Heritage institutions today increasingly rely on digital formats for access, use and re-use of their collections. Books and other text-based documents, previously accessed on location in libraries are now transferred into digital format and managed, distributed, and engaged as binary encoded representations.

The digitisation process is conditioned by technology but also by the interest and ideals guiding its design and operation. Our use of digital resources is often shaped by a rather uncritical acceptance of the reproduction on face value, thereby ignoring both the technical particulars of the binary format as well as the consequences of the digital transmission on a conceptual level. The question of the capacity of a reproduction to serve as a substitute for the source document, as an enrichment or a supplement to a particular document or collection is not always easily answered. Still, as digital representations increasingly are regarded as primary sources this question is gaining in importance.

This thesis focuses on the digitisation of text-based documents and how the conversion influences the informative capacity of the digital resource. Based on two empirical studies – an analysis of the components in the digitisation process and an interview study with researchers who rely on digital resources – it seeks to outline a conceptual framework that structures the relation between the source document and its reproduction, as conditioned by the digitisation process.

**HOW REPRODUCTIVE IS A REPRODUCTION?**

Lars Björk

Digital transmission of text-based documents

Lars Björk works at the National library of Sweden. *How reproductive is a reproduction? Digital transmission of text-based documents is his doctoral thesis.*