

Norway

Report by Karen Marie Ellefsen
The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority
Oslo

Introduction – Key Issues

The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority (ABM-utvikling) was established on 1st January, 2003 following the merger of the Norwegian Directorate for Public Libraries, the Norwegian Museum Authority, and the National Office for Research Documentation, Academic and Special Libraries. ABM-utvikling is a subordinate to the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs, and carries out the governmental archive, library and museum policy.

Principal aim and vision

Adopted at the board meeting held on 30th May, 2006

Vision

Knowledge and experience for all

Underlying principle

The activities of ABM-utvikling are based on freedom of speech, a multi-faceted society, open dialogue and tolerance.

Principal aim:

ABM-utvikling is to strengthen the archives, libraries and museums in their role as active and relevant institutions in our society.

Areas targeted for special attention from 2007 to 2010

It is the task of ABM-utvikling to promote:

- learning, and the spread of culture and knowledge
- the development of digital content and services
- the development and the security of the collections
- innovative thinking and co-operation

One of the tasks of ABM-utvikling is to collect and publish statistics from archives, libraries and museums.

The museum statistics is collected by ABM-utvikling and processed by Statistics Norway. When ABM-utvikling was established in 2003, it was a goal to collect as much data as possible from as many museums as possible. The questionnaire was sent to approximately 750 museums, and the response rate was below 80 %. The Statistics Norway pointed out that different museums answered each year, and this lowered the quality of the results. In the Official Statistics of Norway they therefore limited the population to museums that were open to the public and had at least one full time employee in the year of question. The same limited population is used when ABM-utvikling participates in international statistical surveys.

As a result of the museum policy, the number of museums has decreased. Small museums with poor resources have been encouraged to merge into larger museums where they can share competency, staff and economic resources. Another part of the reform is the establishment of specialised national networks. The new consolidated museums receive increased governmental funding to facilitate the development of the museum. In 2007 there were 104 consolidated museums with funding from the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs. All together there were 174 museums in the museum statistics/Official Statistics of Norway for the year of 2007.

As mentioned earlier, ABM-utvikling has collected statistics also from smaller museums, and the results has been published as a "ABM skrift" together with the library and archive statistics. 294 museums were included in the statistics report for 2007.

In 2008 we looked into the cost/benefit of collecting statistics from museums with less than one full time employee, and found that this group of ca. 150 museums gave less than 5 % of the total numbers of objects, visits, exhibitions etc.. We concluded to focus upon only one group of museums from the statistical year of 2008, and that is the same population as Statistics Norway uses for their purposes, that is professional museums.

From 2004 the statistics has been collected by means of web questionnaires developed by ABM-utvikling. The data are stored in a database. The museums have access to real time pdf reports with new and historical data, and ABM-utvikling's staff can take out progress reports during the registration period and results in pdf and excel. The questionnaire has 6 pages that reflects the different themes:

- Address information
- Collection
- Attendance
- Exhibitions and teaching
- Administration: staff, security, formal plans etc.
- Economy

The statistics are collected by yearly surveys. The questionnaire is revised every year. Questions from the EGMUS Common Questionnaire has been introduced, but not all questions are relevant for Norwegian museums.

Definition of a Museum

Most museums in the Official Statistics of Norway will meet these demands:

The Museum has at least one full time employee.

The Museum is open to visitors at regular hours. Not all museums will be open the whole year around; some are open only in the summer season.

The collection is permanent, and the collection is registered in a catalog. Most museums have a digital catalogue, but not all of them are available at the Internet.

The Museum has by-laws that defines the ownership of the collection, the organisational framework of the museum, and states what will happen to the collections if the museum ceases to exist.

Categories used regarding Type of Collection

Traditionally the museums have been divided into four categories for statistical purposes:

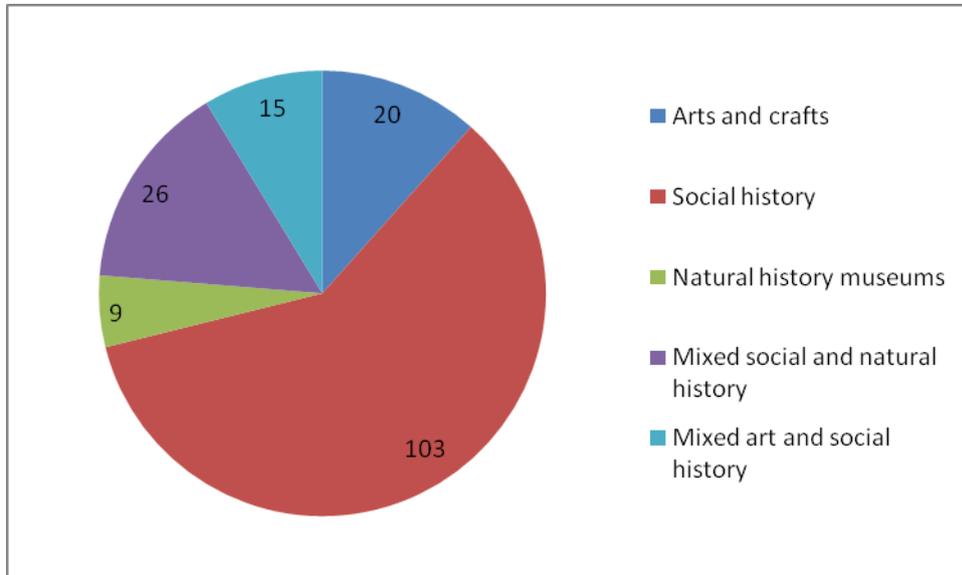
1. Arts and crafts museums
2. Social history museums
3. Natural history museums

4. Mixed social history and natural history museums

The merging of museums has made it necessary to establish a new category:

5. Mixed arts and social history museums

The following graph shows how the museums categorised themselves in 2007:



The largest category is social history. These museums are municipal museums, many of them open air museums with a large number of buildings. The category also includes industrial museums. There are 4 university museums in Norway:

Natural History Museum, University of Oslo (Natural history)

Bergen Museum, University of Bergen (Mixed social and natural history)

Vitenskapsmuseet, NTNU Trondheim (Mixed social and natural history)

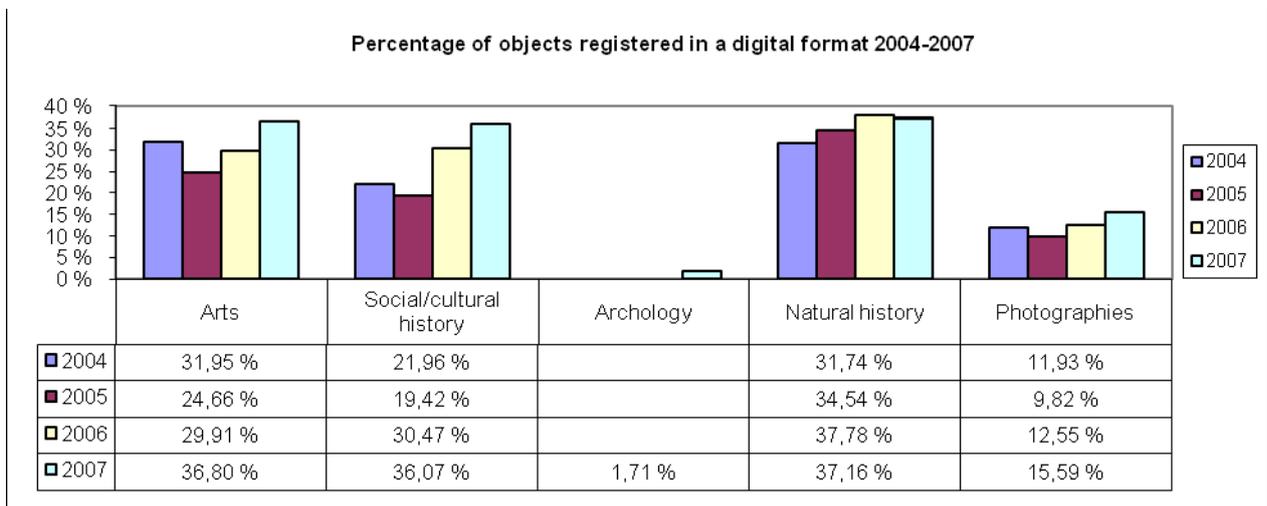
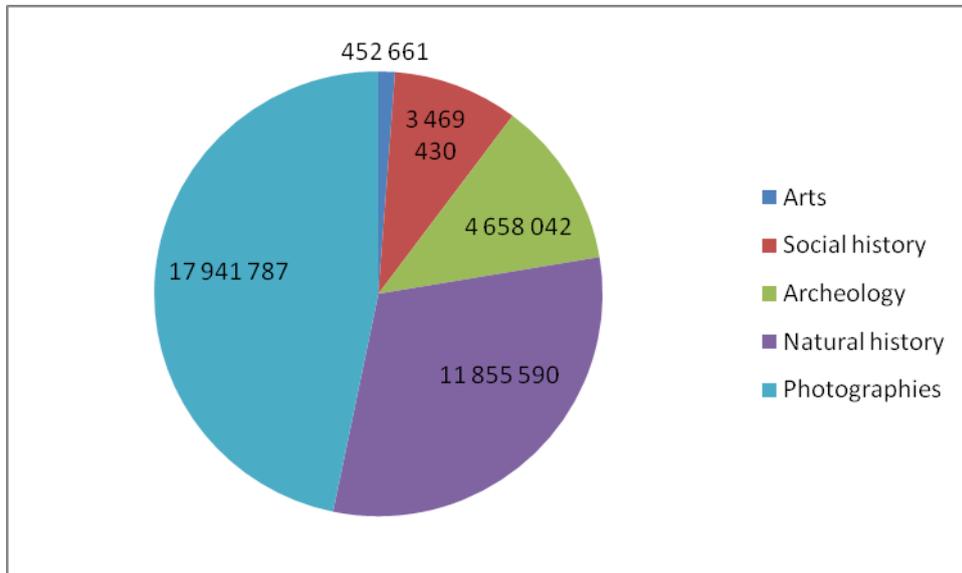
Tromsø museum, Tromsø (Mixed social and natural history)

These university museums are museums with large staffs and vast collections.

Existing Data

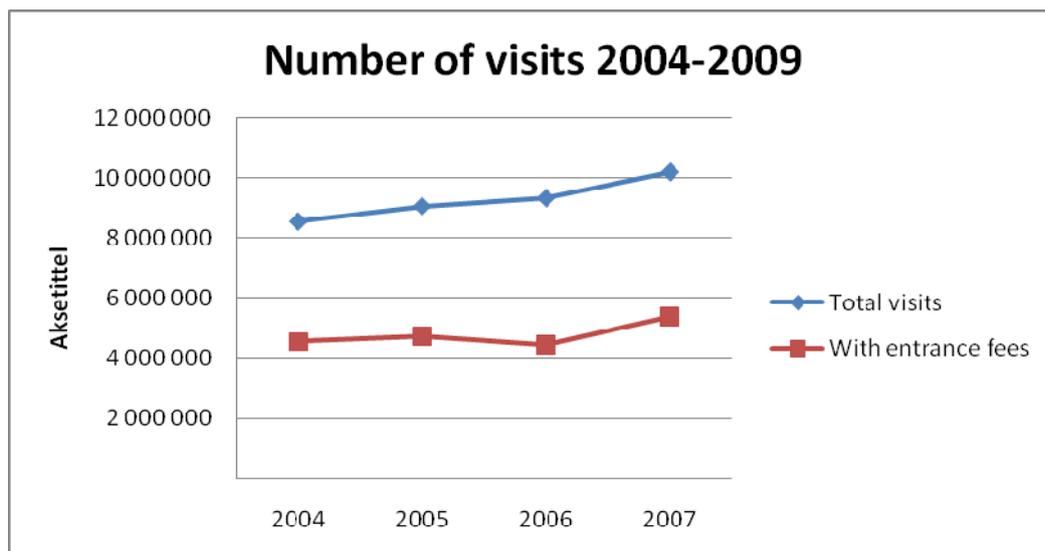
Number of objects and digitisation of the collections:

Number of objects in 2007 divided into the following groups: 1) Arts 2) Social history 3) Archeology 4) Natural history 5) Photographies.



Visits:

The number of visits has increased over the last years. The number of visits in 2008 passed 10 millions. This is equivalent to 2,18 visits per inhabitant.



The following is a list of the 5 most visited museums in Norway with number of visits from 2007:

1. Nasjonalmuseet for kunst, arkitektur og design (The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design) - 523 827
2. Kulturhistorisk museum, University of Oslo (Historical museum and Viking Ship Museum) - 494 331
3. Naturhistorisk museum , University of Oslo (Natural History Museum)- 435 106
4. Norsk folkemuseum (The Norwegian Museum of Cultural History) - 409 517
5. Nidaros Domkirkes Restaureringsarbeider (The Restoration Workshop of Nidaros Cathedral) - 383 871

None of these museums had free entry.

Literature

http://www.abm-utvikling.no/?set_language=en

http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/07/01/40/museer_en/

<http://www.abm-utvikling.no/publisert/abm-skrift/abm-skrift-41.html/>

KME/April 14, 2009