Publishing in the AI-era and collaborating with libraries

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The Role of AI in Modern Publishing

A burning platform?

- It is a tool driven by big tech and commercial interests
- Uncontrolled AI can result in content flooding

AI is transforming the publishing industry

- AI as a tool, not as a content creator
- Human eyes _must_ approve everything

AI collaboration between publishers and libraries

- Agreeing on overall principals
- Agreeing on disagreeing regarding specific topics
- We cannot roll back this development – we all have to adapt

Saga's Digital Strategy and Innovations

10 years ago, we wanted to digitize the book market in Denmark

Digital-first publishing approach at Saga

- 33.000 e-books
- 18.000 audiobooks

We have to work with both **quantity and quality**

- AI can help us, but it cannot compromise the quality
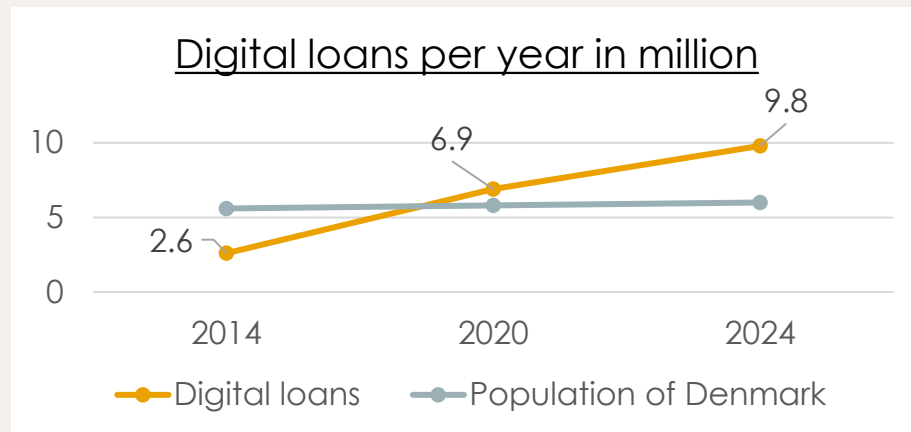
AI must provide **benefits for readers**

- Otherwise, the entire book industry will lose credibility and readers
- We cannot stop this innovation.
- We can try to adapt to it with curiosity and human reflection

Digital Transformation in Danish Libraries

- eReolen was launched back in **2011**
  - An early embrace of digital innovation

- Population in Denmark: 6 million

Digital loans per year in million

FIGUR 2. UDLÅN AF FYSISKE OG DIGITALE BØGER PÅ FOLKEBIBLIOTEKER.

Udlån fysiske og digitale bøger samlet
Udlån fysiske bøger (16 + 17 estimeret)
Udlån e-bøger og lydbøger fra eReolen og fysiske lydbøger

- Physical versus digital books
  - Does the formats **compete or supplement** each other?
  - **More people read**, but less people read physical books
  - A never-before-seen **battle for attention**; movie streaming, podcast, reels, etc.
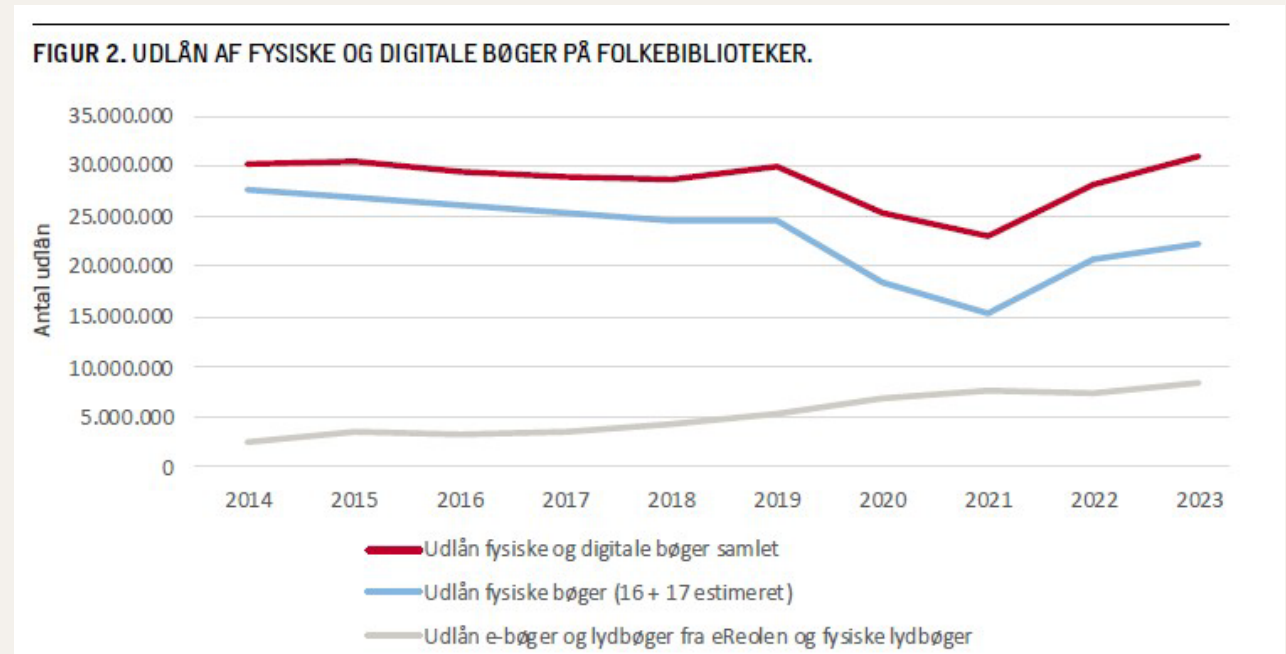
A brief history of eReolen and publishers in Denmark

The year Saga started

several of the big publishers withdrew their titles from eReolen

Our belief : " **never try to invert digital innovation**"

We have no choice, but to adapt and make a healthy business out of it…

This our key statement

internally and when speaking to eReolen: **Let's not restrict innovation**
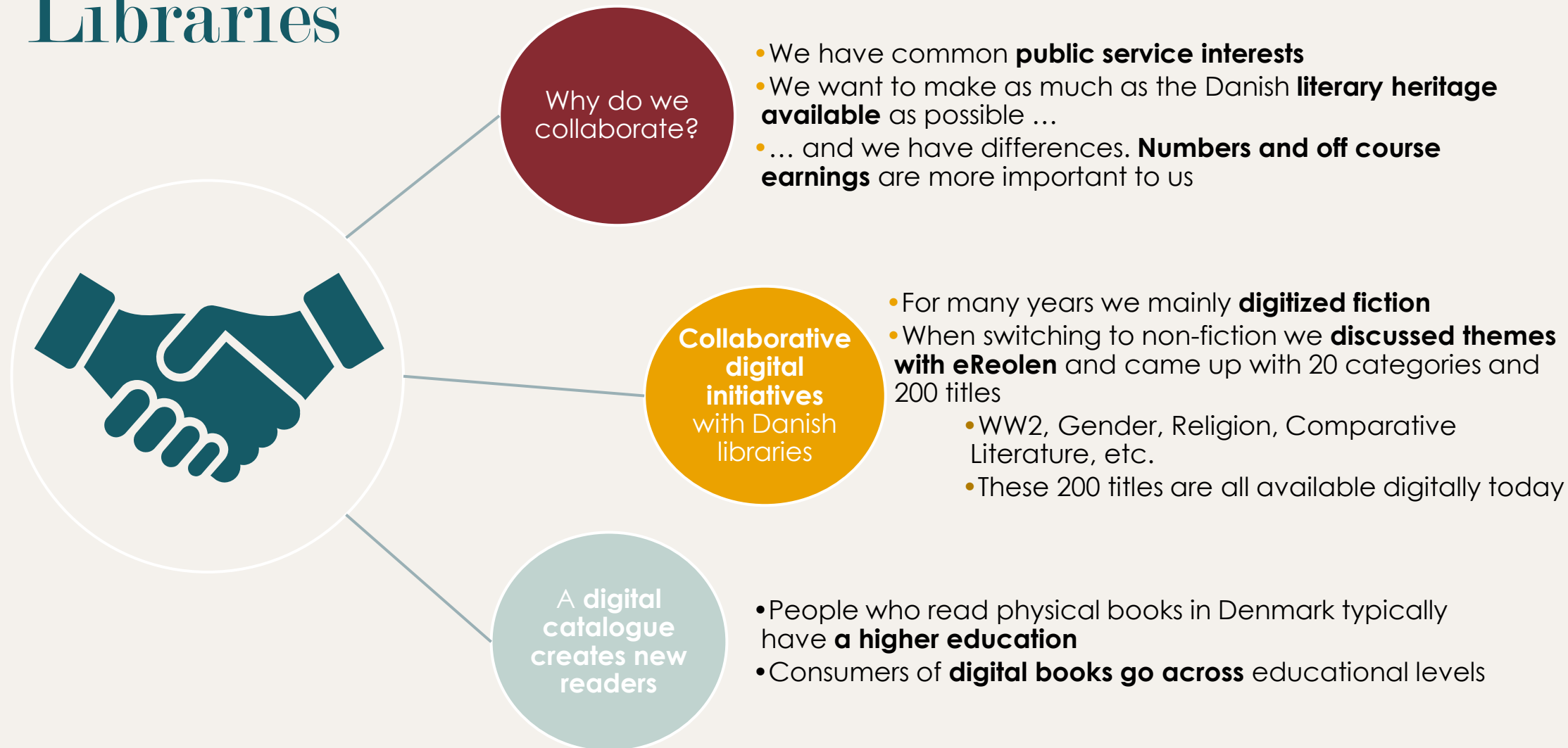
The question was:

Can a title compete at a commercial market when it is available at the library's streaming service?

… and eReolen

has not made it impossible for a commercial streaming market to exist in Denmark.

Synergies Between Saga and Danish Libraries

Why do we collaborate?

- We have common **public service interests**
- We want to make as much as the Danish **literary heritage available** as possible …
- … and we have differences. **Numbers and off course earnings** are more important to us

Collaborative digital initiatives with Danish libraries

- For many years we mainly **digitized fiction**
- When switching to non-fiction we **discussed themes with eReolen** and came up with 20 categories and 200 titles
  - WW2, Gender, Religion, Comparative Literature, etc.
  - These 200 titles are all available digitally today

A **digital catalogue** creates new readers

- People who read physical books in Denmark typically have **a higher education**
- Consumers of **digital books go across** educational levels

Challenges in the AI Era

The AI revolution is driven by **commercial interests**

- This can result in a flood of irrelevant content

There are **legal uncertainties**

There is **AI resistance** from creators and unions

- These are real concerns, but the main question for publishers and libraries should be: *What is best for the readers?*

More advanced AI could result in **less variety** in search results

Experiments with AI will occasionally result in **errors**.

- News media might be very interested in these

Opportunities in the AI era

There is window of opportunity right now to show how to work responsibly and thorough with AI

To take control in a chaotic landscape

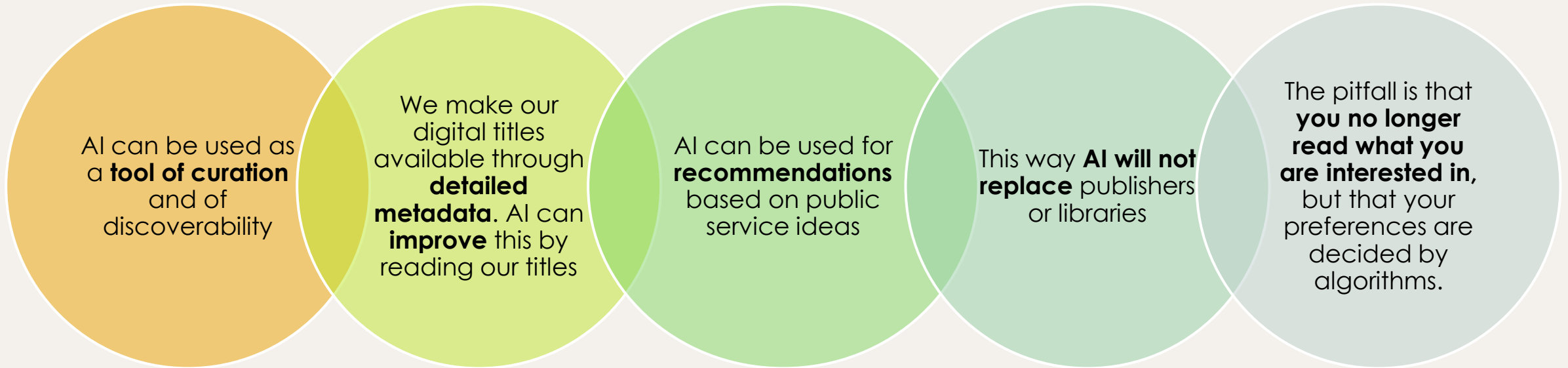We need to stand for quality and credibility – without rejecting progress

A way is to always rely on human approved content

We see retro digitization as a stronghold against irrelevant AI content

AI might be able to suggest new ways to interact with older titles

Discoverability and AI

AI can be used as a **tool of curation** and of discoverability

We make our digital titles available through **detailed metadata**. AI can **improve** this by reading our titles

AI can be used for **recommendations** based on public service ideas

This way **AI will not replace** publishers or libraries

The pitfall is that **you no longer read what you are interested in,** but that your preferences are decided by algorithms.

Conclusions: Collaborative Visions

AI is here to stay and we; publishers and libraries need to adapt

We must **adapt and take control** of these new possibilities to not be irrelevant in the future

New digital solutions can **create new readers** and make the literary heritage **relevant again**

Availability and **curation** is key; we do not solely compete inside the book industry

It not just about technology or money – **it is also about politics**

The big question is **how to find the golden, human-controlled path in an AI future**

- The publishers can provide the vast and relevant catalogues
- The libraries can focus on technical solutions, communication and interaction

Thank you!

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