

Media Trends in the Nordic Countries

Newsletter from NORDICOM

No. 1, 2020 (April)

Content

Media Market and Media Policy

- Media VAT in the Nordic Countries – Similarities and Differences [Nordicom] 2
- Finnish Media and Communication Policy Followed up by New Report [Ministry of Communication] 6
- A Method to Assess Norwegian Media Development [Norwegian Media Authority] 7
- Updates of MedieSverige 2019 [Nordicom] 8
- New Report: Cultural Expenditure in the Nordic Region [Kulturanalys Norden] 9
- Updates on the Changing Global Media Landscape [UNESCO World Trends] 10
- European Media Policy Newsletter no. 1, 2020 [Nordicom] 11

Media Use

- The Nordics – Europe's Most Avid Online Consumers [Statistics Denmark] 12
- Increase for Audio Books in Norway and Denmark [BI:CCI and the Danish Book Panel] 13
- 2019 Was a Turbulent Year for the Danish Media Market [DR Audience Research Department] 15
- Norwegian Children's Media Use 2020 [Norwegian Media Authority] 17
- EU Kids Online: Children's Opportunities and Risks Online Surveyed – incl. Finland, Norway 18

More News from Nordicom

- Nordicom Review: Latest Articles 19
- The Global Audiences of Danish Television Drama 20
- Nordicom Review: Newspapers Reused Crisis Quotes from the Swedish Academy 21
- Upcoming: Webinar in Swedish About the Results of the Media Barometer 2019 22

Media Market and Media Policy

Media VAT in the Nordic countries – similarities and differences

Media Policy | Nordic April 2020 | EH

Since July 2019, digital media have reduced value-added tax (VAT) throughout the Nordic region. But there are differences between the countries – and all VAT issues are not resolved. Nordicom has mapped the situation for media VAT in the five Nordic countries.

In March 2016, Norway became the first Nordic country to lower the VAT on digital news, followed by Iceland in July 2018. Denmark, Finland and Sweden – the three Nordic EU members – reduced or abolished the digital media VAT in July 2019.

So far, the question of VAT on digital media has been solved, but there are still some open questions in the VAT area, for example on how the digital VAT is applied and which general media categories should be subject to reduced VAT rates.

Relating to EU VAT rules

State media subsidies, aiming to strengthen democracy and freedom of speech, can be direct or indirect. While direct media subsidies go through the state budget, indirect subsidies – which this article is about – are regulated through national VAT legislation.

National acts must be harmonised with the EU VAT Directive, which long vetoed lowering the VAT on digital platforms. However, in November 2018 – after a review of the directive – the EU gave the go-ahead for equivalent VAT on printed and digital (electronic) publications. At that time, the Nordic media industry had long protested against media content being subject to different VAT rates depending on whether it was read digitally or on paper. Also, politicians were ready to work for platform-neutral VAT rates.

Following the EU's green light, the governments in Denmark, Finland and Sweden quickly proposed to apply the same VAT reductions to both printed and digital publications. In Spring 2019, decisions were taken: the VAT laws were revised, and on 1 July 2019, amendments came into force in the three countries.

The two non-EU members were a bit ahead: Norway abolished digital VAT on news in 2016, while Iceland reduced the VAT rate on a range of digital media in 2018, after approvals from the [EFTA Surveillance Authority \(ESA\)](#).

Only news media have reduced VAT in all Nordic countries

Paid-for news media, that is, printed newspapers and digital equivalents (in Norway, also TV news) comprise the only category with a reduced VAT level in all five Nordic countries. Finland, Iceland and Sweden apply reduced VAT rates of 10, 11 and 6 per cent, respectively, while in Norway news media are VAT exempt. In Denmark, newspapers are VAT exempt, but must pay a fee calculated on revenue from newspaper sales (see the section about Denmark below).

Comparing the five Nordic countries, Denmark and Iceland are at opposite ends of the spectrum; while Denmark has standard VAT for all media except newspapers, Iceland has reduced VAT for virtually all paid media. Norway stands out by applying VAT exemptions to the largest extent.

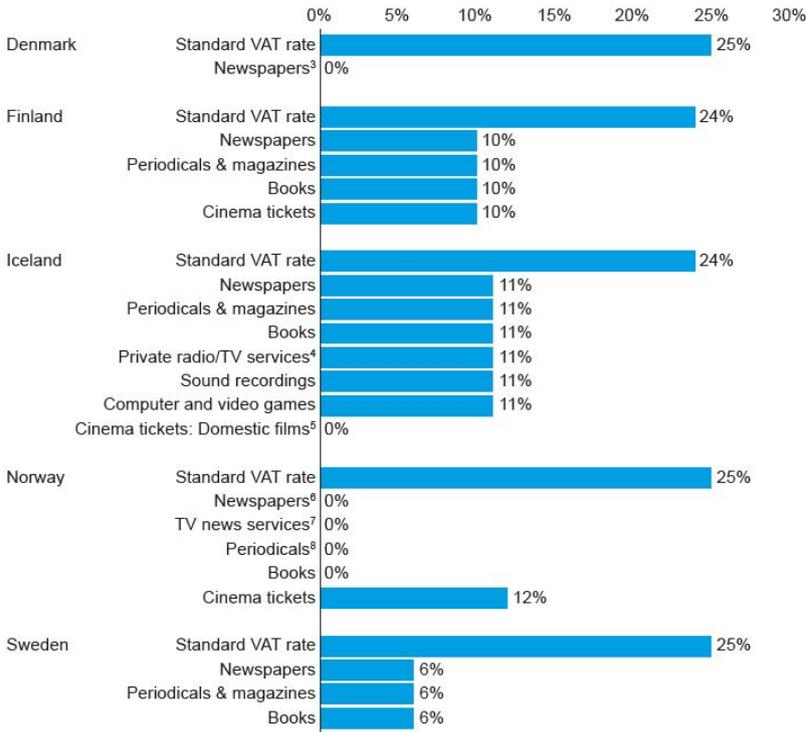
Further similarities and differences

In addition to news media, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden apply reduced VAT rates on books, periodicals and magazines (in Norway periodicals only), as well as cinema tickets (the latter with the exception of Sweden). But VAT levels vary between the countries, and there are also some local features. In Norway, for example, VAT exemption on digital news media is more far-reaching than in the other countries and includes, for instance, TV news channels. Meanwhile, Iceland alone has a reduced VAT rate on streaming services and computer games.

As for cinema tickets, Iceland makes a difference between domestic films that are VAT exempt, and foreign films with a standard VAT rate. Sweden, which abolished the cinema VAT reduction in 2017, has, together with Denmark, a standard VAT rate for all cinema tickets.

Below, the graph and country descriptions show more information about the media VAT country by country.

Graph: Media sectors with reduced value-added tax (VAT) rate in the Nordic countries, 2020



For notes and sources, [download the graph from Nordicom's table database \(PDF\)](#)

- **In Denmark**, there are no reduced VAT rates at all, only a standard VAT of 25 per cent. The standard VAT is applied to all media, except for newspapers, which are exempt from VAT. Newspapers must, however, pay 3.54 per cent of the newspaper sales value (lønsumsafgift). As of 1 July 2019, the same conditions apply to digital newspapers (elektronisk leveret avis).

Also, the magazine and book sectors wish for reduced VAT. As for the magazine industry, an [analysis of the competitive interaction](#) (in Danish) between traditional news media and magazines is currently underway, initiated in the [media policy agreement for 2019–2023](#) (in Danish). The agreement is now being renegotiated, following a shift of governments in June 2019, and the analysis is to be presented during spring 2020 and serve as a knowledge resource for the media negotiations.

- **In Finland**, newspapers, periodicals and magazines, books and cinema tickets have a reduced VAT rate of ten per cent. Since 1 July 2019, the same reduced VAT rate applies to digital publications. Previously, Finland had different VAT rates for subscriptions and single-copy sales of newspapers and magazines, with reduced VAT rates for subscriptions extending over at least one month and standard VAT rates for single copies. This changed on 1 July 2019, when the VAT rate for single copies was also reduced to ten per cent. Until 2012, subscriptions to newspapers and magazines were exempt from VAT in Finland.

- **In Iceland**, there is a reduced VAT rate (11%) on newspapers, periodicals and magazines, books and cinema tickets. But unlike the other Nordic countries, reduced VAT also applies to private electronic media – sound recordings, radio and TV – as well as streaming services and computer games.

The reduced VAT rate for digital news services, magazines and books, together with streaming services and computer games, was introduced on 1 July 2018, one year ahead of the VAT reductions in the EU states. A local Icelandic feature is that domestic films are exempt from VAT, while foreign films have a standard VAT rate. Until 2002, the same system applied to books.

- **In Norway**, newspapers and electronic news services, periodicals (fagpresse) and books are exempt from VAT, while cinema tickets have a reduced VAT rate of 12 per cent. Consumer magazines (ukepresse) are subject to the standard VAT rate of 25 per cent.

Norway abolished VAT on electronic news on 1 March 2016, after [approval from ESA](#) (PDF in English). Since then, electronic news services – that is, digital newspapers and other online news services, plus TV (and radio) paid-for news – are exempt from VAT, in line with printed newspapers. For example, the TV2 News channel is VAT exempt.

Since 1 July 2019, digital books and periodicals are exempt from VAT. However, the zero-VAT rate for periodicals on the web has aroused debate, as it is limited to digital editions of the printed journals or static numbered digital editions. In other words, their online services with continuous updates are not exempt from VAT.

In February 2020, the government proposed to extend the VAT exemption to in-depth journalism ([dybdejournalistik](#)), to be able to include continuous digital periodicals. The proposal, which is now on referral, is suggested to enter into force on 1 July 2020.

- **In Sweden**, newspapers, periodicals and magazines and books have a reduced VAT rate of 6 per cent. From 1 July 2019, the same reduced VAT rate applies to the digital counterparts. Cinema tickets previously had 6 per cent VAT, but as of 2017, they have a standard VAT rate.

DOWNLOAD TABLES: Media VAT in the Nordic Countries 2000-2020

[Media sectors with reduced value added tax \(VAT\) rate in the Nordic countries 2020 \(PDF-graph\)](#)

[Value added tax \(VAT\) rates for media in the Nordic countries 2000-2020, by country and by media category \(3 tables, Excel\)](#)

Tables from Nordicom's table database. Data collected in cooperation with the [statistical offices in Finland and Iceland, and medianorway](#) (Nordicom's statistical network).

NATIONAL DOCUMENTS: Acts on VAT, rates of VAT, press releases, etc.

DENMARK

Danish Customs and Tax Administration (Skatteforvaltningen): [Beregning af lønsumsafgift, Metode 3](#)

Danish Ministry of Taxation (Skatteministeriet): [Lønsumsafgift - Avgiftssatser](#)

[Lønsumsafgiftsloven](#) [Act on Pay Roll Tax]

FINLAND

The Finnish Tax Administration: [Rates of VAT | Arvonlisäveroprosentit](#)

The Finnish Tax Administration: [Kirjojen ja lehtien arvonlisäverotuksesta](#) [About VAT taxing of books and newspapers]

[Laki arvonlisäverolain 85 a §:n muuttamisesta](#) (15 March 2019) [Act on Changes of 85 a § in the VAT Act]

ICELAND

Iceland Revenue and Customs: [Value Added Tax](#)

[Lög um virðisaukaskatt, 1988 nr. 50](#) (incl. changes) [Act on VAT 1988 no. 50]

NORWAY

Norwegian Tax Administration (Skatteetaten): [Merverdiavgiftshåndboken 2019](#)

[Lov om merverdiavgift \(merverdiavgiftsloven\). LOV-2009-06-19-58](#) (sist endret: LOV-2019-12-20-98 fra 01.01.2020) [Act on VAT]

Government, 21 February 2020: [Regjeringen har i dag sendt et forslag til merverdiavgiftsfritak for dybdejournalistikk på høring](#)

Ministry of Finance, 21 February 2020:

- [Høring - Forslag om endring av merverdiavgiftsfritaket for aviser](#)
- [Høringsnotat: Endring av merverdiavgiftsfritak for aviser \(PDF 547 KB\)](#)

SWEDEN

Swedish Tax Agency (Skatteverket): [Momssats på varor och tjänster](#)

[Mervärdesskattelag \(1994:200\), ändrad t.o.m. SFS 2019:886](#) [Act on VAT]

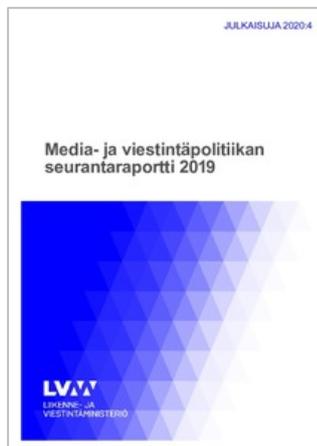
Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Culture, 14 March 2019: [Regeringen lämnar förslag om sänkt moms på e-publikationer till riksdagen](#)

Parliament Decision, 08 May 2019: [Extra ändringsbudget för 2019 - Sänkt moms på e-publikationer](#)

Finnish media and communication policy followed up by new report

Media Policy, Media Structure | Finland March 2020 | MJ

The Finnish Ministry of Communications has published a report assessing Finnish media communication and media policy and the media industry. The report monitors the developments on the basis of indicators proposed in a previous 2018 report.



The report, produced by researchers Marko Ala-Fossi, Katja Lehtisaari, Heikki Hellman and Mikko Grönlund, was published on 25 March. The report describes the development of Finnish media and communication policy focusing on three areas, mainly in journalistic media: the media economy and business, citizens' access to media services and media pluralism.

Among the findings are that digital distribution platforms have gained popularity, while traditional distribution channels have lost ground.

Ownership concentration in the media industry has increased and, according to the research group, will continue to increase; at present, the highest concentration is in the radio industry and the lowest is in the newspaper industry. The number of companies and employees in the media industry is declining.

Citizens' access to media services, on the other hand, seems to be quite stable, but the declining volume of postal mail threatens the distribution of printed newspapers.

The researchers raise the issue that systematic monitoring, especially when it comes to media content, has decreased significantly during the 2010s, preventing follow-up surveys. Moreover, telecommunications operators have become players in the media industry, which means that the markets for media and telecommunications are merging.

The report presents the first step in the Ministry's systematic follow-up process, applying in practice the measuring apparatus created by a research group at the Universities of Helsinki and Tampere. The follow-up process has been divided into at least two phases, of which the now-published report is the first.

Read the reports in Finnish and brief summaries in English:

[Media- ja viestintäpolitiikan seurantaraportti 2019. Liikenne- ja viestintäministeriön julkaisuja 2020:4](#) [Media and Communication Policy Monitoring report 2019 (2020). Publications of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 2020: 4]

[Media- ja viestintäpolitiikan nykytila ja mittaaminen: Loppuraportti. Liikenne- ja viestintäministeriön julkaisuja 2018:4](#) [The State of Media and Communications Policy and How to Measure It – A Final Report (2018). Publications of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 2018: 4]

Previous news from Nordicom in English:

[Report \(2018\): Finland's media policy lacks a citizen's perspective](#) (19 April 2018)

[New media policy guidelines in Finland](#) (13 September 2018)

A method to assess Norwegian media development

Media Policy, Media Structure | Norway March 2020 | EH

In a recent report, the Norwegian Media Authority maps media pluralism in Norway. This is the first step in a new model aiming to monitor and assess media development.



The Norwegian population has access to a wide range of media and news sources. This is according to an assessment of media pluralism from the Norwegian Media Authority (Medietilsynet), who has mapped the newspaper, radio and TV markets in Norway.

Applying a sender's perspective, the new media pluralism report describes the number of media outlets at national, regional and local levels, as well as the ownership structure in each market. Other conditions investigated are the presence of editorial news rooms in different parts of Norway, the gender balance among journalists and editors, as well as the population's access to broadband and other media infrastructure.

A method to assess the development

The current survey is the first step in a new method aiming to monitor the developments in the media market – a media pluralism account (mediemangfoldsregnskap). Based on the media policy goals of media pluralism being a prerequisite for freedom of expression and democracy, the Media Authority works to identify measurable indicators to monitor the development.

During the year, two more reports on media content and media usage, respectively, are planned. Director Mari Velsand said the following in a [press release \(in Norwegian\)](#):

The editorial media is an important part of the infrastructure for democracy and freedom of expression. At a time when these media are being challenged from many quarters, it is of the utmost importance to closely monitor developments in media pluralism. This is therefore a priority for the Norwegian Media Authority.

Strong sender diversity, but vulnerable at the local level

The Media Authority's results indicate a strong sender diversity in Norway. The population has access to a wide range of media, especially at national and local levels. At the regional level, the players are few, making public broadcaster NRK's regional presence important. Broadband access is widespread.

The markets for national TV and radio are stable in terms of the number of owners and the market shares between them. At the same time, the Norwegian players face strong and growing competition from the popular global streaming players. In the newspaper and local radio industries, ownership concentration is increasing. More and more newspapers and radio stations are gathered under fewer and larger owners, which can have both negative and positive effects on diversity – negative if the content becomes more similar and positive if the smaller players can get help with the digitalisation process.

The digital transition is demanding for the media industry, states the Media Authority, concerned especially about the small players. Mari Velsand adds, “the sender pluralism on the local level is vulnerable, and here it will be important to monitor developments closely”.

Open Access database on Norwegian media

Another ingredient in the media market monitoring is a new media database, launched by the Media Authority in March. This Open Access database lists the Norwegian media, where they are located and who owns them, including almost 300 newspapers and around 400 local radio stations, 30 national radio channels and 30 TV channels.

Read the news on the Media Authority's website (in Norwegian):

[25 February 2020: Medietilsynet med nytt mediemangfoldsregnskap: Sterkt avsendermangfold, men krevende for de små aktørene](#) [Media Authority with new media pluralism account: Strong sender pluralism, but demanding for the small players]

[23 March 2020: Ny mediedatabase fra Medietilsynet: Informasjon om norske medier på ett sted](#) [New media database from the Media Authority: Information on Norwegian media in one place]

More reading in English: [The Norwegian Government: Media Policy in Norway \(27 September 2017\)](#)

Updates of *MedieSverige* 2019

Media Market, Media Use | Sweden March 2020 | UF

To all readers of *MedieSverige 2019*, Nordicom’s comprehensive overview of today’s media landscape in Sweden, the search for updates is over.



Since the turn of the millennium, digitalisation has been a major game-changer for the media industry as well as for its audiences. The publication *MedieSverige 2019* [MediaSweden 2019] gives the reader an up-to-date and broad overview of today's Swedish media landscape. Although that was 2019, this is 2020. In an updated, separate Excel document, the reader gets the latest information available.

Nordicom’s report *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.

The updated [data are available in a separate Excel document \(in Swedish\) on our website](#).

You can also [find a brief summary in English online and download the publication \(in Swedish\)](#).

MedieSverige 2019 [MediaSweden 2019] is the 13th volume in [the series](#), and is written (in Swedish) by Ulrika Facht and Jonas Ohlsson.

New report: Cultural expenditure in the Nordic Region

Cultural Policy | Nordic January 2020 | EH

Of all the Nordic countries, Iceland, Greenland and Norway have the highest cultural expenditure per capita. This is according to a Nordic cultural facts report, published by Kulturanalys Norden.



During the period 2009–2017, the total expenditure on cultural services in the Nordic countries increased by 12 per cent, as stated in a report on public cultural expenditure in the Nordic region (*Kulturutgifter i Norden*).

During the same period, the Faroe Islands and Norway were the only countries where the share of GDP spent on cultural services increased. The other Nordic countries either reduced spending on culture in relation to GDP (Sweden, Iceland, Greenland) or stayed unchanged (Denmark and Finland). Between 0.5 and 1 per cent of the Nordic countries' GDP is expenditure on cultural services.

Iceland spends the most money on culture, with EUR 651 per inhabitant (2017). Greenland and Norway follow with EUR 495 and EUR 438 per inhabitant, respectively. The least cultural money spent per inhabitant is in Sweden and Finland, with EUR 240 and EUR 213 respectively in 2017.

Smaller Nordic countries clearly have the highest expenditure on culture in relation to the population. This applies at the state and local levels combined, as above, where Iceland and Greenland top the list, but even more so at the state level only. Then the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland spend the most money on culture per inhabitant, according to a review of each country's 2018 state budget.

Another conclusion in the report is that it is difficult to compare cultural expenditure between the Nordic countries, as the statistics are based on broad categories and cultural expenditure takes place on different political levels (central government or local government). The Agency therefore recommends that the countries, in consultation, produce statistics according to the same definitions.

Summary in English: [Cultural Expenditure in the Nordic countries \(PDF, 129 KB\)](#)

The report in Swedish: [Kulturutgifter i Norden](#)

More about the report: *Kulturutgifter i Norden* is the third report in a series called Nordisk Kulturfakta, presenting key figures and comparative data in different cultural areas. The series also aims to discuss the need for harmonisation of data in the Nordic countries for future follow-ups. The previous two publications dealt with film in cinema in the Nordic region, and museums in the Nordic region ([English summaries available](#)).

The Nordic Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis, Kulturanalys Norden, is tasked by the Nordic Council of Ministers to produce statistics and knowledge of relevance to Nordic cultural policy. Read [more about the Agency](#).

Find more Nordic cultural statistics

NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS: NORDIC STATISTICS DATABASE

[Go to the database](#)

[Read more: New Nordic database for comparative statistics](#)

EUROSTAT DATABASE

[Go to Eurostat's database: Culture statistics](#)

[Read more: The Nordics – Europe's busiest users of culture and media online](#)

Updates on the changing global media landscape

Media Policy | Global February 2020 | CB

Three reports presenting world trends and current findings within media development and freedom of expression were released by UNESCO in late 2019.

Following the digitalisation of societies, opportunities to seek, impart and receive information have increased, a development that in many ways enables a more open and democratic public debate. But there are also challenges following this progress. The three In Focus reports, presented at the 40th UNESCO General Conference in November 2019, monitor and analyse emerging issues related to media development or freedom of expression.



Access to Information

Access to Information: A New Promise for Sustainable Development focuses on Access to Information (ATI) laws and their implementation. Democratisation of political systems favouring transparency have led to an increase of freedom of information laws in many countries, an advancement toward the 16th Sustainable Development Goal. Since 2013, the number of ATI laws have increased by 31, to a total of 125.

While digitalising the public domain has been a positive force for increasing opportunities, new challenges emerge, for example, concerning data collection, protection of personal data and uncertainties regarding the impact of algorithms and AI. Solutions balancing the right to access to information and the right to privacy need to be found.

Read the report: [Access to Information](#)

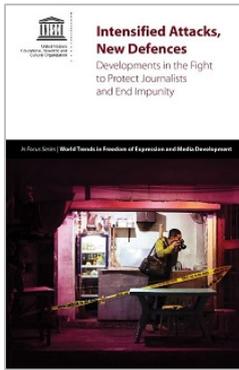


Elections and Media in Digital Times

The impact of new developments on electoral processes are dealt with in the report *Elections and Media in Digital Times*. Different trends in the information and media system converge in elections. Following greater opportunities to find and share (political) information and ideas comes greater possibilities of also sharing disinformation and propaganda. Public debate is taking place more and more online. Digitally enabled tactics or business models may disrupt the democratic processes.

Thus, effective strategies are needed to adapt to changes following digitalisation to safeguard an inclusive public debate, voting integrity and free and fair elections. Based on research of academic literature and regulatory and policy development, the report identifies trends from around the world.

Read the report: [Elections and Media in Digital Times](#)



Intensified Attacks, New Defences

Essential to ATI and freedom of expression is the safety of journalists. The report *Intensified Attacks, New Defences: Developments in the Fight to Protect Journalists and End Impunity* presents a study covering the years 2014–2018 with information from member states and international NGOs on the status of threats and abuses towards journalists. Among the findings an increased prevalence of digital threats and harassment towards journalists can be seen.

During the five-year period, there has also been a changing nature of violence against journalists. The number of journalists killed outside of conflict zones were found to be greater than reporters in regions of war, and more journalists were silenced for reporting on issues of corruption, crime and politics. However, a growing commitment on the national and global level to set up monitoring, protection, prevention and prosecution mechanisms for the safety of journalists are also reported.

Read the report: [Intensified Attacks, New Defences](#)

About UNESCO World Trend Report: The [In Focus report series](#) presents stepping stones towards the main edition of the World Trend Report, which is published every four years. The next edition is expected in late 2021. They were made possible by financial support from Sweden through SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency).

Welcome to a new issue of our European Media Policy newsletter

Media Policy | Europe March 2020 | AC



Media policy is perhaps not what European policy-makers think about the most these days, but the media are both involved in and affected by the coronavirus health crisis. This in turn has had repercussions on current policies as well as those under development. Read more in this year's first issue of *European Media Policy*.

In this issue you can read about, for example:

- what the EU is doing to fight the wave of disinformation about COVID-19 and how this could affect upcoming EU measures to combat false information
- new concerns about facial recognition, one of the technologies covered by the EU Commission's recently launched strategy on artificial intelligence
- how the EU's flagship data protection regulations are being watered down by the crisis

But there are also other types of news, such as:

- new EU actions – and money – to support journalism and media
- Chinese Huawei edging into 5G networks in Europe

Download [European Media Policy 1/2020 \(PDF, 372 KB\)](#)

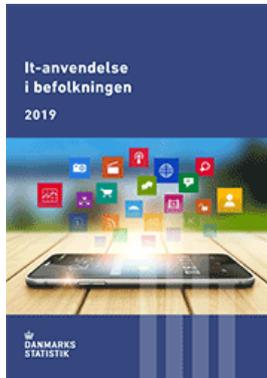
Find [all issues of the newsletter on Nordicom's website](#)

European Media Policy is a newsletter published by Nordicom and edited by Anna Celsing. Published three times a year, it focuses specifically on developments in media policy at the European level, such as new proposals for legislation, debates in the European Parliament, recently taken or impending policy decisions, EU studies in the field, and so forth. [Subscribe here](#).

Media Use

The Nordics – Europe's most avid online consumers

Media Use | Denmark Nordic March 2020 | EH



When it comes to online shopping, social media and Internet of Things, the Nordics are in the forefront. This is shown when Statistics Denmark compares IT habits in the Nordic countries and the EU.

In a new report, Statistics Denmark looks into the digital habits of the Danish population, including comprehensive comparisons with the other Nordic countries and the EU.

The comparisons are based on a harmonised European study, conducted in all EU countries plus Iceland and Norway, of the population aged 16–74 years.

Among the results are:

- **Eight of ten** Nordic people shop online. In Denmark, on top of the list together with the UK, 84 per cent of the population has purchased a product or service online. The corresponding proportion in Norway and Sweden is 82 per cent, in Iceland 79 per cent and in Finland 73 per cent. The EU average is 63 per cent.
- **About one-third** of the inhabitants of the Nordic countries have bought books, e-books, magazines or newspapers online. It is most common in Sweden and Norway (35–36%).
- **Three Nordic** countries top the list of social media use: Iceland, where 92 per cent of the population use social media, Norway with 86 per cent and Denmark with 81 per cent. In Sweden and Finland, 72 and 67 per cent use Facebook, Twitter or similar services, respectively, which places the countries at number six and seven on the list.
- **As for Internet of Things**, the Nordic countries are (together with the Netherlands) ahead of other EU countries. In Denmark, 23 per cent of the population use Internet-connected products, in the Netherlands 21 per cent, in Sweden and Norway 19 per cent and in Iceland 17 per cent. Meanwhile, Finland's 12 per cent is close to the EU average of 10 per cent.

Other areas surveyed in the report include cloud services, IT security and IT knowledge.

The report is in Danish and includes a preface and summary in English.

Read the full report [It-anvendelse i befolkningen 2019 \[ICT use by individuals 2019\]](#)

Find [key data and read about the survey in English](#)

About the statistics: The national statistical offices in the EU, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland conduct annual studies on ICT usage by individuals, based on a [European model questionnaire](#) coordinated by Eurostat. The surveys are sample surveys in the population aged 16–74 years, and data are presented in [Eurostat's database](#). The results above refer to Spring 2019.

Several countries, including Denmark above, expand their national surveys with more questions and broaden the sample to a larger proportion of the population (Denmark 15–89 years, Norway 16–79 years, Sweden 16–85 years).

Find more Nordic IT statistics in English

EUROSTAT AND THE NORDIC STATISTICAL OFFICES' REPORTS

EUROSTAT [Information Society Statistics \(database\)](#)

STATISTICS FINLAND [Use of information and communications technology by individuals](#)

STATISTICS NORWAY [ICT usage in households](#)

STATISTICS SWEDEN [ICT usage in households and by individuals](#)

NORDICOM [Eurostat data in the table database](#) (filter by Nordic + Internet/ICT)

MORE READING

DESI, Europe's annual digital status report: [The Nordics peak in 2019 digital EU index](#)

Eurostat's cultural statistics: [The Nordics – Europe's busiest users of culture and media online](#)

Increase for audio books in Norway and Denmark

Book Reading, Book Market | Norway Denmark February 2020 | EH

More and more people listen to audio books, but still, the paper book is top notch. Two current reports examine book trends in the digital society.

The book industry is changing. Digital book formats are on the rise, especially streamed audio books that can be listened to anytime and anywhere via smartphones or tablets. However, the printed book is still the most popular format, independent of age. But there are growing differences between older and younger readers. This is shown in two book reports from Norway and Denmark, respectively. As they both examine how many and who reads, buys or borrows books, including use of digital book services, some common trends are visible. However, as the results are based on different surveys and research questions, the statistics cannot be compared between countries.

Norway: Book consumption, libraries and reading in digital times



How do the Norwegians prefer to consume books? What digital services do they use? This is examined by BI: Centre for Creative Industries in its fourth interim report from the research project [Digitization and Diversity](#). The report, published in January, is based on five surveys on book consumption, the National Library's digital book service, and self-publishing.

In 2018, 70 per cent of Norwegians preferred to read on paper. The audio book, in second place, was preferred by 10 per cent, and the e-book reader by 4 per cent. This can be compared to 2016, when 75 per cent preferred printed books, 7 per cent audio books and 3 per cent e-book readers.

Even though the print book is number one independent of age, there are generational differences. In the age group 70 years and older, 82 per cent prefer to read a print book, compared to 59 per cent in the age group 15–19 years.

As for the usage of streamed audio book services, such as Storytel and Fabel, it has increased from 4 to 8 per cent from 2016 to 2018. Despite the increase, the figure is low compared to other digital subscription services, which are topped by SVOD services such as Netflix and TV2 Sumo (used by 60%), online music services such as Spotify and Tidal (51%) and online newspapers (38%).

Download PDF in Norwegian (6.6 MB): [Bokforbruk, bibliotek og lesing i digitale tider](#) [Book Consumption, Libraries and Reading in Digital Times]

Denmark: Books and literature status review 2019



In Denmark, audio books are booming. This is according to the annual report from the [Danish Book Panel](#), tasked by the Minister of Culture to follow developments in the Danish book market.

Among Danes who read fiction, two of ten (20%) listen to audio books. Nevertheless, the print book is still the most popular way to consume literature. Nine of ten (86%) readers state that they read printed books. To read on paper is actually most common in all age groups, although to a greater extent among older people than among younger ones. Conversely, audio books have a better hold on younger readers: 31 per cent of 25–34-year-olds who consume fictional books listen to the story, compared to 9 per cent in the age group 75 years and older.

The most common way to access fictional books is to buy a physical one (34% of the population), followed by loans from the library or from family or friends (24% and 21%, respectively). Digital subscription services such as Mofibo and Storytel are used by 8 per cent.

Production of digital audio books is also on the rise in Denmark. In 2018, some 3,800 new titles were released, an increase of 60 per cent since 2017. Lending of audio books at public libraries increased by 24 per cent.

Read more in Danish and download:

[Bogen og litteraturens vilkår 2019](#) [Books and literature status review 2019]

Reading tips: Book report from Sweden and statistics from Finland

In September 2019, the Swedish Publishers Association published a report on how audio books affect the market, consumption and the future ([Ljudboken: Hur den digitala logiken påverkar marknaden, konsumtionen och framtiden](#)), which shows a rapid growth rate for digital book subscription services in Sweden. Book sales statistics 2019 were presented on 17 February 2020 in Swedish: [Bokförsäljningsstatistiken – helåret 2019](#).

As for Finland, facts about book reading and the book market are available in Statistics Finland's [databases for Culture](#) and [Media \(Table 4.21 on audio books\)](#) in English and Finnish, and in Statistics Finland's [Leisure Survey of 2017 \(article in Finnish\)](#).

Annual book sales statistics are presented by the national publishers' associations in the Nordic countries. Find them via Nordicom's [database of external statistical sources](#) (filter Subject area – Books).

2019 was a turbulent year for the Danish media market

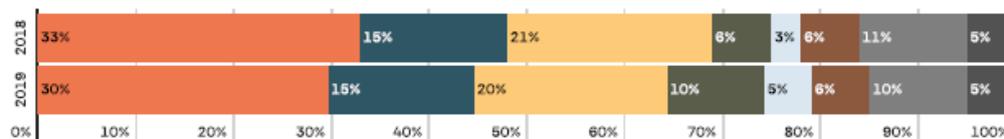
Media Use | Denmark March 2020 | CR

The Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) has just published their annual report *Media Development 2019*, which describes the Danish population's media usage. 2019 was influenced by savings and conflicts that undoubtedly will affect future Danish media usage.

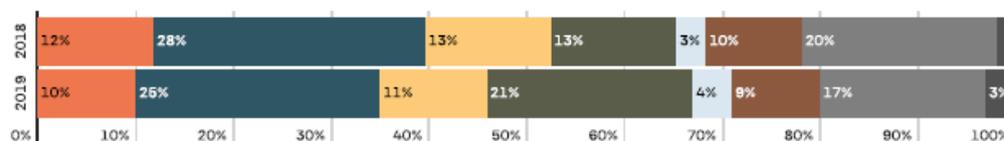
Traditional media still dominates. The reason for this is that the elderly, who make up a large group of the Danish population, use traditional media more. However, traditional media consistently loses users to TV-streaming, radio, music and podcasts.

Distribution of the Danes' media use

15-75 years



15-31 years



Source: [DR Audience Research Department's report Media Development 2019](#)

Conflicts and savings plans led to several TV-channels closing down

As part of the political savings plan, DR closed several flow-channels at the end of 2019. Moreover, the TV distributor Yousee and Discovery Network didn't succeed in reaching a new agreement in 2019, leading Yousee to close all Discovery Network channels this year. This has left several Yousee customers considering whether to switch TV-packages or replace cable- and flow-TV with streaming services.

In 2019, the Danish population watched an average of 2 hours and 17 minutes of television per day. Ten per cent of this time went to DR's flow-channels and Discovery Network's channels. The closing of these TV-channels will have a negative effect on traditional television usage.

Popular speech radio channel closed down

The popular radio channel Radio24syv had to close down after eight years on the air, when they didn't receive a new allocation of a DAB-frequency. Radio24syv was replaced by Radio4 and the DAB-frequency went to a new channel, LOUD, whose profile is not completely known yet. This means that Denmark will have three speech radio channels in 2020: DR P1, Radio4 and LOUD.

Streaming toddlers

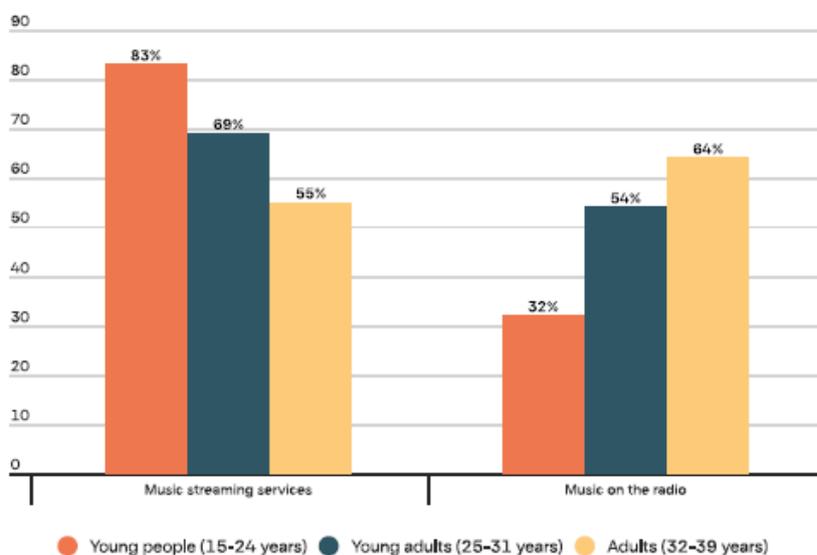
Half of Danish children under the age of three use YouTube weekly, while one out of three streams content from DR. Research shows that children under the age of three spend half an hour per day watching video- and TV-content from DR. Parents, who control children's screen time, have different motives for exposing their children to streamed content, such as stimulating their development or using it as a diversion.

Screen time is a debated topic. However, according to both Danish and international scientists, there is no proof that the use of screen devices has a negative effect on children's mental health. It is, on the other hand, important to focus on what type of content they are exposed to.

Music and radio on the mobile phone

The Danish population mostly use their mobile phones to listen to music and radio. There is, however, a big difference between how people under the age of 25 and people over the age of 25 listen to music. People over the age of 25 listen to music like they always have, but they have replaced CDs with streaming. For people under the age of 25, accessibility is more important. While sound quality is not an important factor, having the music available all the time is. Spotify is the most popular music source that young people have, and instead of albums, they listen to playlists based on their current mood.

This is how the young Danes listen to music and radio



Applies to 2019. [Source: DR Audience Research Department's report Media Development 2019](#)

There is no doubt that 2020 will be a year of change for the Danish population's media usage.

In the report, you can also read about:

- how much the Danish people listen to radio and podcasts
- how the Danish people navigate through the streaming jungle
- the media year 2019
- how Danish people still value TV news
- how the media industry measures user behaviour
- the large group of mature streamers
- how e-sports are on the edge of a big breakthrough
- push notifications
- the gender divide when choosing TV programmes

Find the full report [Media Development 2019 on DR's website](#)

About the report: *Media Development 2019* is a part of DR Audience Research Department's annual report series about the Danish people's media usage, with focus on TV, radio and the Internet (electronic media).

[Previous reports are available to download from DR's website.](#)

Norwegian children's media use 2020

Media Use | Norway February 2020 | JR

In Norway, 90 per cent of children between the ages of 9 and 18 use social media, according to a new report from the Norwegian Media Authority. YouTube is the most popular social media platform, followed by Snapchat, Tik Tok and Instagram. The report also shows that more than 40 per cent of teenagers between 13 and 18 years old have seen frightening or violent content online.



Last week, the first report from the research Barn og medier 2020 was published by the Norwegian Media Authority. The first report focuses on children's and young people's social media use and what type of content they are exposed to online. According to the results, as much as 90 per cent of Norwegian children aged between 9 and 18 years use social media. Among the 9-year-olds, the youngest group that participated in the research, more than 50 per cent are on social media.

The most popular social media platforms among children and young people are Youtube, Snapchat, Tik Tok and Instagram. Youtube is used by 95 per cent of the children between 9 and 18 years old and Snapchat is used by 80 per cent. Tik Tok and Instagram are both used by 65 per cent.

Almost all children and young people use social media to talk to their friends. About 50 per cent get to know new people with the same interests and around 40 per cent share things that they feel are important on social media. The most popular thing to do on social media among children between the ages of 9 and 18 is to "like" something. The second most popular thing is to share, send or make video clips.

Although there are positive sides to children's media use, it doesn't come without problems. Over the last year, more than 40 per cent of Norwegian teenagers between 13 and 18 years old have seen frightening or violent content online, and as much as 50 per cent of girls between the ages of 13 and 18 have seen content idealising thinness.

The Norwegian Media Authority works with developing and strengthening critical media understanding among children and young people to prevent problems like cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and body-related anxiety. According to the Norwegian Media Authority, there is need for a national strategy to achieve the greatest effect from the prevention work. This would mean to coordinate the actions for children's online safety that today are performed by several different actors.

Read the report (in Norwegian): [Barn og medier 2020: Delrapport 1 \(PDF 2.1 MB\)](#)

Read more [about the Norwegian Media Authority on their website](#)

Since 2006, the Norwegian Media Authority have collected data regarding children's and young people's media use through the research Barn og medier-undersøkelsen, which is performed every other year. The research makes it possible for the Norwegian Media Authority to follow the development of the media use, which benefits the work with strengthening the critical media understanding among children and young people. In this year's research, 3,400 children between the ages of 9 and 18 participated. The results are presented in several reports with different themes. The first report was published 11 February 2020 and some of the results were presented at the [seminar Safer Internet Day 2020](#) the same day.

Children’s opportunities and risks online surveyed

Media Use | Europe Norway Finland February 2020 | CB

Since 2010, time spent daily online has almost doubled among children in many European countries. And for most children in Europe, the smartphone is the preferred means of going online, enabling “anywhere, anytime” connectivity.

These results may not come as a great surprise to many. Considerable country differences may instead offer new insights. According to the new 2020 EU Kids online survey, more than half of the children use social networking sites on a weekly basis in most countries, whereas in other countries, four out of ten children never or hardly ever visit a social networking site.

In the recently released report from the EU Kids Online project, the findings from a survey of children aged 9–16 years from 19 European countries – Finland and Norway among them – and their use of the Internet and digital technology are presented.



The report aims to map different aspects of young people’s online use and centres around four main areas: access, practice and skills, risks and opportunities and social context. Whereas *access* focuses on how children go online and for how long, for example which devices they use to go online, *practice and skills* describes what they do, for example which services they use and if they have enough skills to understand and use the Internet for their benefit.

The area of *risks and opportunities* deals with negative and positive experiences such as online aggression, cyberbullying and seeing potentially harmful content, meeting new people and preferences for communication online. *Social context* refers to, for example, parental mediation and support for safe use but also “reverse mediation”, when children help their parents with difficulties they encounter in their online use.

The report is a follow up of the EU Kids Online 2010 survey, where children in 25 European countries and their parents participated. The unique 2010 survey had a great impact on policy and prevention work on both national and international levels, providing enhanced knowledge and better insight into children’s technology use and online experiences.

The 2020 survey partially followed the 2010 edition. However, since significant changes occurred during the time period, such as the increased access and use of smartphones and fast mobile Internet, adjustments of the questionnaire were required. Other changes to consider regard new services, such as Instagram and TikTok, used by young people and the development of touchscreen devices enabling Internet use at earlier ages. Possibilities for direct comparison with the 2010 data are limited.

Figure 1: Countries participated in the survey (in red).



The thorough report (156 pages) comprises country profiles of the 19 participating countries; 12 of these also participated in the 2010 survey. Since there was no central funding body, the methodology used varies among the participating countries. Hence, the report focuses on basic descriptive results of questions used in all countries participating in the survey.

Further on shorter reports will be available on the EU Kids Online website (www.eukidsonline.net), presenting more in-depth results in selected areas.

[Read more and download EU Kids Online 2020](#)

Source: Smahel, D., Machackova, H., Mascheroni, G., Dedkova, L., Staksrud, E., Ólafsson, K., Livingstone, S., & Hasebrink, U. (2020). EU Kids Online 2020: Survey results from 19 countries. EU Kids Online. London: London School of Economics and Political Science. <https://www.doi.org/10.21953/lse.47fdeqj01ofo>

More News from Nordicom

Nordicom Review: Latest Articles

Nordicom Review | Nordic March 2020 | EH

Nordicom's journal *Nordicom Review* is an Open Access scientific journal in English, applying double-blind peer-review standards. Starting in 2020 with volume 41, *Nordicom Review* will be a digital-only journal. The articles are published one by one online, allowing you to read them as soon as they are complete, rather than waiting for the entire issue to be published.

The latest articles ([links available via Nordicom's website](#)):

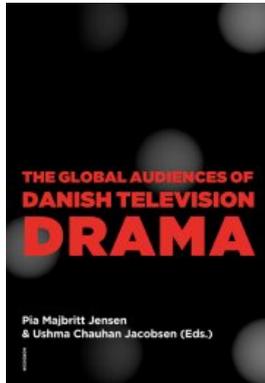
- **Private Governance** of Freedom of Expression on Social Media Platforms: EU content regulation through the lens of human rights standards (Rikke Frank Jørgensen & Lumi Zuleta)
- **From Decoding** a Graph to Processing a Multimodal Message: Interacting with data visualisation in the news media (Martin Engebretsen)
- **Cold War** Television Diplomacy: The German Democratic Republic on Finnish television (Laura Saarenmaa, Marie Cronqvist)
- **Mimicking News:** How the credibility of an established tabloid is used when disseminating racism (Johan Farkas, Christina Neumayer)

Read more about [Nordicom Review](#) and find the latest articles on the [Sciendo publishing](#) platform. [Publish with us!](#)

The Global Audiences of Danish Television Drama

Research Anthology | Denmark Global March 2019 | KA

A new anthology, *The Global Audiences of Danish Television Drama*, edited by Pia Majbritt Jensen and Ushma Chauhan Jacobsen, sheds light on the global success of Danish television drama and explores the theoretical implications for audience studies.



“When Danish television drama spread across the world it surprised both industry professionals and academics”, writes Pia Majbritt Jensen and Ushma Chauhan Jacobsen in the anthology’s first chapter, “It appeared that a public broadcaster from a relatively small nation with a language spoken by only 5.6 million people had succeeded in creating what could indeed be termed ‘a peripheral counter-flow’ of television content”.

This new anthology is the first publication to consider the transnational audiences of Nordic Noir. Intended for students, researchers and media professionals, it explores the reception of three Danish series among global audiences by investigating how they were received in seven different countries: Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Turkey and the UK.

“The scale of the study is truly global”, comments Pia Majbritt Jensen and Ushma Chauhan Jacobsen. They continue:

We have used a highly innovative approach to transnational audiences insofar as we also consider distributors, buyers, and cultural intermediaries as important audiences. The anthology maps out transnational audiences and non-Anglophone content in all their complexities.

As a whole, the anthology provides insight on global-audience research in an age of multi-platform and multi-directional media flows, as well as on the complex nature of contemporary audiences located in different parts of the world.

The Global Audiences of Danish Television Drama offers a major contribution to research on Danish television drama, the international circulation of audiovisual content produced in non-Anglophone contexts, and the phenomenon of Nordic Noir.

[Read: The Global Audiences of Danish Television Drama](#) (Open Access on Nordicom’s website)

About the editors:

Pia Majbritt Jensen is Associate Professor in the Department of Media Studies and Journalism, Aarhus University. Ushma Chauhan Jacobsen is Associate Professor in the Department of English, Aarhus University.

Newspapers reused crisis quotes from the Swedish Academy

Nordicom Review | Nordic March 2020 | JR

When reporting on the crisis at the Swedish Academy in the spring of 2018, Swedish newspapers often reused quotes already published by other media. Such replication can have economic benefits, but can lead to a self-referencing journalistic culture. This is shown in a new study published by Nordicom.

The study, published in the scientific journal *Nordicom Review*, examines the extent to which Swedish newspapers have reused quotes already published by other media in connection with the reporting of the crisis in the Swedish Academy in spring 2018. The quotes came from interviews, text messages and social media, and mainly from members of the Swedish Academy, though also from other public figures.

The results show that recycling of quotes is a widely used practice. Author Sanna Skärlund, associate professor of Swedish language at Halmstad University, comments:

In the articles I analysed, almost a sixth of the content is quoted from an already published text. Some articles consist entirely of descriptions of what has been said in interviews from other media, but the most common is that the newspapers mix new statements with quotes from previously published interviews.

The study is based on an analysis of 120 articles published during spring 2018 in Sweden's four largest newspapers: Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet, Aftonbladet and Expressen. All articles address the crisis in the Swedish Academy, which began in the fall of 2017 with a prominent artistic director with ties to the Swedish Academy being accused of sexual abuse by several women in connection with the #metoo movement.

Problems with text recycling

Republishing text can save money for the news media in a time of diminishing resources. In addition, the possibilities of copying material from various sources have been facilitated by the use of the Internet and digital publishing. From a larger perspective, however, reuse can lead to problems and cause a "self-referential culture". Sanna Skärlund explains:

The newspapers could become almost like a closed system where the same information is circulated in all media without new facts. There will be a great deal of stagnation in the media if journalists are largely referring to each other instead of doing their own investigations and contacting new sources that can give different perspectives on the events described.

Another risk of the media reusing statements is that second-hand material can easily be misinterpreted and cause inaccuracies to spread.

We can think of the game Chinese whisper: what the first person says is distorted along the way, so that the message – after passing several people – has soon changed to something else. In my study, this is most clear in a one-way analysis, where it appears that journalists at *Svenska Dagbladet* misunderstood a text message from Sara Stridsberg that *Dagens Nyheter* published, says Sanna Skärlund.

Text recycling is increasing

Sanna Skärhund emphasises that the articles about the crisis in the Swedish Academy are probably an extreme case, but still thinks that the reuse of published material is something that has increased.

I do not think all newspaper articles contain such a large proportion of recycled quotes. However, I am pretty sure that the reuse of already published texts has increased in the media, as international research has shown. It is much more easy today to cut and paste articles from material found on the Internet than it was before the Internet's impact.

Read the article (PDF): [The Recycling of News in Swedish Newspapers: Reused quotations and reports in articles about the crisis in the Swedish Academy in 2018.](#)

Upcoming:

Webinar in Swedish about the results of the Media Barometer 2019

The Media Barometer Survey | Sweden April 2020 | JR

On 29 May 2020, Nordicom at the University of Gothenburg will present the results of the Media Barometer 2019, the annual survey investigating the Swedish population's media use. This year, we will hold a webinar (in Swedish) instead of the usual seminar.

The results of the Media Barometer survey will be presented, as usual, at the end of May. This year, it will only be in digital form, since we follow the University of Gothenburg's recommendations to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

We plan to hold the webinar 29 May 2020 between 13:00 and 14:30, but changes might be made due to the current circumstances. The webinar will be in Swedish and will be recorded and available at Nordicom's website following the livestream.

We will present a more detailed programme in the beginning of May, together with information about how to participate. Visit our website or follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates about the webinar and sneak peaks from the results of the Media Barometer 2019.

[Nordicom on Facebook](#)

[Nordicom on Twitter](#)

[The Media Barometer](#) has been conducted every year since 1979, making it the oldest research of its kind in the world. In the survey, a random selection of the Swedish population between the ages of 9 and 79 answer questions about their media use. Starting in 2019, the answers are collected through both an online survey and telephone interviews.

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Media Trends in the Nordic Countries

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Nordicom is a co-operative body of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Nordicom follows the Nordic media development with the aim to document and spread knowledge about media trends within, and about, the Nordic region within a European and global perspective. The newsletter *Media Trends in the Nordic Countries* covers issues such as media consumption, structure and policy, and reports on the latest developments and current research in the field.

The newsletter is scheduled to come out three times a year.

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