

## A DIGITAL NATIONAL LIBRARY

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*The National Library of Norway* is now embarking on a planned digitization of all our collections in order to make as much content as possible available on the Net. It means a new way of performing our National Library function. Important fields of our cultural heritage will become easily accessible and known to many more than today. We will also digitize material that is still under copyright, as this is vital to preservation even if we are not yet allowed to provide access to the digital copy.

We are the first National Library in Europe to take on this huge venture in dialogue with important rights holders such as **The Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association** and **The Norwegian Publishers Association** – with the intention to arrive at agreements not only to preserve, but also to be able to give access to *recent* material in a digital way.

**The National Library's motivation** in digitizing this material is threefold:

Firstly, to aid that part of our cultural heritage which has been entrusted to the National Library, in reaching as many as possible. Secondly, to ensure that the content is preserved should the original document deteriorate, or if public access to the original were to be limited for safety reasons. Copyright legislation allows us to do this, and we can give access to the material for research and documentation. Thirdly, there is the challenge of preserving for posterity the material that is created digitally.

### Meeting the user where the user is

The opening of the renovated building at Drammensveien 42 in Oslo and the web site nb.no on August 15 last year set the stage not only for the preservation of materials for posterity, but for increased focus on access *today*. The cultural heritage must be available to as many as possible. Material that carries knowledge in our time must continually be placed at the disposition of research and discussion in the public space in order to generate new knowledge and experience. To achieve this, the library must be where the user is. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the users of the National Library can be found on the Internet as much as on our premises.

It is the ambition of the National Library to develop "nb.no" from a home page into a digital library where that *collections* are located digitally. We want to be as accessible to net surfers as those search engines who have "stolen" and improved on the library business model; the contents of the cultural heritage entrusted to the National Library should be only a few clicks away.

### European focus

The National Library has worked a long time to secure financial support for the digitization of the collections. France, England and the Nordic countries have also started digitizing parts of their national cultural treasures, but so far no other national library has plans to digitize *all* their collections.

Several European national libraries are cooperating on a European Digital Library. So far this consists of surveys of what is available digitally, but a larger proportion of full text is coming soon. The European Commission recently granted money and established a group to develop common strategies for digitizing the cultural heritage.

The discussion following Google's digitization and making available the contents of several of the world's large research libraries, has contributed to an increased political awareness of the need for a public funding of the digitization of the cultural heritage. In Norway too, those institutions with a responsibility to preserve the cultural heritage *conventionally*, should take responsibility for laying a *digital* groundwork. This both in order to represent a cultural political perspective and not allow the marketplace to be the sole actor, but also in order to protect copyright. Once this is done, any search engine may provide public access to the text, images, sound or graphics, after it has been digitized and organized for retrieval.

### **Norway – a straightforward nation**

Norway is a young nation and our national collections are of manageable size. Accordingly, we should be in a good position to be able to digitize the historical collections of the National Library and elsewhere within a reasonable amount of time. This is of course dependent on the speed of grants, but the National Library itself has provided a good basis through its prioritization in the present and coming years.

In order to ensure continuing digital access after the foundation has been laid, it is important that as much as possible of the material that is born digital is also deposited in digital form, so we avoid doing the job all over again. Today all text is born digital, but still the books etc that are published in Norway are deposited in printed form for us to preserve with a thousand year perspective. If we are to preserve them in our digital long term repository, we will have to scan them back to digital form. We are having a dialogue with the Norwegian Publishers Association about arrangements for digital deposit. I am confident that we will find ways of streamlining this in the future, for the good of both authors, publishers and end users.

### **The multimedia National Library**

Norway has one of the world's most modern legal deposit acts because it is technology independent. This means that *everything* that is produced and is of interest to the public is to be deposited with the National Library, be it books, newspapers, periodicals, photographs, music or broadcasting. We are also to preserve those digital signals that are never converted into anything else before they reach the user. Starting in 2005 we have harvested large parts of the Norwegian web domain .no. The National Library's digital long term repository contains 350 000 web pages from .no. This gives some indication of how much the Norwegian public communicate with each other *and* of the challenge we face concerning the preservation of documentation of the present for posterity. The electronic volatility of standards and formats makes it a greater challenge to preserve what is produced digitally than that which was written with pencil on acid-free paper. And it is a challenge to organise this material so that it can be retrieved.

### **The audiovisual**

When the National Library begins the systematic digitization of text, we have ample experience with digitizing audiovisual material. All broadcasters with a licence in Norway are to deliver copies of their programmes for preservation, and we have an extensive collaboration with the national broadcaster, NRK. At present the programmes of four radio channels are transferred every night to the National Library. NRK can find and use their own material from the Digital Radio Archive, and part of this material this is also available at certain libraries.

When it comes to newspapers, photographs, film and music, usable parts of the material are in digital form. All this opens great possibilities for distribution in cooperation with the depositors. The cooperation with the NRK is a good example of how it is possible to strike a balance between public access and commercial exploitation.

Through authentication of users it is now possible to develop models that unite public access, use for research and documentation and future pay for use services in cooperation with rights holders through digital distribution. The increased possibility for digitization raises the cultural political question of what is to be made *freely* accessible. Regardless, it will be interesting to see how the digital content of the National Library can serve as general objects of learning both in universities and higher and lower education.