

Summary

A comprehensive overview of today's media landscape in Sweden

The structure of the media landscape develops in interaction with the surrounding society, an ongoing process whereby the social, economic, political and technological landscapes shape - and are shaped by - the media landscape. Since the millennium, digitalisation has been a major game-changer for the media industry as well as for its audiences. The publication *MedieSverige 2019* gives the reader an up-to-date and broad overview of today's Swedish media landscape, and here are a few trends the publication notes.

Audience moving to digital, slowly leaving traditional

Surveys show a growing share of the Swedish population turning away from traditional media, such as print and linear TV and radio, towards streaming services for audiovisual content, online radio, podcasts and digital newspapers. There is a significant generation gap in the use of

online and legacy

media; the only

online media that

is in use more

among older than

younger people is

the newspaper.

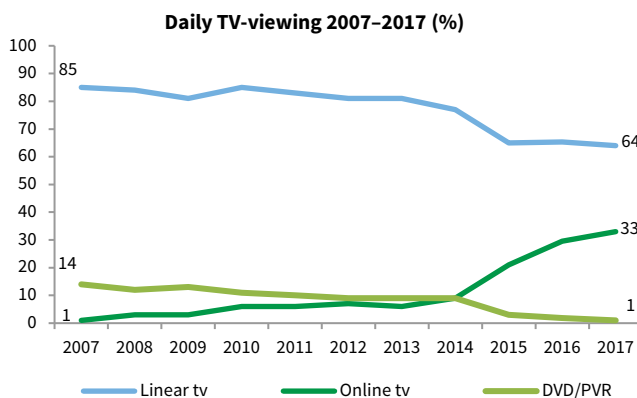
The younger

generations prefer

streaming

services, podcasts

and social media.



Note: Share of population 9–79 years. Source: The Nordicom Media Barometer.

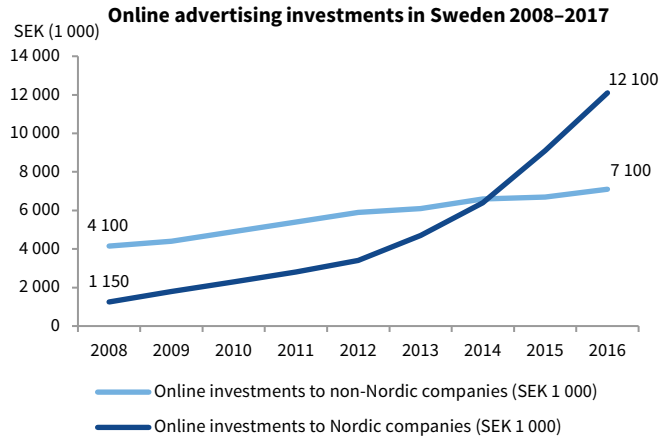
Looking at overall

TV viewing regardless of device, it has been stable, with over 80 per cent of the population 9 to 79 years watching TV on an average day. However, the audience is moving away from traditional linear viewing (from 85% in 2007 to 64% in 2017). Today, audiences can choose when, how, and where they want to watch TV through various services online. Watching TV online has increased over the past five years from 7 to 33 per cent on an average day. More young people aged 15–24 years watch TV online (53%) than linear TV (47%) (p. 49). The patterns are similar for radio listening.

Advertising market going digital

Digitalisation has created new streams for media financing and advertising investments, with investments in online advertising making up 51 per cent of the total Swedish advertising investments in 2017 (SEK 19 billion of SEK 37 billion) (p. 69). The advertising investments do not necessarily end up with Swedish media companies, however. Of the

online advertising in Sweden, 63 per cent (SEK 12 billion) was invested in global streaming services and social media networks (p. 75). This, of course, means that Swedish media lose revenues at the same time as



Source: Hedström, Tobias/Smartplanner (primary source IRM).

they are competing to keep audience shares. Advertising investments in linear TV and radio are stable or growing, whereas the newspaper industry is struggling; since 2000, its advertising revenue has dropped by 60 per cent. Thus far, the drop in print advertising has not been compensated for by the growth in online advertising revenue (p. 73).

Concerns for local news

The fear is that the flow of money out of the national media market to foreign players will result in increased difficulties in financing content production, especially news journalism (p. 71). During the 21st century, the newspaper market has continued making profits by cutting costs. Nevertheless, newspapers that have long held advertising as their main source of revenue are inexorably experiencing tighter financial margins, less advertising turnover, and fewer readers.

In Sweden, local and regional newspapers have been crucial media for the production and distribution of local news and debate. There are concerns that the newspapers' reduced revenue and scope will affect citizens' access to local news. In 2018, some 30 of Sweden's approximately 290 municipalities lacked regular local news coverage (p. 84).

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Media policy measures following suit

Media policy has to react and adjust to the development. Digitalisation is creating new challenges for the policy-makers.

In 2019, a new government media support means was introduced to counteract the concerns over local news coverage. This support is not associated with any specific technology, as long as it is news media. One particular purpose of the subsidy is to support the establishment of local news journalism in blank spots. In addition, the funding of the existing operating subsidies for newspapers will be increased (p. 27).

The Swedish public service fee has traditionally been based on household ownership of television sets. However, this model has been challenged since people no longer require a television set to watch audiovisual content. Beginning in 2019, Swedes over the age of 18 will instead pay a fee calculated based on their income as reflected on their tax return. Another media policy measure in 2019 is the lowering of VAT on digital newspapers, books and magazines, from the standard rate (25%) to the same rate as for print media (6%).

About *MedieSverige*

MedieSverige 2019 is rich in data from a variety of sources. The report targets students, teachers, researchers and journalists, as well as decision-makers and everyone who wants to learn more about the development in the Swedish media market. *MedieSverige 2019* is the 13th volume in the series, and is written by Ulrika Facht and Jonas Ohlsson at Nordicom, University of Gothenburg.