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## **NAPS in Europe - promotion of electronic information services under the IMPACT 2 programme - the scene in Norway**

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**NAPS IN EUROPE - PROMOTION OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION  
SERVICES UNDER THE IMPACT 2 PROGRAMME  
- THE SCENE IN NORWAY**

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**National Awareness Partners**

A network of National Awareness Partners (NAP network) was created under IMPACT in 1992 with a view to strengthening the demand for, and supply of, electronic information in Europe.

Today the NAP network is a dedicated network of 30 organizations in 17 countries throughout the European Economic Area (EEA): Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom, - these are the former 12 EU countries and 5 EFTA countries. Some countries have more than one NAP depending on geography and population. The network is supported by a Central Support Team (CST) in Luxembourg.

**The Norwegian NAPs**

When the EEA agreement opened for EFTA participation in IMPACT, the NAP network was extended accordingly in 1994. Two NAPs were chosen for Norway by the Directorate General XIII/E of the European Commission: Statskonsult in Oslo and INFOSOEK, The Technical University Library of Norway, in Trondheim. These two centres, as well as the centres in the other "old" EFTA countries, have now been



operational for nine months, providing training, information and knowledge on the role electronic information can play for SMEs, libraries, universities and other higher education sectors.

On November 28 1994 the Norwegian people voted "no" to EU membership in a referendum, and today 2 of the 17 NAP countries, Iceland and Norway, are EFTA-participants, while Austria, Finland and Sweden are full EU members from 1995.

The Norwegian NAPs were proposed by Norwegian IMPACT, which will be explained later in the paper. The two NAPs are different in nature: Statskonsult, the Directorate of Public Management, is an adviser to government and public administration, whilst INFOSOEK is a department of the Technical University Library of Norway, which is the national resource library and information centre in technology and architecture, giving services to universities as well as to Norwegian industry, research institutes, higher education, local governments and the general public.

INFOSOEK was among the first users of electronic information services in Norway and is still one of the largest users, with access to around 60 online services worldwide. The staff is experienced not only in online searching, CD-ROMs are also in daily use. Other activities include document delivery, training, consultancy, and R&D mainly in the field of electronic information. The library is a partner of the BIBSYS database library system in Norway, and INFOSOEK gives regular BIBSYS training workshops throughout the country. INFOSOEK is also organizing training courses for different hosts and database producers who want to promote their services in Norway.

INFOSOEK has, since 1986, hosted the Norwegian DIANE Centre, which is a centre giving advice and training on electronic information. All these activities give valuable experiences to the work with NAP.



## **EUs IMPACT programme**

IMPACT (Information Market Policy Actions) is a programme of DG XIII of the European Commission aimed at developing the European information services market. The programme started in 1988 as a plan of action for setting up an information services market, for the years 1988-1990. A second phase of the programme was called IMPACT 2, planned for the period 1991-1995 as a continuation and extension of the activities begun under the 1988-1990 phase. The total funding of the two programmes has been 100 million ECU, supporting more than 120 projects.

The main objectives of the ongoing programme is "to establish an internal information service market, identify the strength and weaknesses of existing information services in the Community, promote the use of advanced information services, stimulate and reinforce the competitive capability of European suppliers of such services, reinforce European cooperation in order to achieve a Community information services policy, and make use of results supplied by other Community or national programmes with a view of strengthening the information services market", in other words: IMPACT activities focus on strengthening the demand for, and supply of, electronic information services across Europe.

The IMPACT 2 programme is now in its final year and a new programme, INFO 2000, is planned to stimulate the development of a European multimedia information content industry for business, administrations and citizens.

## **Norwegian IMPACT**

The European Economic Area Agreement (EEA agreement) opened for EFTA countries to participate in the IMPACT programme and Norway joined the programme in 1993. (Protocol 31 about information services in the EEA). In order to take advantage of this participation in IMPACT 2, the Ministry of Industry and Energy decided it was important to support national actions, and established the project



"Norwegian IMPACT" with its secretariat in Statskonsult, Oslo, and a board of 8 members as a steering committee. The aim of Norwegian IMPACT is to connect national activities to the EU IMPACT programme, to establish projects and disseminate information about IMPACT, call for tenders etc., and in this way stimulate Norwegian industry to take an active part in the programme and make products. Norwegian IMPACT is a coordinating body at the national level for IMPACT activities in the country.

Norway has paid a contribution to the IMPACT programme according to the EFTA key distribution, and it has to be clarified whether Iceland and Norway can take part in the INFO 2000 programme according to the above mentioned protocol.

### **NAP activities**

The NAP activities are a combination of help desk, training courses, lectures and dissemination of information about EU and IMPACT. With two NAPs in the country it is possible to divide activities according to geographic areas and types of actions. For INFOSOEK it is in many cases a natural continuation and extension of work which is already being done in training and advising on electronic information services. Even after the Norwegian referendum with a "no" to EU membership, the demand for information about the European Union and European databases is increasing.

The INFOSOEK NAP has arranged several courses on ECHO databases, and particularly training courses on CORDIS (Community Research and Development Information Service) databases are of interest in the technological environment.

"Open days" have been arranged, with lectures and demonstrations of online databases and CD-ROMs, and the Norwegian NAPs and Norwegian IMPACT have participated with a stand at several exhibitions and conferences. Oslo Online & Telecom'95 was such an event in May, where a special session was devoted to IMPACT. Participation in at least 3 exhibitions is planned for the fall, experience has shown that this is an efficient way to come in contact with people to inform about and show how electronic



information services can be of interest to them. A "road show" about electronic information services and IMPACT is also being planned for different parts of the country. Such events will take place in cooperation with local organizations.

Several Internet courses have been extra popular so far this year, informing how to find information about EU, calls for proposals, and other Internet information. Courses on CD-ROM and multimedia have also been arranged.

Other activities of Norwegian IMPACT and the NAPs have been workshops for potential partners in IMPACT projects, and also conferences or meetings on special subjects. Last fall there was a meeting on pricing of public information, and next month a conference on copyright and multimedia will take place - examples showing that discussions in EU countries is followed by discussions in EEA countries.

### **Marketing of IMPACT and NAP activities**

The main target group for NAP activities are new and potential users of electronic information services. Such services have been used in Norway since the early 70's. The first users were university libraries and some larger companies, which were mainly using international online databases. Today the use of electronic information services is rather well-established in the larger companies, in some research centres, in universities and colleges, but is much less used in small and medium sized companies (SMEs), by consultants, authorities and local governments etc.

According to a market analysis made last year by Norwegian IMPACT, the electronic information services in Norway are characterized as being fragmented into narrow niches, showing low awareness within the potential user community. Therefore, one of the main efforts to increase the use of electronic information services has to be directed towards new potential users, but because of the rapid developments in the



field, also trained online users need information on new products, services, telecommunications etc. and are therefore target groups for NAP activities.

This year Norwegian IMPACT and the NAPs are participating in a European study on electronic information, the so-called Member State Study (MSStudy). During 1995 data are being collected in all IMPACT participating countries about the production and use of electronic information.

The production of national databases also started in Norway around 1970. Today the number of domestic databases is around 200, which are registered in a database on the Norwegian network UNINETT and can be searched via Internet. The country has well-developed telecommunication networks, high coverage of PC technology and high usage of Internet. Promotion of Internet seems to be unnecessary - every week there is some information in newspapers, TV etc. But training courses are still popular.

The main goal for NAP activities for the near future is to reach the SMEs. This is a rather difficult group to access, but there is a project planned in cooperation between some technological libraries, the National Office for Research and Special Libraries, the Norwegian Research Council, the telecommunication body Telenor, Norwegian IMPACT and the NAPs, so hopefully also this group of industry will in the future include more frequent users of electronic information services.

## **Conclusions**

It is of great importance that technological libraries with all their resources, should take part in activities for industry like NAP. After the "no" from Norway to EU membership, it is important to inform about our participation through the EEA agreement, which states that the internal market, except for the custom union, is extended to Iceland and Norway.

This agreement is also important for the NAP activities in the future. There has now been an initiative to Norwegian IMPACT to make an electronic database, with

information regarding EEA, accessible on Internet and this will be available in the near future.

Further reading about the NAP network:

1. National Awareness Partners Network: "Promoting the use of electronic information in Europe" Brochure from the European Commission DG XIII, 4 p. 1995.
2. NAP National Awareness Partners Network. IMPACT programme. European Commission DG XIII/E, 36 p. Version 1. 1995.