

SLOOOOOOOOOOW TV

It's Friday night. What would you like to watch on TV? How about a reality show to find the best singer in the country? Or the funniest comedy programme on TV? Or how about watching a complete seven-and-a-half hour train journey from Oslo to Bergen in Norway?

One Friday night in 2009, against all predictions, a million people in Norway (20% of the population) decided to watch the programme about the longest railway in the country! This programme was the start of a new phenomenon called 'Slow TV'.

'It was the 100th anniversary of this route and we'd planned a couple of documentaries,' says Rune Møklebust, head of programming at the Norwegian public TV channel (NRK). 'Then someone said "why not film the whole trip?". We thought it would be something completely new ... and cheap'. The programme went out at the same time as *The X Factor* and a popular comedy programme. It was the most popular programme that night. Many people said they only planned to watch for a few minutes, but they ended up watching for hours and hours.

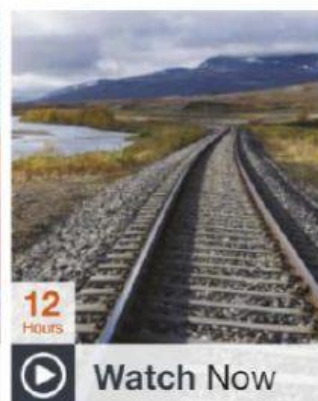
Some Slow TV programmes are longer and slower than that first programme. There has been a nine-hour programme which showed the process of getting the wool from a sheep and turning it into a jumper. There has also been a 12-hour programme showing a wood fire burning. And an 18-hour programme showing somebody fishing (it took four hours to catch the first fish!). The longest programme so far was 134 hours, showing the coast of Norway from a ship. Møklebust used 11 cameras and filmed for five and a half days. Many people went to the coast to appear in the programme. 3.2 million people watched it. That's more than half the country!



08
Hours



Watch Now



12
Hours



Watch Now

So why is Slow TV so popular? Life is faster and more stressful than in the past. For many people, Slow TV is more relaxing than modern programmes where the pictures and sounds change rapidly. Also, more and more people live in big cities. Maybe Slow TV helps them to feel in contact with nature again. After all, this is real 'reality TV', with no editing, not like the programmes they call 'reality shows'.

Slow TV is getting bigger and bigger. And it isn't only Norwegians who are interested in it. A US company has started to show the programmes on over 100 channels. 1.1 million Americans watched the famous seven-and-a-half-hour train programme. But some Americans say that Slow TV was really an American invention. One of the most famous American artists, Andy Warhol, made a film in 1963. It was called *Sleep*. In the film, a poet called John Giorno sleeps for six hours!

Choose the correct answer

1. When a lot of people watched the train programme in 2009, it was ...

- ☐ because there was nothing good on the other channels.
- ☐ a surprise.
- ☐ because Norwegians are interested in their railway.

2. Originally, Rune Møklebust didn't ...

- ☐ have a reason to make a programme about the train journey.
- ☐ want to make a programme about the train journey.
- ☐ plan to make a long programme of the train journey.

3. In Norway ...

- ☐ there are approximately 5 million people.
- ☐ people generally live on the coast.
- ☐ they are only really interested in nature programmes.

4. Slow TV is 'real' because ...

- ☐ they only use one or two cameras.
- ☐ what they film is what you see.
- ☐ they only film nature and animals, not people.

5. On American TV ...

- ☐ there are channels that are starting to show Norwegian programmes.
- ☐ they are saying that an American artist invented Slow TV.
- ☐ there are channels which now only show Slow TV.

Answer these questions.

- 1 Why did Rune Møklebust and his team decide to make their first long programme?
- 2 What reasons can explain the popularity of Slow TV?
- 3 What are the similarities between the film *Sleep* and Slow TV?