This issue takes us back to Scandinavia—Sweden and Denmark in particular—with three articles about media and multimedia. Dr. Rune Pettersson, who is no stranger to this column, is the guest editor of the articles from Scandinavia. Is it mere coincidence that in such a relatively small area of the world as Scandinavia a plethora of high technology projects is evident?

Dr. Petterson’s own article, “Information Technology in Sweden,” is a comprehensive review of the status of educational technology and the mass media in Sweden. He points out that while Swedes are typically well informed through extensive mass media networks, school curricula adhere to a traditional lecture mode—in spite of widespread applications of educational media.

The two companion articles are from Dr. Pettersson’s colleagues in Denmark: Professor Bagh Andersen and his associates at Aarhus University write about multimedia in Denmark, and Mikael Kindborg reports on a specific multimedia project in Sweden. Multimedia projects in Denmark are found extensively in four areas: skills training, advertising, museums, and communication research at universities. In the final article, Kindborg draws the reader into “The Time Machine” by depicting the manner in which a girl and her pet frog are used to construct learning about the origin of the earth.

Would you contact me about your thoughts for the International Review? Perhaps you have an idea for an article or feature issue, or you can recommend another potential author, guest editor or reviewer. You may also know someone who would like to receive ETR&D in exchange for an educational technology or related journal in their country. This type of exchange is particularly relevant to those in North America who read or speak another language, and it benefits those outside of North America who otherwise would not have access to English language educational technology journals.

The next issue features educational technology in yet other parts of the Middle East—Turkey and Qatar. We will also hear from Dr. Mei-Yan Lu about ETR&D’s “sister” journals from outside of the United States. Dr. Nick Eastmond reminds me that he is watching for further developments from the French-speaking world. We solicit both original articles and reviews from those of you with foreign language expertise or overseas contacts.
Information Technology in Sweden

by Rune Pettersson

Sweden is situated between the Baltic Sea and the North Sea. This is so far north in Europe that the Arctic Circle intersects the country's northernmost province. However, Sweden is not an arctic country. Thanks to the winds that blow from the Gulf Stream in the Atlantic, the southern part of our country has a rather warm climate, considering the latitude.

More than half of this area is covered with forests and large mountains, and there are nearly 100,000 lakes, many waterways and some large rivers.

In 1992, Sweden had 3.8 million households and a total population of 8.6 million people. This is about the same as the number of people in a large metropolitan area like New York, Mexico City, Moscow, or Tokyo. Although most people in Sweden live in cities and towns—especially in the three major urban regions of Stockholm (1.4 million), Gothenburg and Malmö—the Swedish population is spread over a large area. The distance between the northern and southern tips of our country is almost 1,600 km (1,000 miles). Statistically speaking, each inhabitant of Sweden has more than 52,000 square meters to go roaming in. There are 19 people per square kilometer in Sweden. In the United States, there are about 250 million people, and 27 per square kilometer.

For many centuries, Sweden was ethnically very homogeneous. Today, this is not quite so. During the 1960s and 1970s, more than a half million immigrants moved to Sweden to work. In addition, Sweden has accepted refugees from different parts of the world. In some parts of Stockholm, the inhabitants come from no fewer than 40 countries. It is easy to realize that this poses problems in our public school system.

Sweden is one of the oldest kingdoms in the world but also has ancient democratic traditions. The Swedish Parliament dates back to the 15th century. It has one chamber with 349 members, who are chosen by direct election every three years. All Swedish citizens aged 18 and over are entitled to vote and run for election. The meetings of the Parliament are open to the public. Since the recent constitutional reform of 1974, the King has only a ceremonial function.

Media in Sweden

In Sweden most people have access to mass media such as radio, television, newspapers, periodicals, and books.

Radio

Almost everyone in Sweden (99%) has access to one or more radio sets (Carlsson & Anshelm, 1993). For many years, the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation has had a monopoly of radio and television broadcasting. The company is jointly owned by the popular movements, the private industry and the press, although half of the board members are appointed by the Government. Production and distribution are financed by license revenues, based on the ownership of one or more TV sets.

In 1991, total broadcasting time was 64 hours per day (Statistics Sweden, 1992), and there are always different programs to choose from. During an ordinary week, almost everyone (97%) in Sweden listens to the radio (Carlsson & Anshelm, 1993). During an average day, we listen to the radio for 134 minutes.

In September 1993, the radio monopoly came to an end, and commercial radio was introduced into Sweden. This will rapidly increase broadcasting time, although not necessarily the actual listening time. The Swedish Broadcasting Corporation will have to face competition.

Television

Almost everyone in Sweden (97%) has access to one or more television sets (Carlsson & Anshelm, 1993). There are 417 TV sets per 1,000 inhabitants. This is about half the corresponding figure for the United States, where there are 812 TV sets per 1,000 inhabitants. Today, many families in Sweden have more than one television set. According to Considine and Haley (1992) there were 92 million television households in the United States in 1989.