

THE HIDDEN JEWEL IN PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

COMMUNICATING LOCAL STORIES

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Abstract: During the summer of 2017 DR Archive brought 1500 TV clips and 100 radio clips to the residents of five towns in Denmark. More than 10.000 people interacted with the clips, and with each other, through five installations. The clips were stories from the DR archive about the past life of the towns that DR Archive was visiting. This article is a case story that describes the tour and the work that was put into what was called the tent-project. Drawing on research within the field of social media, the article gives some insight into the effects and the values that the archive materials have had in the interaction with the locals in the region where the stories originated from.

Keywords: social media, audiovisual archive materials, local history, identity, audience, users

1 Introduction

As a public service broadcaster, it is DR's mandate to serve the entire population; the rich and the poor, the young and the old¹. The documentation of a nation's history often focuses on the lives of the rich and the famous. Ordinary people's lives are not as well documented. Public service broadcasting has taken that role in the 20th century, and that is why the content of the archives of the public service broadcasters are a significant part of the documentation of a country's cultural heritage. Digitization has made it possible to re-discover lots of hidden materials from the archives. Radio and television stories from the past are suddenly accessible. Ordinary people's stories from the past told to a broadcaster, can now with ease give insight into our culture and way of living in different times. It can help us to understand our own or others' past and to find or form our identities in the future.

This article presents a case story that gives some insights into the effects and values of radio and television stories from the past with and about ordinary people when offered to the local community where the stories originated from. During the summer of 2017 DR Archive brought 1500 TV clips and 100 radio clips to the residents of five towns in Denmark in a mobile tent. More than 10.000 people interacted with the clips through five installations and by meeting and interacting with each other. The clips were stories from the DR archive with and about the life over time in the towns that the DR

Archive visited. Drawing on research within the field of social media, this case story shows some highlights into the effects and the values of stories from the DR Archive collection that went on the road to be re-viewed and re-experienced by the people in their local environment.

The article will start with a brief introduction to DR and local broadcasting. This includes a brief presentation of the idea behind using local archive materials for the tent-project. Afterwards I will introduce some theoretical ideas about social media, social media communities and how communication channels and tools in that environment have changed the way people connect and how they interact with each other. In the next chapter I will present the case story about the DR Archive tent-project followed by a chapter about the effects and values of the project. Finally, other similar projects will be highlighted before the conclusion of the article.



Figure 1. Exterior of the tent. Photo: Louise Broch.

2 DR and Local Programming

DR is a classic European Public Broadcaster. After a couple of years with private attempts to reach people through the new radio medium DR was founded on April 1st 1925 under the name of *Radioordningen*. In 1926 it became *Statsradiofonien*, then *Danmarks Radio* in 1959 and *DR* in 1996. In 1927 when a new transmission tower was built in the town of Kalundborg, DR became a nationwide broadcaster. From the very beginning listeners were charged a license fee to be able to listen to their radio receivers and DR was obligated through legislation to produce and broadcast programs to serve Denmark as a democracy. It was a mandate for DR then as it is now to produce and broadcast programs that were relevant to people from all over the country and that could enlighten and inform us. The radio media was considered a powerful media and was under rigid political restrictions in terms of programming². One obligation was to enlighten people about the diversity of the country. Radio reporters travelled

around the country to meet and report about people in their own environments. The first preserved radio recording of that genre that DR has originates from 1931. It is a reportage from the Danish brewery, Tuborg. DR had several reporters in the early years that had a special flair for speaking with ordinary people throughout the country, among them were Aksel Dahlerup and Gunnar Hansen. They planted a seed for a strong and long-lasting tradition in Danish radio and television and was later followed by renown reporters such as Christian Kryger, Christian Stentoft and Peter Kristiansen.

Television came to Denmark in 1951. As television technology developed and allowed DR to produce and broadcast from distant areas of Denmark the stories were told; there are stories from the early years about a new way of teaching in the north, new parking regulations in a small southern town, the opening of a local art exhibition and the stories of the lives of fishermen in the North sea. New television formats and program series were developed to cover local stories. Among others, in the 70's came "Landet rundt" (Around the country) and in 1999 came "19 Direkte". Between 2016-2018 the earliest DR television program and news segments were digitised and many local stories from the 50s, 60s and 70s saw the light again. It became obvious to explore if these local stories from the past could have a special appeal to the people from where the stories originated from. Thus, because local stories have always been an important part of the public service offer and they were easy to access as television stories, it was obvious that a tour around Denmark with a tent filled with digitised archive materials should include local archive stories.

3 Local Stories Bring People Together and Create Identities

To understand why local archive clips in a tent on tour to local towns seem to be attractive, have value and create a sense of identity for the audiences, I have chosen to look to theories about user-interaction in social media. People's reactions to stories from the past might have been different 15 years ago before the internet and social media. Today, in a world where everybody has a voice and people can show themselves with many different voices and express their opinions at any time and place through social media, people's search for identity has become much more urgent. Identity is not static or tied to your heritage or title anymore. You can create your own identity on social media whenever you wish to. In a globalized society many people join social media groups with similar interests as themselves to find their identities. An interest for local history is one way.

Peter Svarre (2011) has described it this way,

Identity is constantly fluid and has to be created and recreated repeatedly. The identity project becomes a life project which demands constantly attention. People create identity by creating and sharing content, products, and services.³

Thus, social media have also changed the principles of social life. A large group of people that share an interest in their local history are connected without any efforts. Astrid Haug says in *Sig du kan li' mig* (2015) that people share things because it is human to interact with other people; because people want to show who they are by sharing things they are interested in; and because we want to feel that we are part of a community that shares the same ideas.⁴

Practically every town in Denmark of a certain size has a local archive with documents, photos, videos, etc. with and about the history and identity of the community. Before social media a visit to the local archive was limited to

the devoted amateur genealogist or the students who had to write reports about the history of the local shipyard. People with such dedications or needs to local history would also be drawn to the tent filled with local archive clips. But because of the ease of sharing local history today in combination with the search for identity, many more people than before social media search for their history and heritage. They too will presumably visit a tent filled with local archive clips from the past.

Many communities have Facebook groups about their town, their high school, their neighborhood etc. With ease they share and discuss photos, memories and experiences about their community through time. Research shows⁵ that members of a large Facebook group or any other social community do not have equal passion for sharing and commenting and many will not spend a huge amount of time doing so. However, if a few members are very active, others will stay in and participate occasionally and in that way the group will be sustained. Clay Shirky says this is the case for all social communities: Large groups have a few very active users and most of the members of the group are only active occasionally. He says:

... the imbalance drives large social systems rather than damaging them. Fewer than two percent of Wikipedia users ever contribute, yet this is enough to create profound value for millions of users.⁶

Clay Shirky's observation gives an understanding of how Facebook groups can be sustained and how they can help people that strive to find a shared identity. It is here their interest in relevant activities will be shared and promoted. Thus, through social media, members of communities about local history will be encouraged to visit a tent with audiovisual materials in their local community. Through social media the members have been connected because of a shared and passionate interest for local history. This possibility has reinforced the feeling of cohesion and common identity between citizens who might not have known each other before. Together they expand their passion for their local history and search for new information about their town.

When social media arrived in the 2000s, everybody got the chance to produce and write anything to anybody whenever they wanted, without any filtering by an editor. Most ordinary people today write personal stories, show personal videos of themselves or others, and communicate with each other about things that concern their daily lives. They have become eyewitnesses to the world and report on it raw and un-edited. For example, someone can publish a crime scene much faster than traditional media – not only because of technology itself – but also because of the inhibited culture of traditional media. Ordinary people are no longer just consumers of media. They have become producers of media. They interact with the media especially if it is of personal interest to them. Clay Shirky explains it this way:

Our social tools remove older obstacles to public expression, and thus remove the bottlenecks that characterized mass media. The result is the mass amateurization of efforts previously reserved for media professionals.⁷

The archive tent offered 300 television clips and 20 radio clips, the most part unedited, in each town. Visitors could browse the content without any "obstacles". They used the interactive tactile installations, they decided what to see and how much interaction they wanted with the clips. The clips sparked memories and associations of all sorts. Seeing the clips led to new stories: One person saw a clip and remembered the event, and where they had been at the given time. Strangers interacted with each other and spoke about a street, their childhood or the boat of their grandfather that sunk during a major storm. Local Facebook groups helped to bring visitors to the DR Archive tent. They were coming to find stories about themselves or their late families. Many visitors interacted with the clips and created new digital stories to put on their Facebook site or group, bringing more interest to the tent and the site.



Figure 2. Inside the tent. Photo: Oscar Rishede.

4 The Tent-Project – a Case Story

In the beginning of 2017, a team from the DR Archive set out to facilitate an interaction between local stories from the archive and the residents from the region where the stories originated from. The interaction had to differentiate from the interaction audiences could get by visiting a website or commenting on a DR archive-based program after watching it. The aim was to take the stories to the people and let the people interact with the original stories using different gadgets to evoke memories, to learn from it, and to experience and enjoy it.

DR Archive offered 300 television clips and 20 radio clips from the past directly to people in their own local community in five towns. The clips were presented in a mobile tent. The residents would interact with the local stories from the past. The stories would be offered via different kinds of interactive installations, and a team of archive staff would welcome the residents from all demographic segments into the tent; young and elderly, poor and rich, workers and academics. The installations range from an earphone in which you could listen to a radio story from 1934 to a more advanced installation where you could scan an index card that would activate a clip from a television news story to be watched on the card. You could add a handwritten personal story about the story if you wished. You could record the activity and send it to a website to be viewed there.



Figure 3. Inside the tent. Photo: Oscar Rishede.



Figure 4. Inside the tent. Photos: DR Archive.

Back in 2015 the original idea was to rent a truck, fill it with archive materials and drive from town to town to present the content to the people in the region. Lack of financing prohibited the project. However, in 2017 DR celebrated Danish history year. DR decided to fund productions and projects that aimed to reach out to the audience on new platforms. Among others, DR produced a major drama documentary production called “Historien om Danmark” (The story about Denmark) and invited people to events all over the country to celebrate the historical themes the documentary covered.

The idea of the truck filled with stories from the television and radio archive was brought to life again. DR Archive applied for funding and received support.

It was soon obvious to the archive team that a truck was not the best solution for a mobile archive. Among some of the challenges were: it could be difficult for people to enter the truck, size and safety could be a problem, and who would the drivers be? The truck needed to be rather big to hold the expected amount of people who wanted to see and listen to the archive materials at the same time. Since it was **important to be mobile in order to be able to meet people in their local community and to be able to meet people who usually were not users of DR's offerings**, the solution was to travel with a tent. The tent was a rented smaller circus tent that came with a crew to secure the tent in every town. They put it up, took it down, and transported it to the next location.

Drawing on theories about social media it was assumed that the best way to connect the people in a local community to archive materials, the materials had to represent stories that were important to the local community, thus materials with or about the local community. The assumption was that local stories would be appealing to an audience striving to find its own local identity in a society increasingly centered in bigger cities. With that in mind, 300 TV clips and 20 local radio clips from each of the towns to visit on the tour was picked from the DR archive. There was at least one clip from every year of the television history.

The clips were presented to the people in five towns as a part of the town's summer fairs. The towns were chosen by the following criteria:

- The town should have its own summer fair for the residents. The program should include the DR tent as a part of the publicity.
- The fair should have a mixed program, e.g. live music. However other activities such as a guided tours, lectures or exhibitions should be included.
- There should be 300 TV clips in the DR Archive tent about the town from throughout the 20th century.
- The archive tent should include local collaborators such as museums or local archives who could contribute, e.g with a lecture about the town. This would add dimensions to the interactions.
- The dates of the fairs should be close enough to enable the tent to travel from fair to fair during the summer months.



Video 1. Presentation video about "Your town, your story" used for the nomination show of the FIAT/IFTA prizes at the FIAT/IFTA World Conference in Venice, October 2018.

The first fair was in Holbæk on June 2nd and 3rd 2017. That visit served as a pilot. Adjustments were made and from the end of July the archive travelled to Nakskov, Esbjerg, Randers and Odense. In every town seven people from the archive invited the audience into the tent, which was open to the public from 10am to 8pm. Most of the visits lasted four days. The tour ended in Odense on the 24th to the 27th of August. 10.000 visitors in all interacted with the archive clips, with each other and with the team of archivists in the tent during the summer of 2017.

In each town the mobile tent-project consisted of the following:

- A circus tent of 100 m2.
- One presentation montage with selected television clip from the town showed on a television screen.

- One poster wall on legs where museums and local archives could show posters, photographs and other historical memorabilia from the town.
- One radio installation with 20 selected clips.
- One geographical installation with a town map with small flags to be geo-located by the visitors. The flags had QR codes for 30-40 television clips that could be scanned and watched on Ipads by the map.
- One “time machine” with all the 300 television clips in chronological order. The visitor could choose to see clips from a certain decade or a specific year by moving and pushing a button.
- Three desks with scanners, where the visitors could see the 300 television clips ordered in themes on index cards. The cards had a code and the television clip would play on the card on the desk. The visitor could then add a personal handwritten story to the clip and share the story and the clip on the internet. But the desks with the index cards also served as a kind of movie viewer, and many elderly people used the desks in that way; it was an easy way to watch the clips.

5 The Effects and Values of the Tent-Project

The DR Archive tent was an attractive offer in the five towns visited. 10.000 people in all participated, and the effects were expressed directly and indirectly throughout the time the tent was on the road and continuously past the tent-project.

It was difficult to collect statistics about the impact of the clips offered. Most interaction took place physically in the tent. However, the visitors could interact on the internet by sharing their digital stories, or they could watch the audiovisual materials at home before and after their visit to the tent-project internet page. Of course, it is possible to measure pageviews on the internet. And the clicks on the internet site did go up every time the tent was arriving to a new town. A clip from the small town, Nakskov, about a female CEO of a clothing factory in 1977, had 1.912 pageviews in one day - even before the tent had arrived. A clip from Esbjerg which focused on a very specific job at the harbor of Esbjerg had 1.316 pageviews for the one day the tent was in Esbjerg.

Nevertheless, since this article is focused on giving insight to the effect the archive materials had on peoples' lives, it is not sufficient to count pageviews. It is more relevant to know why people interact with the materials when you are looking for effects and values. When you work with archive materials and you want the footage to influence peoples' lives, it is not enough to count users. Quality is much more convenient than quantity in this business, especially when you deal with local stories for a small target group.

Therefore, I will in this chapter highlight some of the observed and expressed effects the local stories had on the residents in the tent on the tour. One installation encouraged the user to write a story about the clip he or she was watching and to share the story and the clip on an internet page for the tent-project. Most users of the installation only watched the clips, but some people were interacting like the active Wikipedia members described by Clay Shirky (2009). They contributed to the stories by creating new digital stories. Both ways of using the installation were perfectly alright. However, being a multifunctional installation, it appealed to the most interactive users who also could inspire others, as well as to the less explorative users. It appealed to both young creative people, and to the elderly who might not be as digital savvy. In the city of Odense, a young crowd of second-generation immigrants with Middle Eastern background entered the tent by accident. They were bewildered. When they were first presented with an invitation to watch an older archive clip, they were obvious skeptical, but they accepted the invitation. They saw a clip about their neighborhood when it was first built in the seventies; an area that recently had been on a “ghetto” list. The area had been labeled as a particularly vulnerable residential area inhabited by low income families with a non-Danish background. The young boys were moved. The clip ignited a conversation about their background and their experience with their neighborhood and Denmark. One of the boys said with a serious look: “it is not as bad as it has been”. A young woman wrote a story about her mother coming to Denmark in the sixties as an immigrant, and how it touched her to see the same clip. She was surprised to learn that the “ghetto” had once been a place for

ordinary Danish families when Denmark was a homogeneous society, and yet, had turned into a beautiful multicultural society. Children made drawings of an amusement park that does not exist any longer. The clip from the park was an inspiration for them.

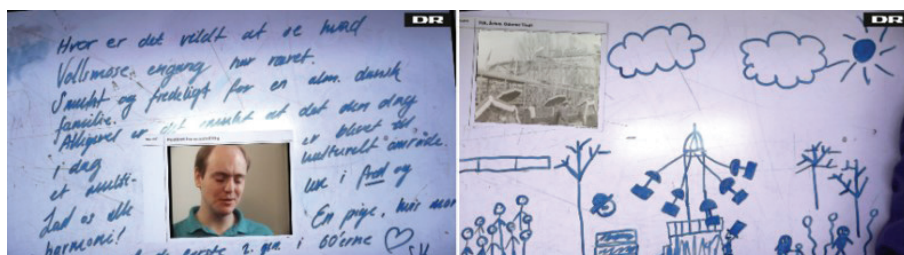


Figure 5. Digital collages.



Video 2. "The director is called Gerda", October 1977: A visit to the Dorika ApS clothing factory in Nakskov, where former clothing designer Gerda Hansen is the director.



Video 3. "Tommy Kragh, cargo picker", March 1980: A visit to the cargo pickers in Esbjerg. It is a tiring job with the risk of back and leg injuries, and in the cargo there is an unbearable stench and dangerous gases can occur. Tommy Kragh talks about his work, his leisure interests and why he became a cargo picker.

In every town, some of the visitors were interviewed by DR journalists. Their statements add to the effects and the attractiveness of the tent-project. The following statements support the argument:

Torben Schrøder, Esbjerg: "I'm very, very impressed, I think it's a scoop that they made this event".

Male, Odense: "Maybe it's nostalgia, I'm elderly and I remember a lot in the clips. It's also fun to see how the new technology can be used in relation with history".

Husband, Randers: "Wow, I went to see this. It was in "Vold Mølle" in 1956. The world championships". Wife, Randers: "Yeah, yeah, yeah, motocross, we have also been there, wow it is fun, wow".

Peter, Esbjerg: "Let's keep it, it would be fantastic to have such a place in Esbjerg, where it could be as accessible as this. It's really good".

Female, Holbæk: "It feels good to remember how it was, and to show it for the kids. Then they can imagine what will happen in the future. It is fun to go back in history".

The tent was visited by young people also. A local television station filmed a school class while they were interacting with the installations.



Video 4. Time code 01:18: A school class in the tent. The students got a small lesson in the history of Danish Broadcasting Corporation and were invited to use the installations.

You can see the users are engaged with the archive clips and/or the installations. The interactive installations attracted the younger users and which led them to the content. It is difficult to make youngsters interested in history. They are a target group for public service media. The Danish Youtube star, Rasmus Brohave (2017) has said in his biography:

The difference between youtubers and traditional television is, that the youtubers are more personal. You might have heard this before. It is because it is true. Children and young people won't see a man in a suit in a television studio. They can't relate to it or mirror themselves in it. In return, they see themselves 100 % in a teenager, who sits in his room in his parents' house – because they may be in the same situation. We are at eye level.⁸

All public service broadcasters seek desperately to find new ways to attract young people to their content. The tent had the potential to break the barrier, because the digital installations attracted young people. The installations led the young people to the archive materials. They felt invited into the tent when they looked in and saw the digital installations. Elderly people were at first more attracted to the possibility of finding their own history. They had to face their phobia of the digital items. Thus, the combination of the archive materials and digital installations was essential in order to attract people of all ages.

It is difficult to document how much people share their stories and experiences in closed Facebook-groups or between Facebook friends. The only ways are to either participate in several local groups and join the conversations or to be in contact with hardcore users, who can help you to collect comments from groups they participate in. We do know from the tent visitor's own accounts that several of them used Facebook to tell their friends about their visit. Also, after the tent had been wrapped up and the tour was over, DR Archive has been in contact with several dedicated users of archive materials. They use the site actively. They have become “user ambassadors”, because they are informal representatives for groups of people on Facebook with shared interests in archival materials. They shared screen dumps that show the interaction between group members about the archive materials from the tent. A program about the small Danish town Hadsund from 1979 got more than 100 likes and 25 comments in a Facebook group after the tent tour.

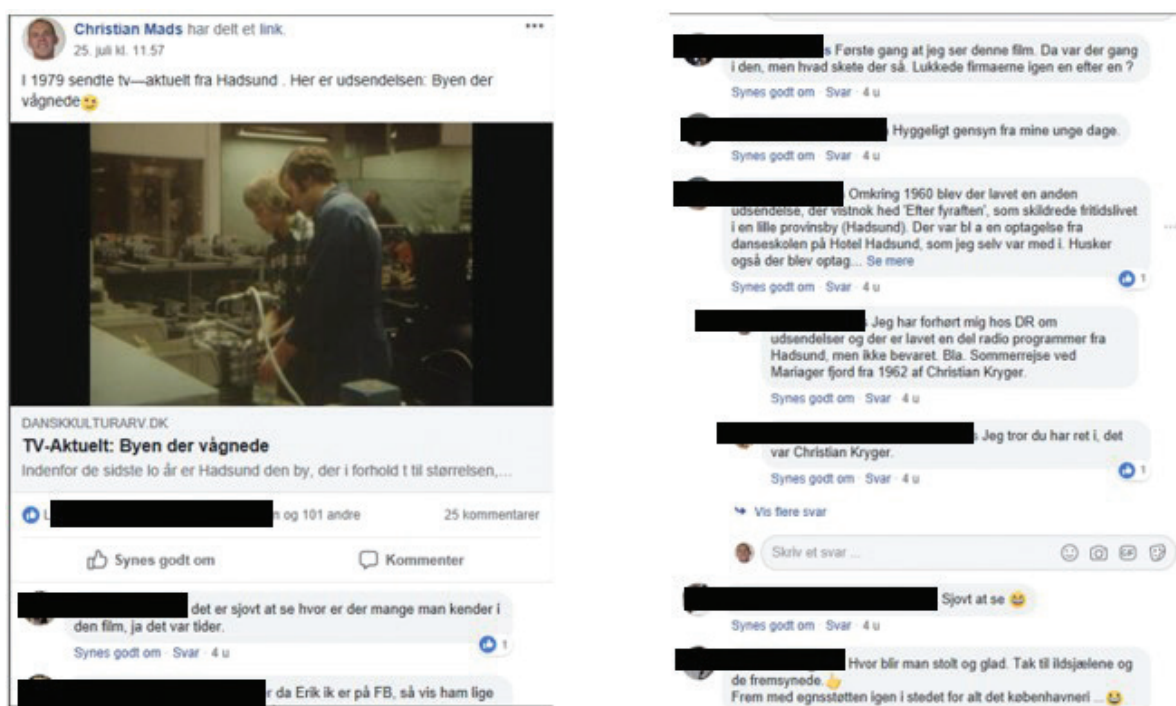


Figure 6. Facebook interactions.

It would have been almost impossible to find this conversation on Facebook without the help of a “user ambassador”. You can only measure the number of clicks in Google Analytics or other similar tools.

As the observed and the expressed effects shows in this chapter the clips in the tent made a difference for the visitors. They interacted with them in various ways. That could be via the installations. However, it could also be by being inspired to tell their own stories to each other or the archive staff. The clips did not only spark a sense of nostalgia. The clips gave people a feeling of cohesion with the local society and a feeling of a shared identity.

6 Other Projects

The tent-project is unique in that it does combine digital installations and content in a local community where the stories from the archive originates from. However, other projects have also taken the archive content showing local stories to audiences. The Irish Public Service Broadcaster, RTÉ, put up showings in the local cinemas in collaboration with film festivals and the Radiotelevisione Svizzera, RSI, has had open-air shows in the summer around their region. Many other organisations have exhibited their archives online on sites with various interactive features.

The Danish Film Institute, DFI, has during the past few years created an interactive tool filled with documentary films and clips about the Danish national and local history. The site was launched in October 2015, it is called “Danmark på film”. An unusual feature is that the films are situated on a geographical map of Denmark. This feature helps the users to quickly find footage from their own town. DFI encourages the users to tell their own stories about the films. They can share and reuse clips on social media. A small editing tool allows them to make a new clip from the film, if the part of the film is not yet situated on the interactive map, or if you want to reuse a small part of a film. The users are free to browse the site. However, there are also curated special themes on the site to target different kinds of audiences. In September 2018, the site offered more than 1000 titles and had reached 600.000 unique users. One of the creators of the site, Lisbeth Richter Larsen, has told about the project here.

Like the DFI project, other organisations also focus on local historical collections as a new source of creating value for local communities. One example is The Texas Archive of Moving Image that collects local and national Texas audiovisual materials from broadcasters all over the country. The interesting aspect of this project is the aim to show a different picture of the local history of Texas than the picture the major networks tend to paint of the State of Texas. Texas history has often been presented through the major television networks. This has led to an unnuanced picture of Texas. Local archival materials are to be used to create a more multifaceted image of the State of Texas.

7 Conclusion

The argument in this article is that local audiovisual collections that were before hidden in dusty basements and not reused on national television because the content was not relevant enough for a broader audience, have an impact and create value for people in the local community. People search for their identity in a fragmented world. Local audiovisual stories from your childhood neighborhood can bring back memories, connect you with old and new friends that share your story and help you form your identities. The audiovisual cultural heritage has the power to describe our past and to give perspective to our future. Digitisation of local materials gives easy access to a goldmine of stories of ordinary people's lives. Lots of audiovisual archives have local collections, and as soon as it becomes digital, it has a huge potential to reach and move people.

The local stories from the DR Archive moved people in five towns in the summer of 2017. Social media principles and actions helped to promote the local stories to the local community. Also, the combination of physical, tangible installations and historical archive clips appealed to all age groups.

In 2018 at the FIAT/IFTA conference in Venice the archive tent-project was awarded the FIAT/IFTA prize for “Excellence in archival use and valorization” The jury wrote:

By interacting directly with the users, the project is taking the value of the archives outside of the vaults. The project proves that scaling down might be of a great value. Stories that might not be relevant for a whole country, can be extremely relevant for a specific community and therefore are worth safeguarding.



Figure 7. Louise Broch receives the FIAT/IFTA Award. Photo: Oscar Rishede

The archive communities should continue to explore the possibilities of bringing parts of the audiovisual archive collections with certain themes to a targeted group of people and to further explore the effects and the values.

Notes

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3. Peter Svarre, *Den Perfekte Storm (The Perfect Storm)*, Gyldendal Business, 2011, p. 51 (author's translation).
4. Astrid Haug, *Sig du kan li' mig (Say you like me)*, Gyldendal Business, 2015, p. 38 (author's translation).
5. Clay Shirly, *Here comes Everybody*, Penguin Books, 2009, p. 122 ff.
6. Ibid., p. 125.
7. Ibid., p. 55.
8. Rasmus Brohave: *Sådan blev jeg Rasmus Brohave (How I became Rasmus Brohave)*, Carlsen, 2017, p. 15 (author's translation).

Biography

Louise has many years of experience with research and archiving at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation. Today she is a researcher in a cross-media task force that helps producers/journalists at DR with TV and radio clips and research in general. She is member of the International AV Think Tank initiated and supported by the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision and has recently become a member of the Value, Use and Copyright Commission in the FIAT/IFTA organization. Louise has obtained a master in digital journalism (2017) with special focus on social media. She also holds a master degree in Music.