



Project: *Trolling words*. Research residence at the National Library. **Left:** *La Kahina* and her diaries to the left, **Right:** K and his documents. **Middle:** residence in Av. Henri Martin (near the OECD). **Base:** Norwegian offshore platforms.

Trolling words is a study of a private archive conducted at the National Library of Norway. The project has been awarded a research residency at the library. The aim of the residency is to define an immersive usership of the library's archive and human resources. The activity that led to filing an application for residency were contributions to the [§112 series](#) hosted by the Dpt. Section of Visual media and Conservation/Dpt. of Collections and Research (NLN). §112 refers to the Norwegian Constitution's environmental paragraph.



In 1999, the readers of *Teknisk Ukeblad* awarded the Engineering feat of the century to the Troll A platform: 472 m high, 360 m subsea level. 656.000 tons. Eiffel tower: 331m. Photo: *Teknisk ukeblad*.

The present handout has a dual purpose: **1)** presenting the *Trolling words* project to the *Critical petro-aesthetics* [OSEH] as an occasional conversation-partner; **2)** reflecting back some learning outcomes on the value of [immersive usership](#) in the wake of previous engagements with the *Dpt. of media and conservation* in the §112-series. Some *elementary* notions of mathematical logic will be used, in order to facilitate the convertibility of some otherwise unwieldy concepts.

The project's key-stone is the *Troll-agreement*: an *agreement* from 1986 for a dedicated gas-delivery to France, from the *Troll-field* in the North Sea. The *Troll-platform* was built in [Stord](#), completed and towed to the offshore field in 1995 (in production the year after). The petro-aesthetic point is to study the depiction in Norwegian media, to communicate the *size* of the *edifice* and the *operation* to the Norwegian public, and its value as a model in other contexts.

The context is Norwegian international diplomacy: the *Troll-agreement* sailed up as a model in the Norwegian negotiations for EU-membership in the late 80s, owing to the political entourage of a diplomat called K, who had successfully led the *Troll-negotiations* throughout. He owed this success to two tracks: his *professional* access to documents and contacts from his work in the OECD/IEA;

his *personal* access to French culture from his experience *abroad*.

In the aspect pertaining to *usership*, the selected documents he filed in his private archive were tagged with *title-blocks* containing the kind of *metadata* similar in function to what today defines an *IP-address*: a *name* that indicates what we seek, an *address* that indicates its location, a *route* indicating how to get to it. That is the kind of metadata allowing an expert to know *exactly* what s/he has in hand from its *positional* value. But *not all* metadata can be trolled in this way.

For instance, the kind of metadata documented by *La Kahina*—*K*'s wife and team-partner—in the 71 *diaries* she kept during 40 years. The life and work of a diplomatic career goes well beyond office-hours. The domestic unit is a home-arena for diplomatic culture, and a crossroads for information flows beyond official documents. And *La Kahina*'s diaries is the only available *track record* of husband-and-wife team on *other* cultural arenas (for instance, French cultural arenas).

The metadata featuring in the *diaries* are *distinct* from the *tags* indicated above, in the *official* documents. From a logical point of view, these metadata are *discrete* in the following sense: *names* to indicate places and people, recording the actual *route* to them, locations to indicate an *address*. In Trolling words, each diary is a compilation of *metadata-addresses*. Which would seem to indicate that the *diaries* and the *documents* are logically and semantically completely diverse.

Hence the question of how we can treat them as an *ensemble*. The simple answer/proposition is that the diaries are the documents' *expanded field*: in the sense of [Rosalind Krauss](#) (1979). Based on an essay that was published in *Les temps modernes*, she applied a concept of mathematical notions adapted to the humanities by [Marc Barbut](#) (1968). The notions applied originated in Felix Klein's *Erlangen programme* (1872): How to move between a *restricted* and an *expanded set*?

The idea is simple: when expanding a *narrow* set (e.g., the documents) to a *wider* set (e.g., the diaries) only *part* of the properties of the narrow set are preserved. By adjoining a *special entity* to the wider group the properties of the *principal* set can be preserved. Let us call this special entity **X**. In mathematics such entities can be conceived and invented. In actual life they can be *difficult* to come by. *If* the Troll-negotiation is a case in point it will have a value for [critical](#) archival studies.

If we call **A** the set of *documents* collected by *K*, and **B** the set of *diaries* written by *La Kahina*, they will appear to have *nothing* in common: that is, one would need something like the Fourier transformation—transforming the signals from two different domains—making them *jointly performant*, while remaining logically and *semantically discrete*. The third term **X** is *the work of time* resulting from the sustained *mediation* between **A** and **B**. Proposed formula: $A + Bi = X$.



Towing the Troll-platform from Stord (1995), Photo: Bjørn Østrem, *National Library*.

Mathematic formalism has *no* value in itself. But in the light of the evolution from the *marginal* semantics in early phases of archival *readings*, to the *fuller* meanings of maturing archival *insights*, the aesthetics of a comparatively simple logical form may be of operative value. Not only to the the development of [usership](#) of researchers immersing themselves in archival studies, but in the policies of expanded semantics, that we may expect to follow in the wake of [AI-technologies](#) (regarding *metadata*).

As a case *Trolling words* will principally distill from the case value of an long term agreement *securing* the economic *wellbeing*—in France and Norway—expanded by a *cultural* exchange. It parses the materials (diaries and documents) with the eyes of a *folklorist*: in part

archaeologist, historian and anthropologist. Or, with the work of time, a [deposition](#) with little authorial ambition—as a journalist of novelist—but with a real ambition of modelling *hive minds* as user-/readerships. A anthroponomic design for the contemporary.