**Developing the collections together –**

**tools for nationwide collection management**

Today museums are facing several serious challenges in their collection activities: with the mass production society the flow of the potential museum objects is overwhelming. In the same time collection storages are filled with material while the physical storage space is very limited. Museums are obliged to think ways to rationalize their collection activities and raise the quality of the collections. Disposals are one essential tool method in this process.

When planning and executing disposals, museums must know the identity and composition of their collections. The identity of the collections include the past and present state of the collections as well as planned guidelines for how to develop the collections and collecting tasks in the future. However, this is not enough.

Museums should think bigger than only their own collections. If we want to get a grip on the overflow of the potential museum material and get collections rationalized, we need to co-operate on a national level. In my talk I will present the model of the nationwide division of collecting tasks that was created in Finland three years ago.

With the agreed division of themes that museums collect it is possible to decrease the overlapping collecting activities. With the division of the collecting tasks and with the raised general knowledge regarding the contents of the museum collections there is also a real possibility to raise disposal activities on the next level. One could even argue that it is not rational to execute disposals blindly – without knowing what other museums are collecting and storing in their collections.

With the national co-operation museums have better tools for developing their collection management: collecting activities, collection translocations, disposal and joint projects – just to name a few.

**Curriculum Vitae – Teemu Ahola**

Teemu Ahola, aged 41, works as a deputy director and head of collections in the Finnish Labour Museum, which is a national special museum of working life and social history. He has been museum professional since 2002 and has worked in several museums in Finland.

Ahola is extremely interested in developing collection policies, museum collection management and professional networks. In 2011 he created a nationwide model for division of collecting tasks for museums in Finland. Since 2012 he has acted as a head of the national network for collection management co-operation and present day documentation in Finland.

Ahola is an active lecturer besides on the museum field but also in the universities of his hometown Tampere. Besides collection management and development, his interests are in social history, built industrial environment and industrial history.