

RESTRICTED AVAILABILITY OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND THE CREATION OF ANALOG SOLUTIONS; A CASE STUDY OF THE USE OF A DIGITAL SCHOOL PLATFORM IN UPPSALA MUNICIPALITY, SWEDEN

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INTRODUCTION

In Sweden in which my research is performed, most if not all schools on all levels use a digital platform to communicate with children and their parents. It could be any type of communication, from personal communication regarding a child, to information regarding homework for a class, what you need to bring to the field trip and so on. In Sweden, having a law regarding compulsory school attendance between the age of 6 and 15, and also having laws regarding access and use of personal information, the information transferred through these platforms are both important and under restricted access.

AD HOC ANALOGUE SOLUTION

The problem I investigate is when this system meets a child with special needs. Especially if that child and its parents are supported through different services. Having a support-family that the child lives with during periods of time or an institution that the child stays at temporary. Because of the restricted access to the digital platforms they are unavailable within such arrangements, forcing schools to choose other forms of communication – mostly in the form of paper “contact books”. There are also information security issues when communicating information regarding the child’s medical needs through digital platforms.

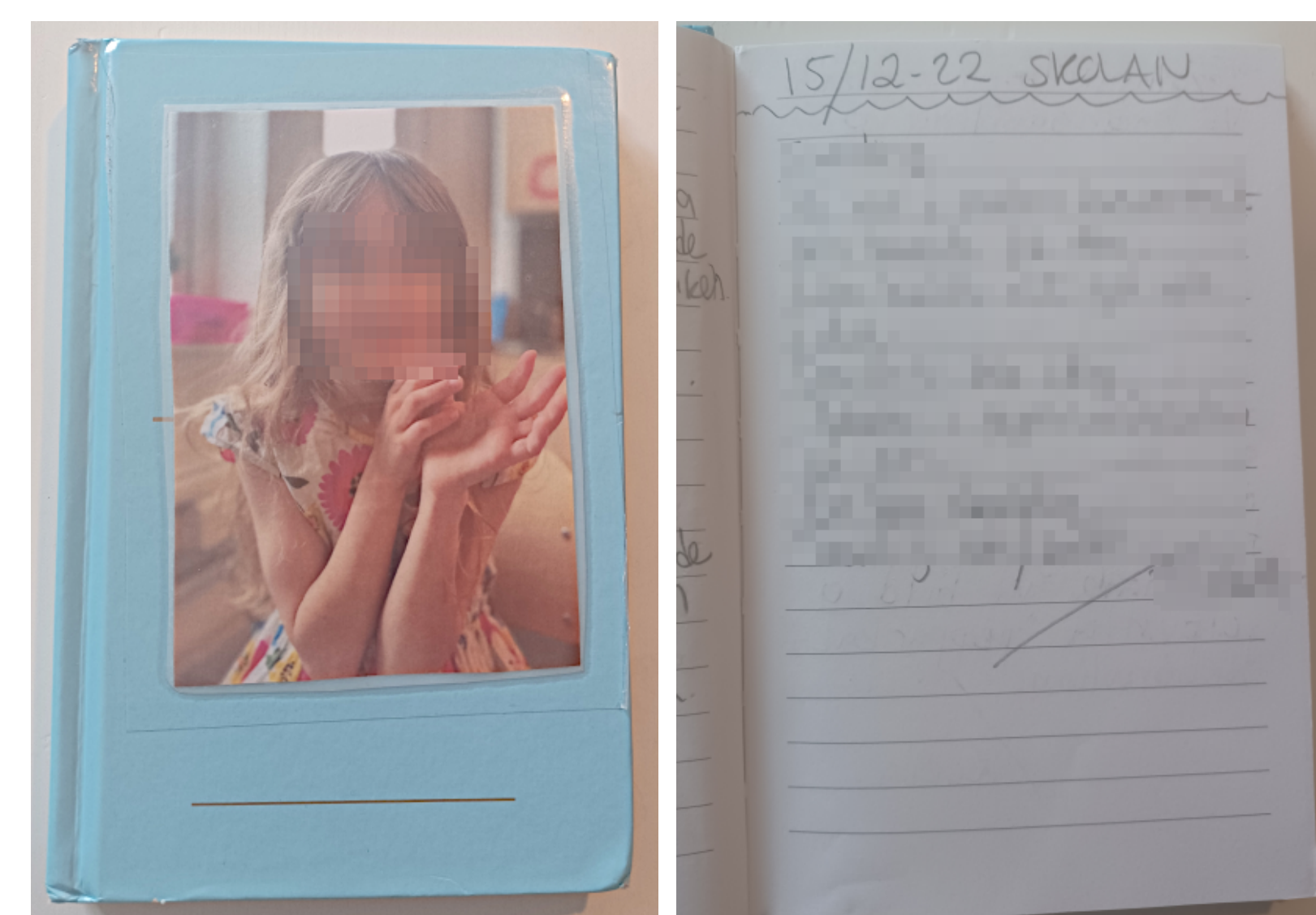
These problems with the use of the digital platforms have lead to some ad hoc solutions in Uppsala municipality, which is the focus of my investigation. In this poster I will explain the process of communication and the consequences regarding information security and preservation of archives when a system forces the users to use analog communication where digital communication is the norm.

PROBLEMS

- External agents have no access to the information system that is used to communicate between the school and the parents.
- Because communication is necessary with external agents, ad hoc solutions will be created by necessity
- In Sweden, due to the law regarding official documents ("Allmänna handlingar") a document that is sent from a governmental or municipal organization unit will be considered an official document, and needs to be considered for archiving, might be released to the public et cetera.

"KONTAKTBOKEN"

This is an example of a contact book.



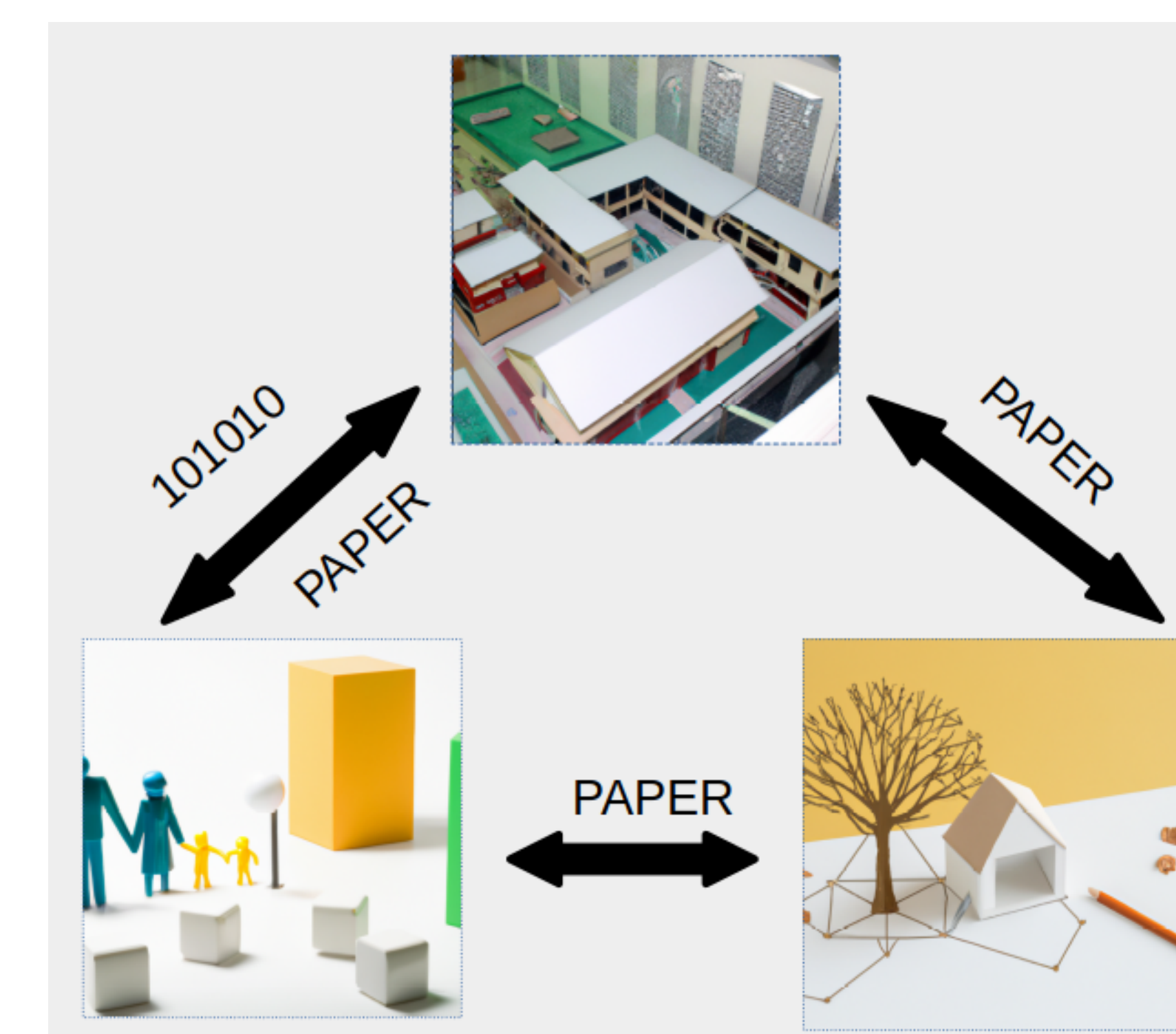
The cover of the notebook is in this example using a photo of the child as an identifier (blurred by the author). The page is a message from the school, a daily message describing what the child did during the day, what he/she ate, if he/she slept et cetera. Other information could be different needs ("need more clothes for school") and descriptions of achievements by the child. The parents can also use the book to inform the school on different matters

PROCESS

In its planned form the process would be completely within a digital system. A system in which both the school and the parents (and other agents) share information. Sending messages, uploading documents et cetera. The system in its totality (the administrative system) is built in this way thus making the solution described here ad hoc in relation to the process. Contact books have been used before the digital system, so the Ad hoc solution is not a new invention, rather a reuse of an old technique to solve a new problem.

As described in the image, communication is now divided into two systems of communication and documentation. Parents and schools in the municipality is generally communicating digitally in a system (a cloud based system not administered by the municipality), but for parents with children that attend school for children with special needs, the process is partly done in an analogue

environment, due to the use of the contact book. Some communications is facilitated through the cloud based system and some is facilitated with the use of a notebook.



CONSEQUENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- The first consequence is a more complicated process for parents with children that attend schools for children with special needs. They must both use a digital and an analogue system.
- There might be a problem in a future preservation of the communication. If the existence of a contact book is not mentioned in the digital material a vast amount of information will be missing regarding certain children.
- The QR-code in this box will direct you to a website with a log that explains the work further. Contact the author through e-mail rikard.friberg.von.sydow@sh.se or Twitter/X (@rikardfvs).
- Hope to hear from you regarding my work on ad hoc administrative solutions.

