

.NU Domain Partners with the Swedish Royal Library to Preserve Internet History

In 1997, the Royal Library was the first library in the world to begin archiving all national Web pages for future generations. This project is dependent on external sources, and .NU Domain Ltd is the only top-level domain to actively support it.

EVERY DAY, between four and eight million pages are created on the Internet. Every day, the same number of Web pages change or disappear. Today, through reading the books of Gustav Vasa, we can understand his 16th century world, but with an average Web-page life span of 36 hours, how will the people of the future understand ours?

This question has occupied the minds of many citizens, and in 1997 Sweden's Royal Library began archiving complete copies of all Swedish Web pages. Since 1661, the library has stored all Swedish print publications, and in the words of Alan Arvidsson, the head of the Web project (known as Kulturarw3), "If we've saved them until now, we should be able to save the Web publications too. The Royal Library should be Sweden's memory, and we need to remember this as well."

One would think the task impossible. Most of the few national libraries that have even attempted this have chosen to store only selected Web publica-

tions. However, the Royal Library has specific reasons for storing all pages. "Storage media have outgrown infor-

mation. They become cheaper while manpower does not. It is cheaper to store everything [electronically] than to start selecting," says Arvidsson. "One thing we cannot do is predict what researchers will want in a few hundred years, and this way we do not limit them."

Since 1997, the Royal Library has taken bi-annual snapshots of all Web pages with Swedish owners through a search robot. In practice this means



Allan Arvidsson, in front of Sweden's Royal Library, manages the archiving of all Swedish Web pages.

FOR PER DARNELL: Now It's .NU



Per Darnell

The former head of NIC-SE switched sides to help build .NU Domain in Sweden.

Per Darnell, the new manager of .NU Domain Ltd in Sweden, has joined the company two years after leaving its chief rival, NIC-SE, as a result of a feud with its owners.

Darnell returned to the domain business because he saw something exciting about .NU. The organization's innovativeness could provide new and liberating applications for its users.

"It's a Web-savvy market, full of unused possibilities," Darnell says. "In an organization like .NU...I can exploit that." He sees potential in the exciting products .NU offers: "I really like the InstantWeb program, and I've grown to like blogging," he explains. These and other .NU products are focused on helping users.

That's just the opposite of NIC-SE's approach, Darnell says. "It is very restrictive. Even the government has been trying to get the organization to lighten up on rules and regulations," he says. "And now when it is starting to 'open up,' NIC-SE still has all those bothersome rules."

Per Darnell has always found his own way. After graduating from the Royal Institute of Technology, he worked for several years as a management consultant and as a vice president of Mgruppen AB and JPD Gruppen AB and is a member of several boards of directors. He became chairman of the board of Djurgårdens IF, one of the largest sports clubs in Sweden with 19 different sports, as well as directly managing the

women's soccer team, after he left NIC-SE. "That doesn't pay, but I'm a sports enthusiast, and I like to do things for youngsters," he says.

Darnell thinks .NU will become ever more popular in Sweden as individual users and small businesses discover the advantages of having their own domain name, and the simplicity of getting onto the Web using .NU Domain's services.

"Someday, everyone in Sweden will have his or her own domain," he says. "We're far from that yet, but we will get there."

covering all .se Web pages, most .NU pages, and a number of generic domains (.com, .net, .org). While .NU Domain has provided the Royal Library with the domain names of its Swedish customers since the start, the generic domains are difficult as there is a multitude of registrars to approach.

"The three large Swedish domains are .NU, .se, and com. The help of .NU Domain is very valuable for us, as .se names only constitute half of the Swedish domains," says Arvidsson.

The first snapshot in 1997 showed a Swedish Internet with four million pages, or 140 gigabytes of information (one GB corresponds to the Encyclopaedia Britannica), the last snapshot in 2003 showed about 20 million pages and 1,809 GB.

"Researchers can now look at sites from the different periods and compare them," notes Arvidsson. For example, you can see the escalation of advertising from 1998 to now (see .NU Then and .NU Now, below).

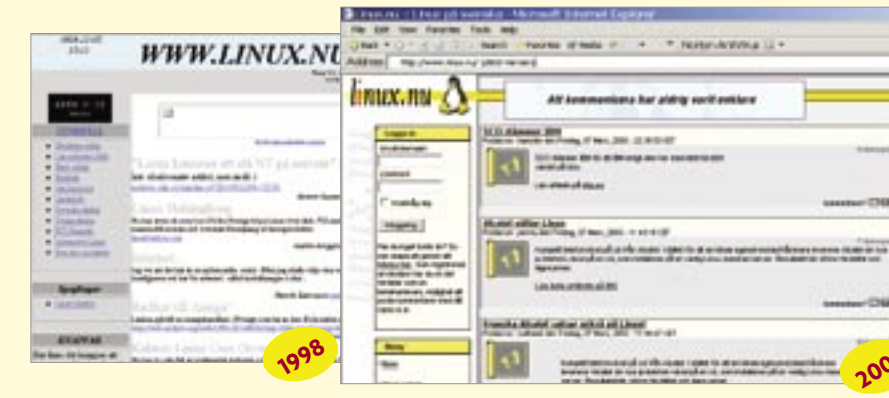
To support such research, "we will soon have the capability to search for domain names, and next year we hope to have a text search engine ready," says Arvidsson. He is confident that they will be able to analyze how many links point to different pages and find which Swedish Web sites are the hot spots. ●

.NU THEN AND .NU NOW

During the past five years Internet users have learned a lot about Web-site design, and the Royal Library's effort to preserve historical archives of complete Web sites illustrates those changes graphically. Notice how the older versions of two popular .NU Web sites, kvinna.nu and linux.nu, have been refined with more graphics and easier navigation.



"When we first went to register our site, we realized our business needed a strong, reliable, well-known domain. The fastest-growing domain in Sweden was .NU, so naturally we started there and now we have several sites using .NU."
—Michael Ländin, kvinna.nu



"Registering with .NU was a no-brainer since our name was already used at all the .com/.net/.org domains. Also, .se had strange rules."
—Mats Kling, linux.nu