

## **WG3 Research & Regulators**

Marita Bergtun, the Norwegian Media Authority

### **Organization/human resources**

The Norwegian Media Authority (NMA) is the responsible authority for protection of minors on all media platforms, media ownership and press subsidies in addition to general broadcasting regulation. The NMA is organized in five departments and has 50 employees. There is no research department at the NMA, and no employee works full time with research. The department for subsidies, economy and markets has a primary responsibility for research at the NMA, but in practice research is conducted in all departments.

The NMA is in regular contact with both Norwegian and foreign research institutions, but the contact is most often informal and on ad hoc-basis. This includes participation in conferences and workshops, and contributions to various publications.

However, an example of a formal and permanent cooperation with academia is the Council for Applied Media Research. The Norwegian government allocates funds to applied media research, and media researchers and master degree students can apply for a research grant from The Council. The Council is an advisory body to the NMA, and a committee of researchers assists the Council in the assessment of the applications. The NMA has the final decision on the allocation of research grants. Approximately 400.000 Euro are allocated annually, and awarded to 20-25 research projects. Interested parties can invite these researchers to present the outcomes of their studies, and the NMA will cover the costs connected to the visit.

Another example of such formal and permanent cooperation is the national cooperation network on media literacy, which was initiated by the NMA in 2011. The object of this network, which is coordinated by the NMA, is to share knowledge, experiences and to collaborate in cases of common interest. The network includes both public and private bodies, NGOs and academic stakeholders. The academics are contributing with recent research and valuable points of view.

### **Funding**

In 2015 there is no specific budget foreseen for research in the NMA. In general, larger studies presupposes earmarked funds in the budget. A tighter budget situation in recent years has made it more difficult to allocate money for this purpose than earlier.

Previous larger studies e.g. in connection with the supervision of public service broadcasters have had a cost of approx. 20.000-70.000 Euro. In 2014 the NMA conducted some ad hoc studies which had a total cost of approx. 15.000 Euro. The Children and Media study has a budget of approx. 80.000 Euro, but these are mainly earmarked funds from an inter-ministerial group.

### **Research projects – regular and ac hoc**

There are two areas where research is conducted regularly:

#### **Economy and media markets**

Every year the NMA publishes a report on the economic situation in the media markets, based on annual reports from the media corporations, and a report on the status for media ownership.

#### **Safe use of media for children**

Since 2003 the NMA has conducted representative surveys on children and young people's use and experience of digital media, and the results have been published every 2nd year in the reports called "Children and Media". The surveys among children and young people's use of media include contact with researchers from different parts of Norway and also Sweden and Finland.

The NMA also regularly conducts what is called “children’s panels” and “youth panels”, where children or young people are invited to participate. The participants are presented to a film or computer games, and then interviewed either as individuals or smaller groups on their experiences.

Ad hoc studies:

The NMA has a tradition for commissioning studies from the academic world in connection with the evaluation on how the public service broadcasters fulfill their remits. These studies often take the form of quantitative content analysis, and the findings are used as a supplement to the NMA’s assessment of the broadcasters own reports on their fulfillment. When commissioning such studies the goals and standards of the study are carefully considered beforehand, and several institutions are always invited to compete for the assignment on pre-defined terms.

Some other recent ad hoc studies:

- “500 boys talk about computer games” (2013)
- A study on the public's knowledge of media regulation (2014)
- After product placement in television and VOD services was allowed, the NMA has on two occasions (2013 and 2014) examined the audience's knowledge on product placement and understanding of the identification. These will be followed up by a new study in June 2015.

The NMA also often conduct ad hoc examinations on behalf of the Ministry of Culture.

#### **The principles/rationales behind the research projects**

- Children and Media: gain factual knowledge in order to customize measures where needed
- Panels: collect qualitative knowledge e.g. on what is perceived as frightening, which again provides a basis for the formulation of questions in the Children and Media study
- Economy reports: figures on the development of the media economy is demanded both by the media industry and the Ministry
- Computer games study: a need for qualitative knowledge which is not revealed through larger national studies

#### **The level of implementation of research outcomes**

- E.g. calculations of shareholdings made in connection with the media ownership reports forms the basis when reviewing a specific case
- Results from the study on product placement was implemented in the supervision of the audiovisual media services; revealed a need for additional information to the “P” when identifying such programs
- The Norwegian Official Reports are studies published by committees or working groups of the government or a ministry. Such reports generally forms the basis for proposals from the government to parliament, and is often cited and reproduced in white papers. Legal professionals ascribe discussions from such reports weight as sources of law, and refer to these as preparatory works. When making reports on the media field the NMA will often be involved, either as appointed members of the committee or working group, or as the secretariat.