



# The NRK shall **unite the people**

When Norway is hit by a catastrophic event, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation has a very special responsibility.



**Hans-Tore Bjerkaas,**  
**NRK's Director General.**

Photograph: Ole Kaland/NRK

On the 22nd of July, 2011, our country was struck by very serious terrorist attacks. The bombing in Oslo and the massacre on the island of Utøya not only shook an entire nation, but affected people far beyond our borders. These events and their effects on our nation will remain a sombre part of our history. When our country experiences a catastrophic event, a public broadcaster has a very special responsibility. This responsibility is to inform, update and analyse. Furthermore, it is about relaying reactions that pour in, it is about uniting a people, to create a sense of unity and give individuals an opportunity to work through their feelings.

During the first hours after the terrorist attacks, the NRK's news organization and its reporters from the local NRK offices worked to report everything that had happened. It was important to utilise the whole spectrum of media channels available, as the attacks occurred

during the summer holiday season. For many, mobile telephones or radios were their most important news sources. At the same time, the television news flow was very central. It quickly became clear that there was a need to let other content give way out of consideration to the enormous need for information that arose in the public.

After a while, it became the NRK's task to be present where people gathered to share their feelings, express their sorrow and experience fellowship. The country's leaders have received international recognition for the way in which they handled the crisis and great attention was drawn to how the Norwegian people responded to terror by going out onto the streets with roses and defending their democracy. It was important to the NRK to give the entire nation an opportunity to be a part of the shared sense of community after the attacks.

The NRK's public purposes are described in its by-laws. To carry out this responsibility, one has to take into consideration society's and people's rapidly changing media habits. In accordance with the NRK's overall strategy, which we revised in 2011, one of its main goals is to unite people. The NRK shall be an important common reference. This applies not only in times of crisis, but also during sporting events, like the 2011 World Ski Championships in Oslo, and spectacular national experiences. An example of this is "Hurtigruten - minutt for minutt" – "The Norwegian Coastal Express: Minute by Minute", a gigantic television event, an internet stunt that became bigger than itself and its original participants. This event spurred nationwide participation, interaction and a sense of a common experience that is unparalleled.

We believe that there is a connection between a public broadcaster's ability to play a unifying role during great entertainment events, and its ability to play a unifying role during important social debates, elections - or when the public finds itself in an extreme or demanding situation.

Another of the NRK's main goals is to be able to offer the entire breadth and spectrum with regard to content. It is the role and privilege of a public broadcaster to not reject content out of consideration to outside economic parties. The NRK is owned by the Norwegian people and can, therefore, be independent. We choose to reflect

the entire spectrum, giving space to news, critical and investigative journalism, in-depth reporting, culture, international affairs, sports and entertainment. Surveys show that 87% of the Norwegian population takes daily advantage of one or more of the NRK's offerings.

Innovation is one of the NRK's goals. Thanks to systematic development work, the NRK was able to launch more new content this year than ever before, and with great success. One example of this is the programme Teenage Boss. Its purpose was to present the somewhat inaccessible subject of family finances through narratives capable of reaching a wider audience. The series, in which young boys and girls are allowed to manage their family's finances on their own for a month, has been a success, also amongst younger viewers. This format has been commissioned in many countries. In the Nordic countries, the NRK now distinguishes itself as a developer of many new formats.

Innovation is very important to the NRK. Our initiatives in recent years have made us more attractive to a younger public than ever before and done this in a way that has not resulted in us losing our faithful viewers, listeners and users. Showing youths and young adults that good, advertisement-free content is available has been a great realization of our societal responsibility.

Over many generations, the NRK has developed a solid connection with the children, thus it was only natural for the NRK to try to meet their needs after the 22nd of July. The children's news programme Supernytt ("Super News"), which has unique experience in mirroring news events in a way that children can understand, took on the responsibility of narrating the terrorist attacks for children. An important message was that the perpetrator had been arrested and that children no longer needed to be afraid. Supernytt received Save the Children's children's rights prize for 2011.

# About the **NRK**

## Status in 2011

The NRK succeeds in reaching the Norwegian population. 87% of the population takes advantage of at least one of the NRK's offers daily, be it through radio, television, the internet or a mobile telephone. The NRK's three television channels have a collective market share of 41%. The channel NRK1, which has a public broadcasting profile, maintained its position as the public's first choice with a 32% market share in 2011, and the children's channel NRK Super has continued to grow in popularity amongst children. Even with international competition, amongst others from Disney's channels, NRK Super is Norway's most popular children's channel with a 41% market share while on air amongst children between 2 and 11 years of age.

The average number of hours spent watching television in Norway in 2011 went down to 178 minutes a day as compared to the previous year. It seems as if the effect from a wider range of channels being made available in connection with digitalization, has run its course. Viewing of pre-recorded television broadcasts is still not widespread amongst the Norwegian population. In 2011, Norwegians viewed an average of 5 pre-recorded minutes daily, although there were big differences be-

tween target groups and genres. Pre-recorded broadcasts were most often viewed by women, young people and households with a PVR (Personal Video Recorder). Drama and entertainment programmes are the most popular forms of pre-recorded broadcasting.

With over 3 million daily listeners aged 12 years or older, radio is still one of the most widely used forms of media in Norway. In total, the NRK's radio channels had a market share of 63% in 2011. The channels P1 and P2 face tough competition in the age demographic 30-50 years, and P1 has lost market share in recent years. Nevertheless, P1 is clearly the listeners' first choice, and the NRK's P3 and mP3 channels are reaching younger listeners well.

The internet is almost universally accessible in Norway. The battle for the public's attention on the internet is not only being fought by Norwegian websites, but also to a large extent by international parties, like Facebook, Google and YouTube. The NRK's homepage, NRK.no, has in recent years worked diligently to become one of the country's leading providers of online content. It is currently competing with the newspaper Dagbladet to be the second biggest provider of online content in Nor-

way. When it comes to the number of unique daily users, NRK.no experienced the largest increase in 2011, but the newspaper VG's homepage, vg.no, is still the country's biggest provider of online content.

In 2011, the NRK's internet television had an average daily viewership of 109,000 unique users. By way of comparison, online radio had an average of 26,000 users, and 23,818,301 podcast downloads were registered.

Mobile use of the internet is growing quickly, amongst other things as a result of an increase in the number of smartphones used by the population. According to TNS Gallup, 57% of the population owned a smartphone by the end of 2011 and nearly 30% used it to access the internet daily. To make it easier for people to find its content on mobile telephones, the NRK launched a simple application just after New Year in 2012. The application gives users quick access to the NRK's most popular content. It was first launched for the iPhone, but will soon also be available in an Android-version.

## NRK.no

Preparing and developing the NRK's online content and new platforms is necessary to fulfil the NRK's public purpose in this area. Its responsibility to "be present on, and develop new services on, all important media platforms..." (cf. section 13) is both ambitious and challenging. During the last two years, much work has been done with regard to prioritizing the core contents provided by the NRK and choosing technologies that are sustainable in the long term. It is important to the NRK to be present with high value content to the public on platforms with many users, and to do this in a cost-effective and innovative way.

The NRK's internet television offer is important in meeting the public's need to use the NRK's content freely regardless of time, place and platform. In 2011, the NRK worked to develop a new NRK-player, which represents a technological generation shift in relation to today's internet radio and television. It will be launched to the public in 2012. The NRK-player will initially be launched for the personal computer format, but will also be made accessible on and adapted for the mobile telephone, tablet computer and television platforms. It will contain a parental control button, which will enable parents to enter a pin code in only a few strokes that prevents children from accessing series intended for adults.

The front page of nrk.no is continually updated with news from Norway and the world. Our local offices across the country are important contributors to our front homepage at nrk.no, as well as to our sports and genre desks. Our twelve district offices in Norway published a total of 41,863 articles in 2011. This amounts to about half of all the articles published on nrk.no. In addition to nrk.no, the NRK offers the webpages NRKbeta.no, nrkskole.no, P3.no, nrksuper.no, yr.no and UT.no.

## Television channels

The content strategies of NRK's television channels are adjusted a little every year, but our overall three-channel strategy remains the same, also for the next five-year period.

- **NRK1** shall offer a wide range of genres, unite people and provide common points of reference. Content now playing an important role with regard to public support, include its weekend entertainment programmes, sports broadcasts, drama, coverage of the 2011 elections and of various events, such as the Melodi Grand Prix, the Eurovision Song Contest, Idrettsgalla, TV-aksjonen (charitable public fundraising) and others.
- **NRK2** offers more in-depth coverage, knowledge, culture and topics of current interest through pro-

grammes like "Bokprogrammet" (a literature programme), Filmbonanza (a film programme), "Nasjonalgalleriet" (an arts programme), "Lydverket" (a music programme), Aktuelt (current affairs), "Urix" (foreign affairs) and a broad documentary offering.

**The NRK2** broadcast "Hurtigruten minutt for minutt" (the Norwegian Coastal Express Minute for Minute) unexpectedly became 2011's biggest Norwegian television success. During a few bright days in June, NRK2 was bigger than all four of the other big Norwegian TV channels combined.

- **NRK3** focuses on innovative Norwegian content and the development of new talent. It has worked long-term to develop many Norwegian initiatives, and in 2011 the channel had a big success with its Norwegian productions like "Sigrid søker selskap", "Trekant", "Dama til..", "Trygdekontoret", "Radioresepsjonen på TV" and "Dating i mørket". Together with NRK P3, mP3 and offers from nrk.no, NRK 3 provides relevant content to younger audiences. NRK 3 shares its channel placement with NRK Super, which is the NRK's children's channel with a vision of creating a world in which children grow and are considered important.

## Radio channels

In May of 2011, the Norwegian Parliament adopted the government's plan to switch from FM to digital radio in 2017. The NRK is currently working on content strategies adapted to a future in which all of its channels become available throughout the entire country. At the same time, there is an ongoing renewal of the programme schedules for the NRK's radio channels.

- **NRK P1** is Norway's biggest radio channel, measured in both the number of listeners and the amount of editorial resources available. Offices in Trondheim, Oslo and Bergen, as well as in smaller districts, aim to reach broad groups of listeners over 30. The channel emphasizes news, music, entertainment and daily features. In 2012, its daily schedule will be changed significantly so that P1 can reach out to an even greater extent than before to adult Norwegian listeners, providing relevant content at the right times of day.
- Many new programmes were launched on **NRK P2** in 2011. "Ekko", a new and current two-hour long societal programme, has replaced "Sånn er livet" and "Verdt å vite". "Kulturhuset" is the new "Kulturmagasinet". Additionally, P2 offers a new music programme called "Spillerom". "Nyhetslunsj" provides news and in-depth in the middle of the day. In 2011, P2 also renewed its signature sound. The goal is to develop a modern and inviting identity for the channel.
- **NRK P3** is a youth radio channel focused on new music, humour and entertainment and the everyday life of young people today. The target audience is Norwegian youth between the age of 15 and 30. P3 has an important role to play as a catalyst for new Norwegian music. Through its live broadcasts on "P3 Sessions" and "Urørt", NRK P3 brings new Norwegian artists to light every year. It also aims to be present where young people are, deliver content from the biggest Norwegian music festivals and get out and about with school-sessions. Through co-operation with "VG-Lista Topp 20", P3 visits the biggest Norwegian cities and brings live concerts featuring the most popular artists.

## The terrorist **attacks**

The 2011 bombing in the government quarters and the massacre on the island of Utøya, in which the perpetrator killed or injured a large number of youths at a political summer camp, was a shocking experience to the entire nation. With these events, the NRK faced its toughest challenge ever as a public broadcaster.

The NRK's responsibility was to provide information about, mediate and analyse, what had happened. In the days following the terrorist attacks, it was also the NRK's responsibility to unite the Norwegian people, mediate their reactions and give them the opportunity to work through their feelings.

### Minutes

The bomb in the government quarters exploded at 3:25 pm. At 3:30 pm, nrk.no published its first report on the incident: "Big Explosion in Downtown Oslo." The first radio report was broadcast almost simultaneously. NRK.no offered its first direct report a couple minutes later, followed by an expanded version at 3:33 pm that described great material damage and injured people on the streets. At 3:38 pm, the first radio report from the place of the explosion was aired. From 4:00 pm and onwards, continuous coverage was offered on both television and radio.

Programme directors, producers and engineers had to handle a large number of reports and live commentary. Amongst these was the first interview with Jens Stoltenberg after the tragic events. During the first phase of the coverage, it was the bombing in Oslo that dominated the news. At about 5:30 pm, reports of the shootings on Utøya began to emerge.



Only minutes after the explosion in downtown Oslo the NRK was reporting its first descriptions of it from the government quarter. Photograph: Kim Erlandsen

## Extra broadcasts

The NRK delivered a total of 77 hours of extra broadcasts on NRK1, NRK2 and NRK3. 37 hours of extra broadcasts were produced for radio. Moreover, radio and television broadcasted together for 17 hours. This was in addition to all of the ordinary news broadcasts. Nr.no provided continuous content in the form of sound, pictures and text. By the 1st of September, it had produced over 900 articles about the attacks.

The NRK shared content with other media players. For instance, the television channel TV Norge and the Nordic public broadcasting services chose to cancel their regular programming and broadcast the NRK's coverage on their channels instead.

## Internationally

The NRK offers visual materials and co-ordination of technical assistance through the EBU. In the course of the first four days after the attacks, the NRK delivered 72 edited news reports and 18 live broadcasts to the EBU. Additionally, many Nordic countries used NRK's own live coverage. Since the 22nd of July, the NRK has delivered more than 180 live or edited reports to the EBU. The NRK established a live position in its studio on Young's Square from 7:00 pm in the evening on Friday the 22nd of July.