Public Service
and
File Sharing

Per Helge Sørensen

Present: Policy Advisor,
                        Danish Broadcasting Corporation, DR

1995 – 2000   IT-policy advisor
                        Ministry of Research and IT

2000 – 2008   Author
                        Novels, Screenplays …

2002   Co-founder, European Digital Rights

It shouldn't be complicated...

- The mission of public service broadcasters is to
    - ... make a difference for Danish citizens through independent, trustworthy high quality content (DR)
    - ... enrich people's lives with programs and services that inform, educate and entertain. (BBC)
- It is in the best interest of society that public service content is distributed and consumed widely
- The content is already paid for by the license fee

Couldn't we just give it away?

Unfortunately not …

1. Third party rights
2. Market impact
3. Controlling the use of content

Third party rights

- To a great extent public service content is based on third party rights:
  - Musicians and composers rights (radio)
  - Actors, directors, authors (tv-drama)
  - Foreign producers (formats, movies)
  - Sports…

- These rights are acquired to a specific use:
  - X television screenings
  - Y days on-demand on the web
  - …

Market impact

- The impact of public service content on commercial broadcasters and news providers is a "hot topic"

- The presence of public service broadcasters outside their own domain (web-page, channels) is one of the main issues

- Allowing file sharing of attractive public service content could be seen as unfair competition

Use of public service content

- Public service broadcasters need to remain in control of the use of their content
- Examples:
  - Use of our children's content on web-sites financed through advertising directed towards children
  - Use of health care content on services financed through advertising for medicine
  - Use of content in political contexts
- Repackaging and "re-mixing" of public service content is not un-problematic

Is doing nothing the only option?

What we can do …

- Use P2P technology in distribution
- Open archives
- Experiment with new platforms and technology for selected public service content

Public service archives

- Rich content with historical and cultural value
- Great interest from users

- www.dr.dk/bonanza
- Rights acquired through Danish collective society Copy-Dan
- Radio and TV content produced before 1. January 2002
- Step by step digitalization

Experiments

- Select content where we acquire the rights to distribute content on new platforms (YouTube, Facebook etc)

- Create a "sandbox" on our web-page where users can "play" with our content

- Allow the use of selected content on the users own web-pages

Conclusion

- It is not simple ...
- There are a number of obstacles that prevent us from using public service content more freely

- But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't try ...