



On A Raft For Six Weeks With Opera Software CTO Håkon Wium Lie

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If you asked for my opinion, I would tell you that I think an adventurous spirit is a stargazer at heart, has a stubborn mind in part, and seeks stimulation of the soul to even start. We may recall the pages of our history books, full of great odyssey, that speak of the Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl leading an excursion by raft from South America to the islands of Polynesia in 1947, by which he named his raft "Kon-Tiki" after the Incan god of the sun.

Long holding reasoning that the South Americans may have settled in Polynesia in the Pre-Colonial Americas era (before the influence of Europeans) Thor had reason enough to believe that even with the primitive equipment of this time frame, the South American's of these early days could have had no problem being able to reach the remote islands of Easter Island on rafts made out of balsa wood.

Besides, genetic proof has shown us that residents of Easter Island do carry a South American bloodline, which has put Heyerdahl's theories back into the spotlight in recent times. And now, Kon-Tiki II is getting ready to set sail!

Leader of the Expedition and adventurous spirit, Torgeir Higrav, will take on the role that Heyerdahl held sixty-eight years ago. Among the handful of crew members, each with a particular skill, will be the sponsor of the expedition and CTO of Opera Software Håkon Wium Lie, www.Opera.com, also an admitted lifelong seeker of eccentric escapades.

Håkon and Opera's technology will be helping crew members stay connected throughout their adventure, sending back scientific findings and receiving observation from the other side of the world.

DC LIFE MAGAZINE: Can you tell me about this whole process and how Opera got involved?

: I normally have a tradition of doing these expeditions. Thor Heyerdahl set out on this exotic journey with purpose in 1947 to see if people could have moved westwards from South America on a raft, so he tried it out and built a raft and set out. So now, many people have grown up with these stories and have been inspired by them. These days we have other challenges, it's not only to learn about migration but also to see what's in the ocean and how are the oceans doing environmentally. The expedition leader, Torgeir Higrav, has been planning this journey for years, and a year ago published an article about this in a Norwegian newspaper which is how I learned about it first. I thought about how this is a fantastic example of a stubborn Norwegian who is heading out further than most people and he will likely need some communication equipment along the way. On a raft you have satellite connections these days, but they are expensive and very narrow banded. So I contacted him and

recommended that he should use Opera compression services along the way, Opera mini, Opera turbo, Opera max. Higrapp liked the idea and agreed, also telling me that it was welcome as a sponsor and that if I wanted to join on the raft that would be good too. (Laughs) I suddenly become the CTO on the raft and we are officially heading out the first of November.

DC: What can you tell me about the rafts you and the crew will sail on and what your route will look like? **HK:** At the moment the ships are being built at the shipyard of the Peruvian Navy in Lima. The balsa wood arrived a week ago from Ecuador and they are currently being shaped into rafts as we are using natural materials and tying them together with ropes. They are quite large at 800 square feet in consideration to the fact that we're rebuilding two of these rafts which will sail in parallel from Peru to Easter Island and on Easter Island the rafts will turn around and sail back again. The point of that, which is a first in history, will be us trying to show it is possible that there could have been two-way communication in historic times. It's almost like re-living a historic event. We can't really prove the Incas lived this but we can prove it would have been possible.

DC: You were a part of a pollution cleanup in Hawaii recently, did you gain any knowledge from this adventure itself?

HK: Yes we did, I was very inspired to meet the people of Hawaii, especially Alison Teal. She is a young woman and she is very active. She has been making these documentaries about the pollution in the ocean and she also has done so much practical work on how to go on the beach and clean up and do it with a sense of humor. It is a very sad state with all the plastic bottles that we saw floating around, and she has found her way of expressing this in an interesting format. We stayed with her family there at the beach and learned about her ways of approaching all of these problems. However, the approach on the rafts will be exactly different, we have with us very new technology to try to sample the plastics we find. The Norwegian Water Research Institute has developed these devices that allow us to be very accurate with our analysis to see what kind of plastic there will be. Not just **IS THERE** plastic but **WHAT** are the sizes down to a very micro level, to have them analyzed by way of laser to discover what type of plastic it is all the way back to the manufacturer. The researchers will gain a lot more knowledge by our journey here. Our rafts are very good platforms for research since they move slowly through water since a normal boat would be too fast for these experiments. It's worth knowing that we will be moving at around 2.5 knots.

DC: Can any of us, or all of us who won't be there, be involved in any way?

HK: Well we will try to transmit information from the raft. We have the website kontiki2.com and it apparently shows some pictures of the building process and describes our purpose. But we will try to upload information about where we are and what kind of activities we are doing at the moment. There are limits to how much data we can transmit from the raft because of the narrow bandwidth of satellite connections but we will try to transmit some of these results through the research institute so that they can study our results. We will also do some research on the rafts themselves and if we find something important, we will also send it to them. It's a good month to leave from Peru because there is this climate meeting in Paris coming up in November so maybe we will discover something truly significant. If there are any problems, we would want to call attention to it and I think the rafts will be very handy for that.

DC: Do you and Opera foresee any more environmental or humanitarian efforts/endeavors? Anything in the back of your mind?

HK: I think the opera product has a role to play in many of the challenges with humanity and we see this in our when people use the mini we can see where they are and what kind of sites they go to. We saw for example, during the revolution in Egypt, we saw that we had a user base for therevolution that was kind of stable and then suddenly in the days leading up to the revolution people took to the web more and more they wanted independent news. They wanted to be online to make sure their family and friends were safe so we saw that asanIncredible increase in those days. Similar things in other Catastrophes too. Not saying we should have more of these events. The internet has become such a fundamental part of life,checking it first before we do anything. We want to contribute technologically to make it easier for people to be part of the world-wide web.

DC: Did you try to miss your flight back from Hawaii on purpose?

HK: (Laughs) Ok I admit, I should have stayed longer there, it's a fantastic place. But truly, soare other parts ofpacific Polynesialike Easter Island. I came on a flight, not the right way to come, you should always come on a raft (laughs). It has this Polynesian story of migration this way. We wonder,how did people come there in the first place, how did people build the statues? But what we don't know isWHY the people built them.

You can keep up withHkon Wium Lie and the entire Kon-Tiki II excursion, Opera software and meet his fellow crew membersat kontiki2.com

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