

# The Swedish Media Barometer: 40 years

The Media Barometer (Mediebarometern) is an annual survey focusing on how the Swedish population aged 9 to 79 uses media on traditional and digital platforms on an average day. The survey was first conducted in 1979, and has since been conducted every year; this makes the Media Barometer the oldest study of its kind in the world.

The main purpose of the study is to describe the long-term tendencies and changes in people's use of different media. The Media Barometer includes all kinds of media and is used as a resource for understanding the Swedish media system. In recent years, the Media Barometer has made important contributions to the knowledge of how digitisation influences our use of media.

## **Trends for traditional media**

Since 2009, the proportion of users of media on traditional media platforms has decreased. This decline is particularly noticeable in recent years, which is largely due to the possibility for TV, radio, and newspapers to now be consumed on different digital services.

However, despite the success of digital technology, traditional radio and television are still big media platforms.

The total use of TV has remained stable despite the platform shift. The Media Barometer 2018 shows that 82 per cent watch TV on any platform on an average day. The TV audience on traditional platforms has been in decline since 2014, however. Between 2014 and 2018, the audience for scheduled/linear TV programmes declined from 77 per cent to 57 per cent. The yearly average for TV on digital platforms increased from 9 per cent 2014 to 36 per cent in 2018.

Reading newspapers was very widespread in the Swedish population for a long time, with the morning newspapers having the highest proportion of readers. In 2000, 74 per cent of the population aged 9 to 79 years read a morning newspaper on an average day; in 2018, however, this share had decreased to 43 per cent. The figures include reading both on paper and digitally. When it comes to evening papers, the situation looks different. Today, the reading of evening newspapers is primarily done digitally. In 2000, 24 per cent read the evening news on paper on an average day, while in 2018 this proportion was 9 per cent. The reading of digital evening papers increased from 4 per cent to 20 per cent between 2000 and 2018, and since 2010 the evening press has more readers in digital form than on paper.

Radio listening in Sweden was at its highest during the second half of the 1990s. At that time, 80 per cent of the population listened to radio on an average day. Listening has since decreased, though, and in 2018 a total of 61 per cent listened to the radio on any platform on an average day. Most people listen to regular FM radio. The proportion of listeners on streaming radio, i.e. live radio via the Internet and podcasts, has increased in recent years. In 2018, the share was 18 per cent.

The use of social media has increased very rapidly over time. Ten years ago, every fourth Swede used social media on an average day, while in 2018 just over 70 per cent did. Use of the major social media brands/services varies depending on different factors, such as gender and age. Women are more active than men on social media, and young people are more active than older people.

Facebook is widely used, regardless of age. The exception is children, among whom Snapchat is the largest platform. Among senior citizens, Facebook is the platform that is mainly used.

### **The "digital generation" is growing older**

The digital and social media have come to be a central part of many people's everyday lives, but will we stop reading newspapers, watching TV, and listening to the radio as social media come to occupy more and more of our time?

Since 1979, the Media Barometer has shown that media use differs among the various age groups. During the 1980s and 1990s, media use was relatively stable in all age groups. In 2018, digital was the most dominant media platform among people aged 9 to 44; they watched TV on digital platforms, read digital newspapers, and listened to music on digital platforms. Still, traditional radio has not lost the majority of its listeners among people aged 25 to 44.

The digital options do not attract everyone. Most of today's 65- to 79-year-olds, born between 1939 and 1953, accepted the Internet in the early 2000s. Today, this group of pensioners is increasingly resembling the general population when it comes to access to digital technology. However, while most people aged 65 to 79 have access to the Internet, television, radio, and newspapers in traditional formats dominate their media use. In 2018, 78 per cent of 65- to 79-year-olds consumed traditional TV on an average day, 65 per cent listened to FM radio, and 61 per cent read the morning news on paper. When pensioners looked for digital platforms to consume media, 17 per cent chose a morning newspaper, 17 per cent an evening newspaper (tabloid), and 14 per cent streaming television; additionally, almost 40 per cent of 65 to 79 year olds were on social media on an average day.

[Read the press release here \(in Swedish\).](#)

[Some basic tables \(in English\)](#)

[Download data from the Media Barometer 2018 via Nordicom's table database.](#)

[The Media Barometer 2018 \(in Swedish\) can be downloaded digitally and ordered in printed format \(price SEK 275\).](#)