

# **Digital Challenges Facing the National Archives of Japan:**

**Towards the Application of Digital Technologies and Cultivation of  
Archival Profession in the New Reiwa Era**

**Mr. ARAKAKI, Kazuaki**

**National Archives of Japan**

November 27, 2019

# Presentation Outline

## Introduction

- 1. The Path towards a Digital Government**
- 2. Digitization of Existing Paper Materials**
- 3. Training Archivists in the Digital Era**

## Conclusion

# 1 The Path towards a Digital Government

- Preparing for a increase in the acquisition of diverse digital records

# 1 The Path towards a Digital Government

Recent developments related to the transition to a digital government...

## 1) Digital Government as a Growth Strategy

2016	Basic Act on the Advancement of Public and Private Sector Data Utilization
2018	Digital Government Action Plan
2019	Digital Procedure Act

# 1 The Path towards a Digital Government

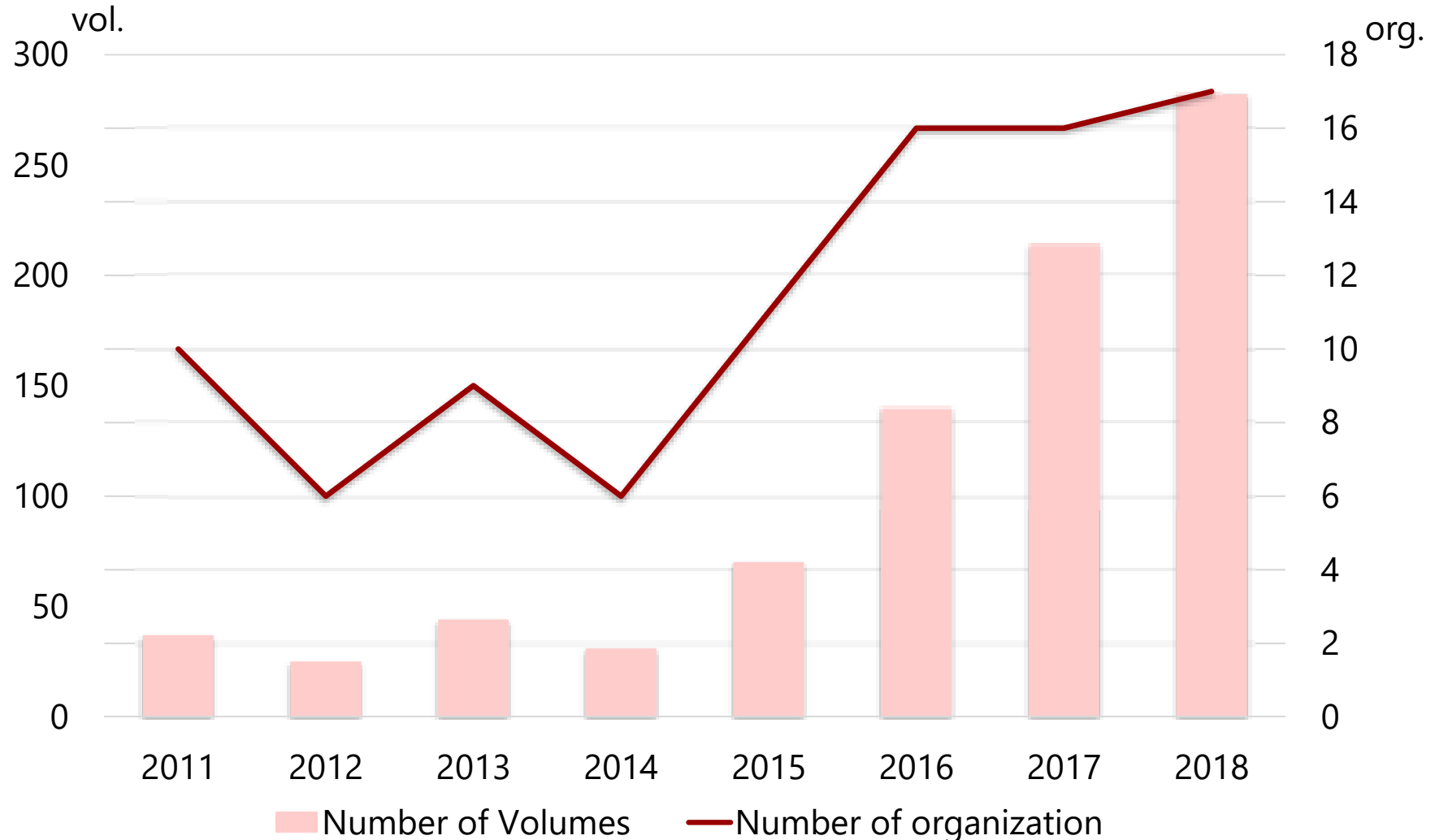
## 2) Digital Government for Regaining Trust

“Basic Guideline Concerning the Electronic Management of Administrative Documents” (2019)

- In principle, the creation and obtaining of administrative documents are required to be systematically managed based on electronic media as the original/master copy
- Government as a whole aims at introducing a full-fledged electronic management system by 2026
- NAJ needs to take measures to enable the long-term and stable use of historical public records and archives transferred to the NAJ

# 1 The Path towards a Digital Government

## Table: Number of digital records transferred to NAJ



## Major issues to acquiring born digital records...

- 1) To reinforce systems and to improve the efficiency of operational procedures
- 2) To update technologies and available formats to accept diverse records
- 3) To build and operate a system that enables stable and reliable long-term preservation

Plus, need to design better systems starting from the creation and obtaining of records **AT ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES!**

## 2 Digitization of Existing Paper Materials

- Using digital technologies to improve accessibility of materials



**Main objective** of the **digitization** of the NAJ holdings is **to improve accessibility**, according to the concepts of "**Any time**", "**Anywhere**", "to **Anyone**", "**Freely**", and "**Free of charge**".

### Two Digital Archive systems run by NAJ

- ❑ Japan Center for Asian Historical Records
  - Approximately 31.31 million images are available online
- ❑ National Archives of Japan Digital Archive
  - Approximately 289,000 volumes and 21.62 million images (19.3 % of entire holdings) are available

### For better accessibility...

#### - **Renewal of NAJ Digital Archive in 2016**

- ✓ Enabled the support of smart devices
- ✓ Improved a viewer for large-sized images
- ✓ Implemented functions such as image download and SNS sharing

#### - **Distribution of "Standard Specifications for Digital Archives"**

- ✓ Conducted a full revision of the Standard (established in 2009) in 2018
- ✓ NAJ Digital Archive offers cross-file search with 17 archival institutions' systems throughout Japan

# 3 Training Archivists in the Digital Era

- Based on the Preparation of "Standard of Tasks and Competencies for Archivists"

### 3 Training Archivists in the Digital Era

Growing importance of training professionals to take full advantage of the knowledge and technologies related to “**DIGITALIZATION**” of records/archive management

Reflecting on the fundamental question:

**“What does archivist do?”**

### Key point of our plan concerning how to secure and train archivists:

- (1) To prepare the "**Standard of Tasks and Competencies for Archivists**" specifying the tasks to be performed by an archivist.
- (2) To consider the **Standard as a base** to cultivate the profession, making universities etc. reflect its contents in their **education and training programs**.
- (3) **Creating a certification system** for the competencies and requirements of an archivist to be established in the Standard.

⇒ **“Standard of Tasks and Competencies for Archivists” was finalized in Dec 2018**

# Structure of the Standard

- 1 Missions of Archivists
- 2 Ethics and Fundamental Positions of Archivists
- 3 Tasks and Necessary Knowledge and Skills of Archivists

Tasks are divided into (i) appraisal and selection/collection development, (ii) collection management, (iii) public access, and (iv) outreach and communication services, and explained with 22 subcategories

- 4 Others

**Standard of Tasks and Competencies for Archivists** (English ver.):  
[http://www.archives.go.jp/about/report/pdf/TasksandCompetencies\\_NAJ.pdf](http://www.archives.go.jp/about/report/pdf/TasksandCompetencies_NAJ.pdf)

# Next step to take...

**2019.3**

**Archivist Certification Preparatory Committee** for  
the Framework for the Archivist Certification System

Members: Experts recommended by academic associations,  
Researchers, Educators, Record Management  
Specialists and Journalists



**2020 Start the Certification System** (to be expected)

# Conclusion



## To sum up...

- 1) NAJ need to be actively involved in providing expertise, as advancing implementation of digital records management constitutes a large national project
- 2) NAJ is required to properly respond to changes in social demands, and continuously improve our provision of long-term and stable access to records
- 3) In order to consider how to make full use of the huge and diversified records created by digital technologies, archivists must reconsider the very concepts of the tasks themselves

## Our Digital Challenges:

- Active application of digital technologies
- Cultivation of archivists



Architectural rendering of new NAJ

# Thank you