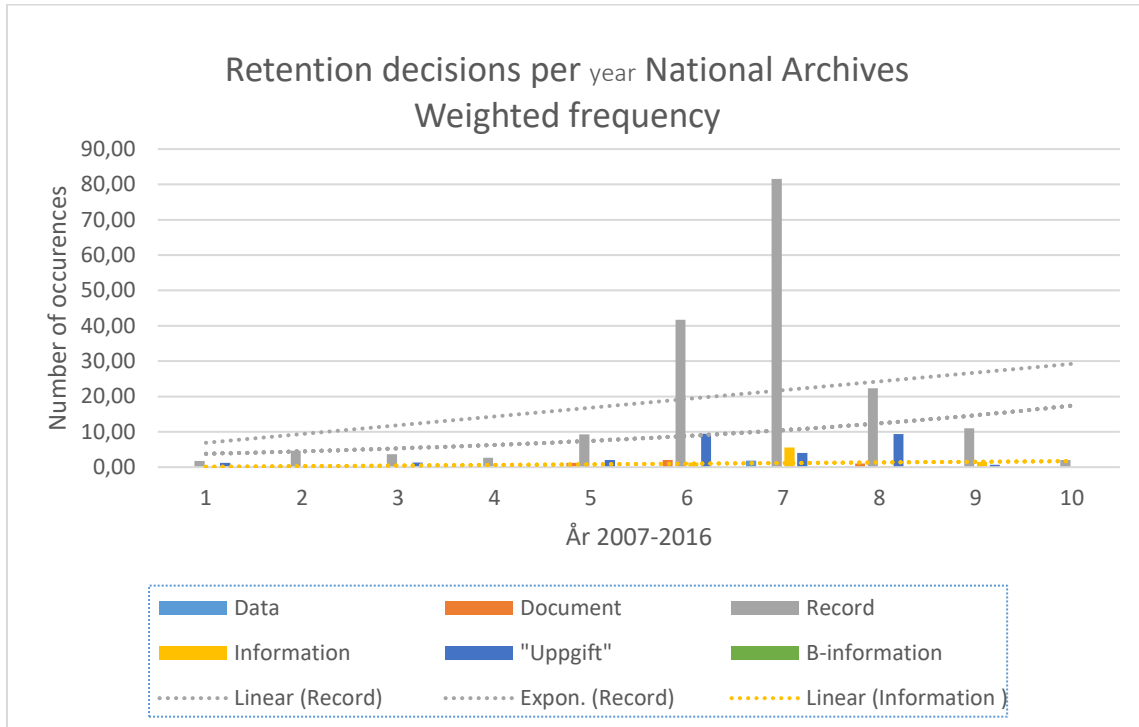
Figure 7: Weighted frequency of terms in Stockholm policy decisions and instructions



Comparing governmental sector and Stockholm: Retention decisions

The result of the *National Archives* sample (Figure 8) shows no significant change in vocabulary. “Record” is the preferred term throughout the sample period. The years 2012 and 2013 stands out with frequency for “record” much higher than other years and extremely much higher than other terms. This is due to two decisions, RA:MS 2012:40 and RA:MS 2013:12 that covers a larger amount of records than other retention decisions.

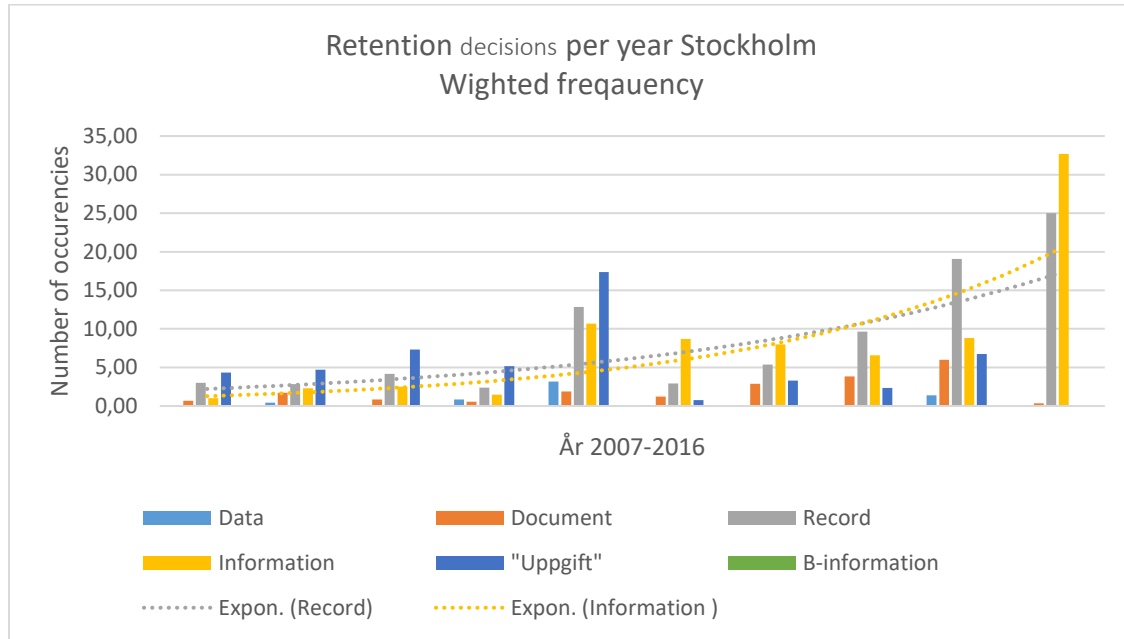
Figure 8: Weighted frequency of terms in National Archives retention decisions



The result of the *Stockholm City Archives* sample (Figure 9) shows a different picture. Here two favorites are in use, “information” and “record”. “Record” is the traditional term connected to judicial terminology and very familiar to archivists. The graph that shows frequency of “information” gets in line with that of “record” by 2013 and becomes the most common term by 2015.

A possible conclusion is that the result shows a change in perception of what is actually important when deciding on what is to be included in the archive. The City Archives documents are explicitly emphasizing the importance of information in records, independent of format. This change is connected in time to the increased amount of electronic records to be appraised for example before migration to the e-archive.

Figure 9: Weighted frequency of terms in Stockholm retention decisions



Discussion

The appropriateness of terminology used for the control of appraisal.

How we understand the concepts of record, information and other records-related terms affects the decision process and the resulting retention proposal (Runardotter, 2007). How they relate to each other, can also have consequences for the scope of appraisal.⁷ Records appraisal includes selecting from among available information and records sources and deciding whether to capture or not, to decide on records' status and classification and on the appropriate retention period. These decision may be simultaneous, if captured as a public record, since the preservation of public records is the default position in the Swedish public sector. If considered not public, it may be captured but falls outside of the process for appraisal considerations.

Looking at how and in what sense "information" and "record" are used by Stockholm archivists in retention decisions during the period 2007 – February 2016, "information" is often used in a generic sense, but more often in some specific, delimited sense. Neither does it clearly exclude non-public records. Usually "information" appears in an open sense, also when it refers to some specific area of business or to information content, and it becomes a matter of knowledge and understanding to execute retention decisions. "Record", which may be easier or more probable to understand as "public", is less used and then often in a delimited sense. In both cases this way of

⁷ Currently (2017) a work on how records relate to data is discussed within ISO TC/46/SC11, by working group 7

communication of retention decisions implies a common, corporate understanding of terminology and of the role of archives in society.

As the mandate of an archival institution is to decide on retention and destruction of public records, it should be implicit that both “information” and “record”, as well as other records-related terms used, refers to “public”. Everything that is not included in the definition of “public record” is out of scope for appraisal. Since processes flow and conclude in information systems of business operations in an organization, it falls to professionals other than archivists to execute appraisal and retention decisions. This conveys an assumption that there are shared concepts of what constitutes information, data and documents.

The use of all included terms requires distinction between the concepts, otherwise it allows the possibility of personal ad hoc interpretation and unpredictable result. There are two possible risks at operational level: the electronic archive is overloaded with records which should not be there, while at the same time records which should be there are missing. These risks causes ineffectiveness in the management of electronic records and archives, as disposal has to be done at some point later, when overload is a problem and the primary goal is minimize the amount of records with minimum of resources in the records and archives management process, when the mass of information overload is difficult to manage and control (Couture, 2005).

One problem indicated in the literature is that archivists tend to be connected to paper-based records (Kallberg, 2013) (Runardotter, 2007). One action to mitigate these risks can be to step into, or form, Communities of Practice for the task of electronic records appraisal, that take an electronic view of records and archives in society. Communities of Practice are “...groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise” (E. C. Wenger & Snyder, 2000). In this case these Communities of Practice should include professionals that control archives formation as well as those who effectuate appraisal decisions, at whatever stage the appraisal is performed. The idea of introducing Communities of Practice for the records and archives appraisal task is wider than the subject of this article, and should be developed further. The cross-border possibility of this model for problem solving, learning and development seems fit for the appraisal task (Lave & Wenger, 1998; E. Wenger, 2002, p26). The border-crossing may include professional, business and organizational boundaries. One part of the task for these communities should be to agree on shared concepts on used terminology that support electronic records appraisal. This would be a step where everyone involved develop a solid ground for the setting of the scope of appraisal.

Conclusions

A broad vocabulary is found at decision level, instructing or confusing people in appraisal. Two terms dominate the archival vocabulary in appraisal related documents; “record” and “information”. The first is specific to archives and records management and not generally

understood in the wider community, the second is commonly used and understood by everyone in a personal way.

The study shows that legal terms have impact on terminology usage at the level of Laws and Regulations level, but this impact lessens at decision levels. An action suggested to mitigate risk is to form Communities of Practice for the task of records appraisal, based on shared concepts on core terminology.

The assumption that Stockholm would follow the governmental sector in vocabulary seems to be valid at the laws and regulation level, but not at decision levels. While National Archives are consistent in mostly using “record”, Stockholm City Archives uses a broader vocabulary with “record” and “information” as favorites.

All the included terms is found to be used, but there is a big gap between the most and least common, that is between “record” and “business information”.

The use of records related core terms in steering documents that affects records appraisal is found to be changing towards a broadened vocabulary, especially at the lowest level of steering documents, Retention Decisions. The variety of definitions of each of the included terms show that the broadened use of terms opens for non-intended interpretation, which may have effect directly onto the practice of appraisal in business processes. “Information” is used, possibly with the intent to be more easily understood when communicating with other professionals than archivists and records managers, and to come closer to business by the use of a common term. This can also be a result of electronic reality, in which very few records in public sector are “paper born”; electronic records in business files and databases are now part of everyone’s daily life. The differences found between the National Archives and Stockholm City Archives is probably due to difference in organizational culture. A municipality in Sweden is smaller, agencies work closer to politics as well as citizens, and is a bit less formal. The governmental sector culture is quite the opposite.

Records appraisal could benefit from forming Communities of Practice, with common corporate understanding of vocabulary for appraisal tasks, building on the reality of several involved competencies in the appraisal and retention execution practice.

The study presented in this paper underpin the initial assumption of a broadened vocabulary in steering documents that ultimately put the scope of electronic archives at risk. The results highlight risks for control of archives formation.

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List of included retention decisions and promemorias

Form at	Decision (Beslut) /PM number	Form at	Decision RA:MS numberr
	http://digitalastadsarkivet.stockholm.se/Databas/gallringsbeslut/Sok		https://riksarkivet.se/foreskrifter-och-regler
Word	2007-32 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2007-7_rams
Word	2007-33 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2007-42_rams
Word	2007-37 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2007-53_rams
Word	2008-03 Gallringsbeslu	Pdf	2007-72_rams
Word	2008-04 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2008-54_rams
Word	2008-5 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2008-LFV_rams
Word	2008-07 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2009-23_rams
Word	2008-08 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2009-50_rams
Word	2008-10 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2010-15_rams
Word	2008-16 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2010-38_rams
Word	2009-14 Upphävande av gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2010-64_rams
Word	2009-16 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2011-7_rams
Word	2009-22 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2011-39_rams
Word	2009-25 gallring	Pdf	2011-54_rams

Word	2009-26 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2011-60_rams
Word	2009-30 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2012-8_rams
Word	2010-2 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2012-13_rams
Word	2010-2 GallringsPM	Pdf	2012-19_rams
Word	2010-09 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2012-23_rams
Word	2010-09 GallringsPM	Pdf	2012-40_rams
Word	2010-10 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2012-63_rams
Word	2010-14 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2013-2_rams
Word	2010-15 gallring SFI	Pdf	2013-12_rams
Word	2010-17 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2013-15_rams
Word	2010-19 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2013-25_rams
Word	2010-20 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2013-35_rams
Word	2010-22 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2013-46_rams
Word	2010-22 GallringsPM	Pdf	2013-54_rams
Word	2011-03 Gallringsbeslut,t	Pdf	2014-2_rams
Word	2011-04 Gallringsbeslut,	Pdf	2014-15_rams
Pdf	2011-09 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2014-21_rams
Word	2011-10 Gallringsbeslut,	Pdf	2014-28_rams
Word	2011-10 GallringsPM	Pdf	2014-40_rams
Pdf	2011-15 Gallringsbeslut t	Pdf	2014-50_rams
Pdf	2011-15 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2015-1_rams
Word	2011-17 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2015-10_rams
Word	2011-21 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2015-14_rams
Word	2011-21 GallringsPM	Pdf	2015-24_rams
Word	2011-22 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2015-29_rams

Word	2011-25 GallringsPM	Pdf	2015-43_rams
Word	2011-27 Gallrings- och bevarandebeslut	Pdf	2015-51_rams
Word	2011-29 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2015-54_rams
Word	2011-29 GallringsPM	Pdf	2015-58_rams
Pdf	2012.07 Gallringsbeslut	Pdf	2016-4_rams
Pdf	2012.08 Upphävande av gallringsbeslut		
Pdf	2012.10 GallringsPM_		
Pdf	2012.10 gallring		
Pdf	2012.11 GallringsPM_		
Pdf	2012.11__gallring		
Pdf	2012.13_gallringspm		
Pdf	2012.13_gallring		
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Pdf	2015_02_gallringsPM
Pdf	2015_03_gallringsbeslut
Pdf	2015_03_gallringsPM

Pdf	2015_10_gallringsbeslut
Pdf	2015_10_gallringsPM
Pdf	2015_17_bevarande_gallringsbeslut
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Pdf	2015_21_gallringsbeslut
Pdf	2015_23_samlat_gallringsbeslut
Pdf	2015_25_gallringsbeslut
Pdf	2015_28_gallringsbeslut
Pdf	2015_29_gallringsbeslut
Pdf	2016_01_gallringsbeslut_
Pdf	2016_01_promemoria
Pdf	2016_02_gallringsbeslut
Pdf	Arkivmyndighetens beslut-ringa-tillfallig_2016-02-22
Pdf	2016-1Gallringsbeslut

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