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153 Audiovisual and Multimedia

A World Wide Web of Possibilities.

Using the web to present Audiovisual and Multimedia Collections

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Abstract:

The Internet provides us with various and wonderful possibilities of presenting audiovisual and multimedia to large groups of users. Audiovisual and multimedia is well suited for creating interesting Internet presentations. Are we aware of all these possibilities and how we use this relatively new tool? What kind of information is it we want to give access to? Who do we want to reach? And what knowhow is required to reach our aim? Examples of different web based presentations from the National Library of Norway.

Vision and strategy

At the National Library of Norway, a new vision and a strategy has recently been approved of. Part of this vision says that the "National library is to be (a):

- Multimedia centre of knowledge - in the front edge of future demands"

Two of the main aims are (to give):

- Knowledge and experience or adventure of high quality

- Cultural understanding and knowledge of technology

Giving access to, or information about, our audiovisual and multimedia materials, has been defined as one of our main tasks. In order to do this in a good way, there are a few basic questions that need to be asked, to make us conscious of what we do.

1. Who do we want to reach?

The arenas we have for reaching the public has of course great consequences for who we are able to reach.

The traditional users of the library (or of an archive for that matter) are the users who visit the library building. This presupposes that the user has a certain amount of knowledge about what he or she can find at the library. Also that he or she finds it interesting enough to take the time and trouble to actually go there.

The Internet gives us an arena where we “visit” the user. A channel for us to present information or adventure that makes him or her want to see more, to use the library. It is a way for us to reach large groups of possible users – if we manage to catch their attention. And what’s more – to keep it!

In addition it is of course necessary for us to be conscious about what sub-groups of users we want to reach for each presentation we make.

2. What do we want to present and why?

- i. Should we give the users a tool to find the knowledge and experience/adventure they want? In other words - let them use the catalogue?
- ii. Or should we give them the knowledge/experience/adventure itself?

I think the obvious answer is yes to both questions. We need both kinds of presentations + a mix of the two, all dependent of what we want for a particular presentation.

New ways of presenting material

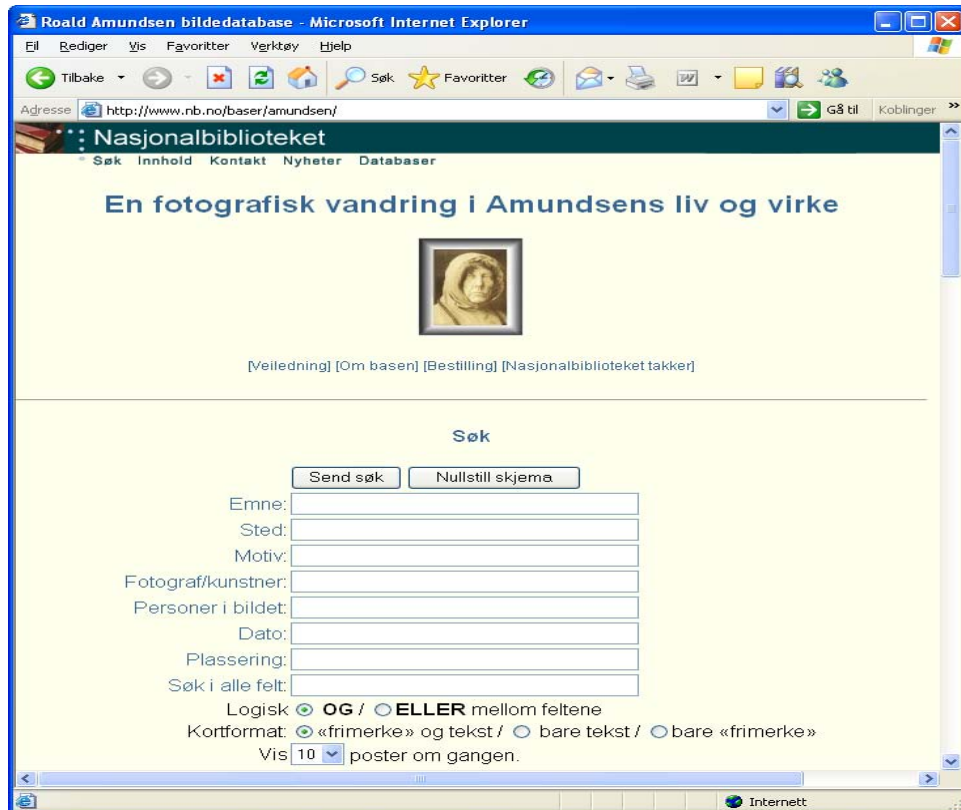
When we started to look through presentations from the National Library of Norway, it became very clear that there had been a change in the way we used the Internet. It would have been disappointing if not.

1. Traditional services moved to a new arena/The catalogue with digital content.

Some of the presentations were in many ways simple, but still quite demanding to use.

The presentation of the Roald Amundsen (the Norwegian Polar explorer) photographic collection is one example.

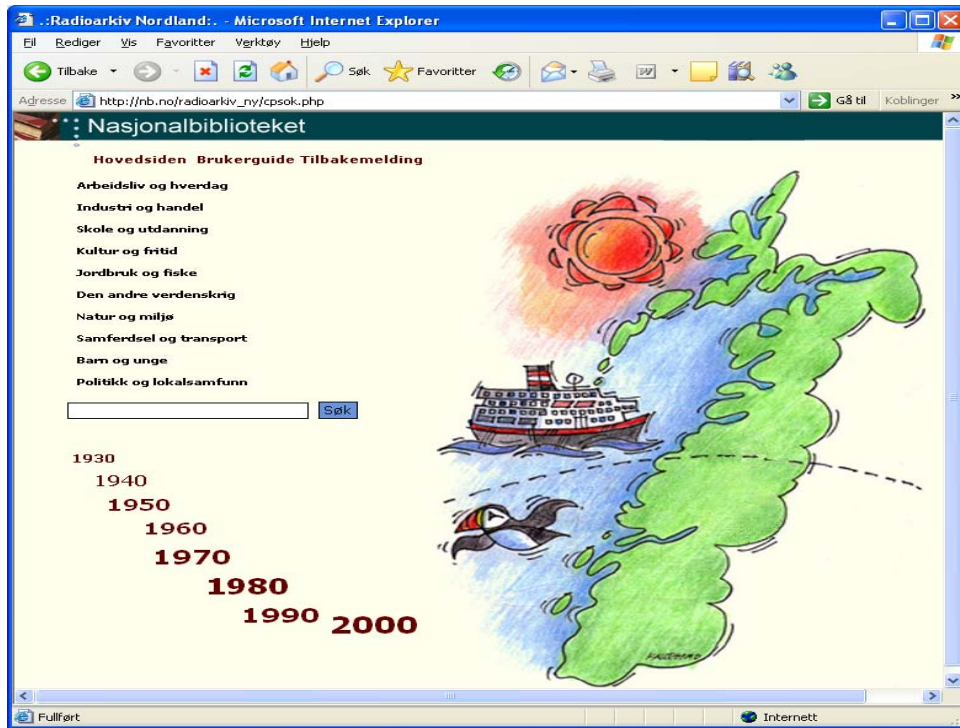
<http://www.nb.no/baser/amundsen/>



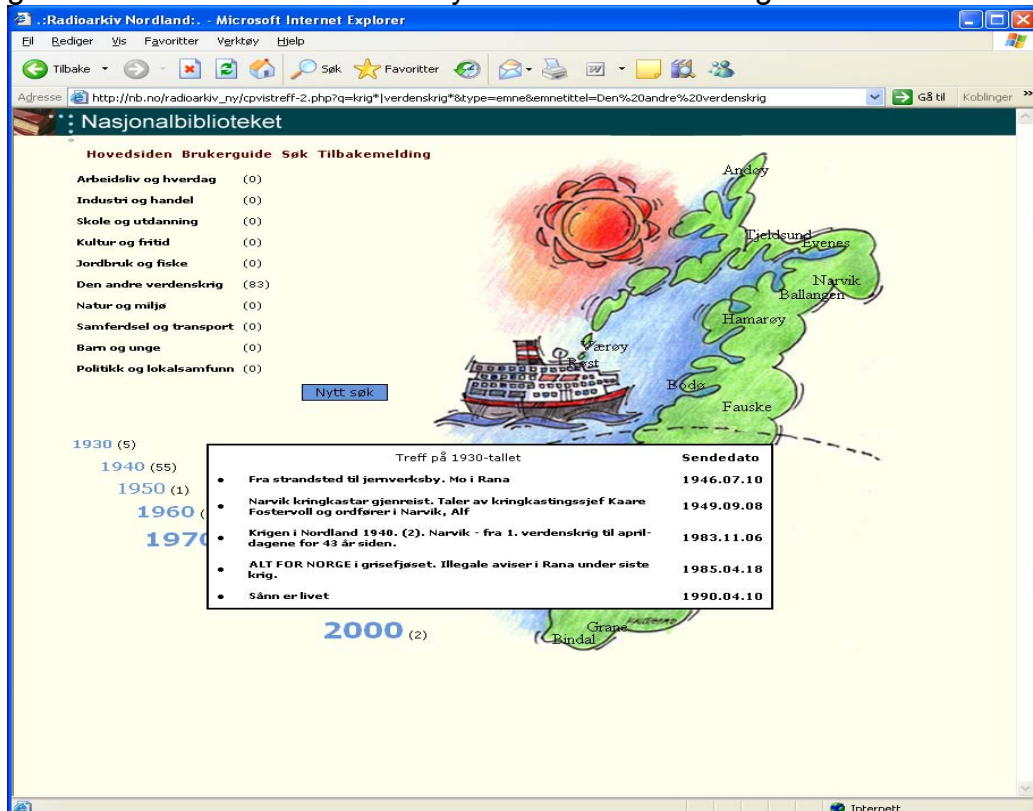
It allows the user to search in the database, and also to see the picture related to metadata about the picture – a catalogue with digital resources. It has content that I find very interesting. But it is demanding in the sense that the user must have some knowledge about Roald Amundsen and his life in order to create searches that make sense. There is nothing to take you by the hand and lead you into the content. First, you have to crack the code.

In a sense it can be said that when the catalogue has been moved to the web, the user doesn't have to actually physically visit the library. But I think it is fair to say that the user group is still the "traditional" library user, the one who already has an interest in this subject. Definitely interesting, and I think something to catch the user's attention, but perhaps not ideal to keep it.

Another and much newer example of a similar web search is DRA Nordland, the Digital Radio Archive for the Nordland County. Some adjustments are still to be made before this page is to be published. http://nb.no/radioarkiv_ny/cpsok.php.



This gives access to a section of the main Norwegian broadcaster; NRKs radio programs from or about the county of Nordland in the north of Norway. It is similar to the Amundsen web page in the sense that it is mainly a catalogue with metadata and digital resources. But this page gives the user several means by which it is easier to get to the content.

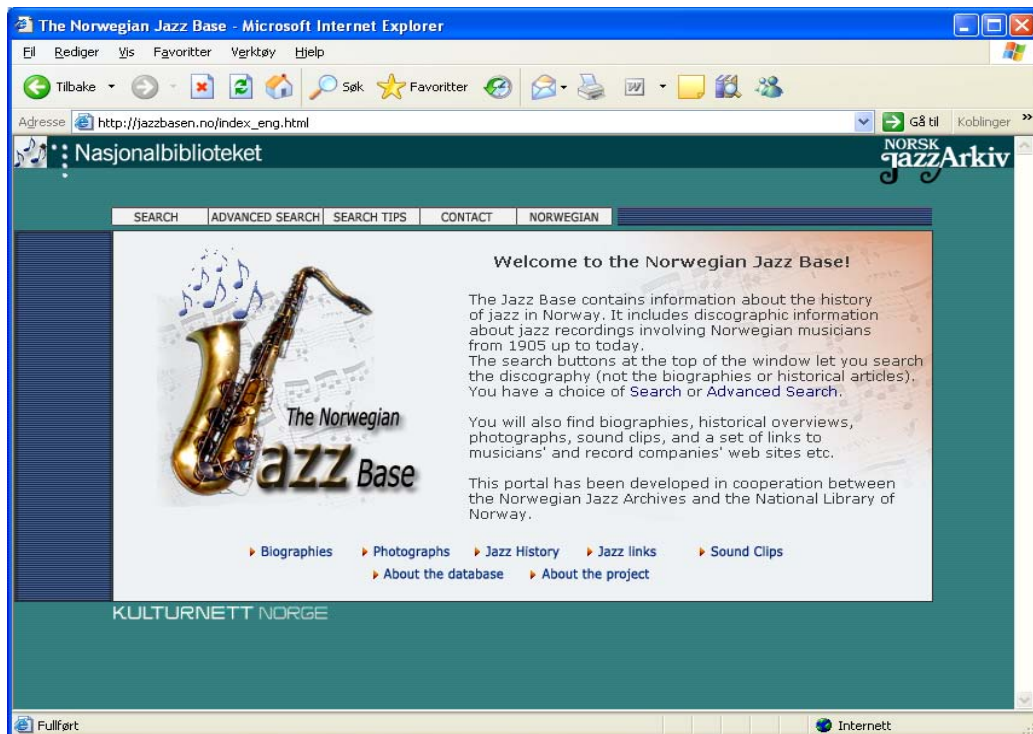


You can find all material connected to one municipality by using the cursor

on the map, there is a timeline and a list of subject categories in addition to the search field. Clicking on one of the records in the list will give a choice between listening to the actual programme and access to more metadata about the programme – or both.

2. **Catalogue + additional information.**

One example where we used the catalogue as part of a larger adaptation about one theme is the Norwegian Jazz base (<http://jazzbasen.no>). This is a discography of Norwegian recorded jazz music from 1905 up to today. There are almost 21.000 records in the database, but only about 30 of them have a file linked to the record and can be listened to. In this case, we have paid the copyright holders to let the users listen to at least a few examples of the recordings.

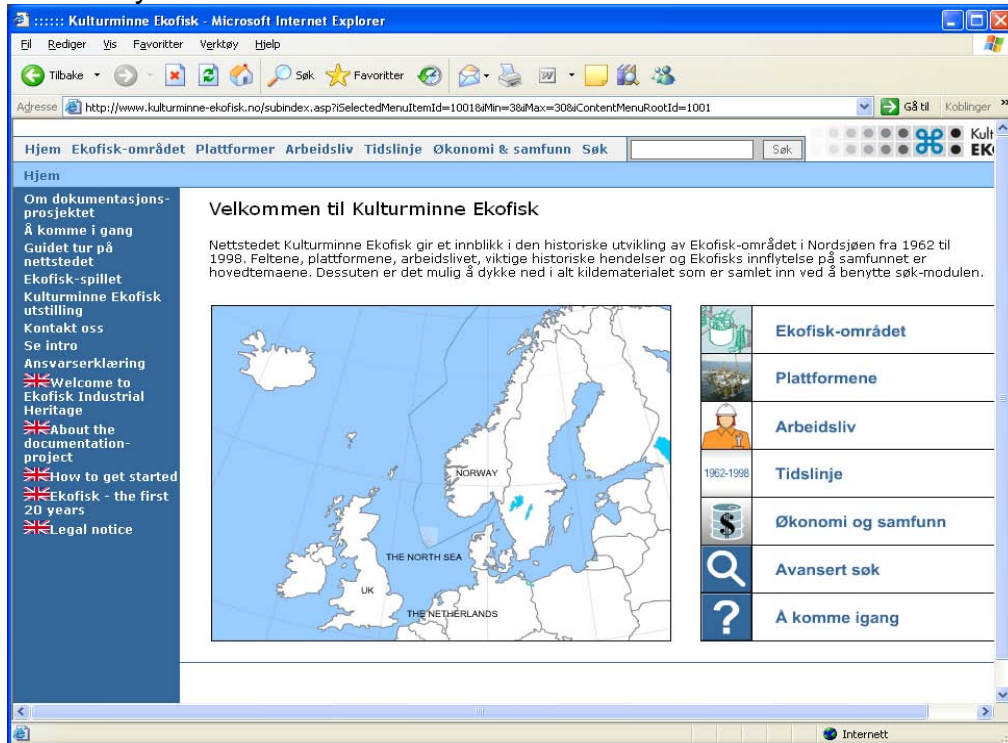


In addition to the metadata, there are articles about Norwegian jazz history, biographies about many of the musicians, portraits and other photographs. The web page has been made in cooperation with the Norwegian Jazz Archive. That has given us access to additional expertise, and also allowed us to use already existing articles. Hopefully this additional information will help the user get a larger and more interesting picture of Norwegian jazz music. The different parts of these pages are not really integrated, but independent parts of the web page.

3. **Searching in several databases through one search.**

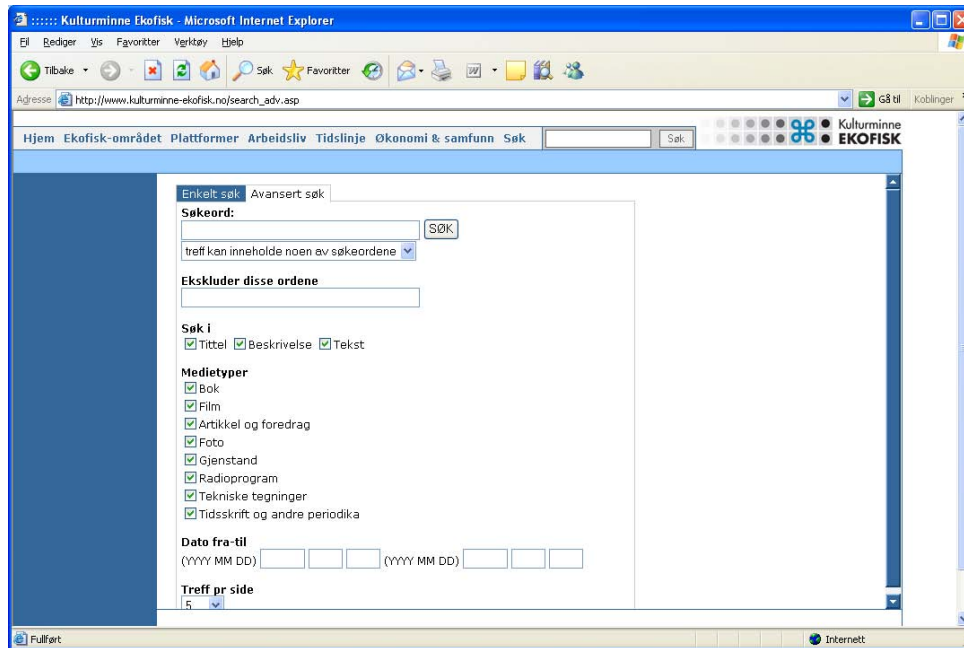
Another example where the catalogue functions as part of a larger picture is the webpage called Ekofisk Industrial Heritage. (<http://www.kulturminne-ekofisk.no/>). This site is cooperative effort of the National Library and the Norwegian Oil museum. Ekofisk was the first oil installation in the North Sea, and this page shows the history of these first years of the oil industry

in Norway.



In addition to the actual search, it gives a list of different categories of information that together give comprehensive documentation of the historic development of the Ekofisk area in the North Sea from 1962 to 1998. Different categories are The Ekofisk area, the platforms, working life, a timeline, economy and society, advanced search, and more practical (IT-technical) information about how to get started. Within each category, there is a range of different information: photos, articles, interviews, sound-clips, moving images etc.

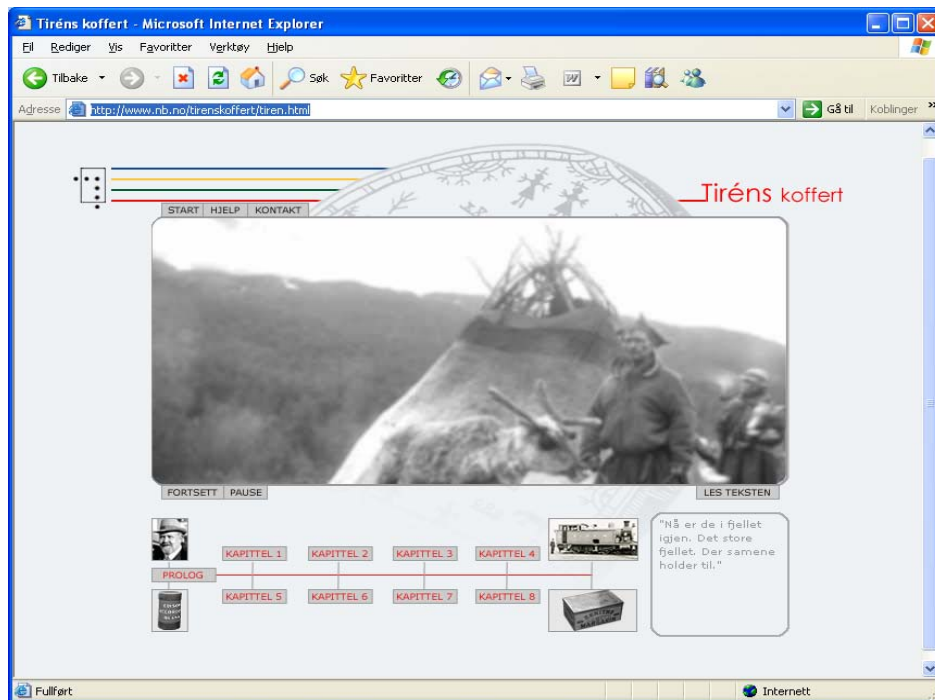
The concept is in many ways the same as for the Jazz base, with a catalogue + other information, but this is a much more comprehensive site. The different areas are much better integrated. Another big difference is the possibility to search in a range of different databases and materials through one search. Which databases are of course not interesting for the user, and he or she can decide from the types of material they want to search for by marking check boxes.



The criterion for selecting material is the subject; the documentation of an industrial event in Norwegian history. We find that integration between bibliographical information and other information strengthens the value of the collections. It gives knowledge and experience and “adventure”, but also the tool to find more – more books, more film, more technical drawings and more articles. Hopefully it can catch people’s interest, and hold it.

4. Digital storytelling

Collections can have different aspects that make them interesting. Tiréns koffert (Tiréns suitcase, <http://www.nb.no/tirenskoffert/>) tells the strange story about a suitcase filled with Sami music from the first decades of the 20th century. The early Edison wax cylinders disappeared in the 1930s, and were accidentally found in a Swedish archive 87 years later. This is definitely a case where it is the experience or adventure that is presented to the public. This time not only the content of the collection, but circumstances around the history of the collection itself.



To create this piece of storytelling on the net, people with many different kinds of background and knowledge were involved. First and foremost the persons who actually found the collection and could give the story itself, the graphic designer, the researchers, the media experts etc, and then also a dramatic adviser to put all these different pieces together so that the story could be told. Other areas of competence than is usually found in libraries and archives, but perhaps necessary when trying to pass on a story?

The aim has been to use the oral story tradition, and the story is told through sound clips where the people involved each tell their part, and a narrator gives the background. The sound clips are coloured by the use of photos, film clips, radio programs etc. This web page does not include a catalogue, but has links to other relevant pages.

The aspect of catching interest is the main focus here, to give experience and adventure. I think it also shows that it is possible to present a collection, or information about a collection at a very early stage. Before we've had the time and possibility to identify, catalogue and perhaps preserve anything at all. And it can still be of interest to the public.

5. Small samples from the collection

All presentations are of course small samples of the large collection. I would like to show a tiny sample. A very short glance from National Library of Norway's new web page which will be released during the conference. It is a presentation of 11 photos from an external project called 'Through the eyes of children'. The pictures are taken by children, and there is a short text to each picture. Enjoy!



Summing up

The Internet is, in spite of the fact that it has been here for years, in many ways a new arena for libraries and archives. A new arena, and new rules to play by. We need to capture our place here, and to be aware that we operate in direct competition with many others; newspapers, companies selling products and services, other institutions - an uncountable number of institutions and persons trying to catch people's attention.

This has become an independent subject area in itself. And we need this knowledge. So who can we ask for help? A few examples:

- The journalist, who can be the intermediary between the content that libraries and archives have in their possession, and the public.
- The dramatic adviser, who can put the pieces of a puzzle together and make it come alive.
- The educator, who can adapt the content to a particular user group.
- The researcher, who can write articles based on what he finds in our collections.
- All these in addition to the graphic designers, the programmers, the librarians, the archivists –

After having said this, let me come back to the librarian and the catalogue. I recently met a friend of mine who is a researcher. I told her about this lecture, and talked about all these different kinds of occupations. She looked more and more worried. Finally she said – “but the catalogue, I’m dependent on the catalogue in my work”. And of course, as I mentioned to start with: the answer to the question “content or catalogue?” is definitely “Yes, please!”

Thank you!