50 years of Telenor Research

Today we celebrate 50 years of Telenor Research. Through the years, there have been several research “waves” that have contributed to shaping Telenor into what it is today.

The old days

The first Head of Research in Telenor, back when it was called Televerket, was Dr. Nic Knudtzon and in 1967 he had a team of eleven, all men. Up until the 1990s they grew to almost 300 people, and the main focus was on technological advances and innovations. This was the first wave that shaped Telenor. This period gave us GSM, the first SMS and video teleconferences. "Back in 1967 when Televerkets' Research department was established, the task was to modernize the fixed telephony system and see how new technology could benefit Norway. In a way, we are still doing that, 50 years later; albeit in a slightly different manner," reflects Bjørn Taale Sandberg, Head of Telenor Research.

1995: When it all changed

From the start to the mid 90's, Televerket enjoyed a position of monopoly with a strong national presence. In 1995, all that changed. Televerket went from being a monopoly to a public corporation and expanded to include market research as well as technology. "Being in competition meant understanding markets, users and changing conditions became focus areas for scientists. Such knowledge and insight helped Televerket transition into what we are today" explains Sandberg.

The major milestones

Since then, the exploration done by Telenor research resulted in a number of spinoff products e.g. Sandberg mentions some of his favorites, "Opera Software with more than 350 million users worldwide; Conax (part of the Kudelski Group) that enabling secure content revenues for 400 operators, representing 140 million pay-TV consumers; and one that is close to my heart – AeroMobile – the first
company to offer GSM aboard commercial aircrafts with Emirates in 2008"

Telenor Group is one of the world's major mobile operators. We keep our customers connected in our markets across Scandinavia and Asia. Our more than 30,000 employees are committed to responsible business conduct and being our customers' favourite partner in digital life.
Telenor Research today

Technology, markets and regulatory environment are constantly changing, and as was the case in 1967, the scientists' role is to help Telenor prepare for the future, reduce uncertainty and explore opportunities. Telenor Research is set up to help Telenor solve difficult problems that can be solved through research. An important success factor today, significantly different from 1967 is how closely the department works with Business to facilitate flow of information and knowledge sharing. "Today, Telenor Research plays a key role in providing insights and competences that enables Telenor to become a customer-centric software and data driven company. Key focus areas are customer insight, AI and advanced analytics, innovation, organizational models, new technologies and market dynamics", says Sandberg.

Telenor Research at a glance

- Established in 1967, Telenor Research was called Televerkets forsningslabratorium in Norway
- The research department was located at Kjeller, Oslo
- It started out with 11 employees under the leadership of Dr Nic Knudtzon,
- The department grew to 800 employees in the early 90s when they merged with a large IT department
- In 2012, Telenor Research was set up as it is today with 45 scientists
- It is now located in 4 locations i.e. Fornebu, Trondheim, Tromsø and Harstad.
- Telenor Research now provides insights and competencies to Business Units that help them produce customer-centric softwares and become data driven companies.