No. 3, 2019 (December)

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Media Use

Report on Danes' perception of news

Researchers at the Danish School of Media and Journalism have studied how the Danish population perceive and comprehend news. Among the unexpected results was that social media has less significance for opinion building than anticipated.

Today, most people follow the news throughout the whole day, with their mobile device in hand. But the news flow, mixing traditional news, entertainment and private updates, makes it more difficult to differentiate between various types of news.

This is especially true among younger generations. The young largely orient themselves by following the flows of certain people online, compared to older generations who mainly turn to a number of specific news media or channels for news.

These are some of the basic results presented in Active, overwhelmed, diverted or addicted?, a Danish report examining how news and current affairs are perceived and comprehended by different segments of the population – and the importance of these views in a social context.

In five chapters, the report explores Danes’ media use, different social networks’ impact on peoples’ news understanding, how different groups orient themselves in the society and with whom they discuss news. The report also investigates Danes’ trust in the media, and how they reflect upon if and why it is important to keep up with the news.

Based on the conclusions, five types of news users are identified. In addition to the young and the elderly mentioned above, there are city-dwellers, who see themselves as media- and socially competent, and the rural population, who form their outlook, including their political orientation, in local newspapers and Facebook groups, for example. For the fifth type, families with children, daily life often seems like “just surviving”. For parents, children are sometimes the reason they keep track of news and sometimes the reason they “can’t be bothered”. Despite being simplifications, the researchers believe the five types to encompass much of the range of attitudes to news and current affairs in 2019.

The minor role of social networks in forming people’s opinions was unexpected, according to the researchers. For opinion building, personal networks – family, workplace, friends – are still the most important. Another unexpected conclusion was that the theory of filter bubbles is exaggerated; for most people, it is important to be aware of current issues. Moreover, Danes are generally both knowledgeable and critical media users, according to the results.

Among the negative results – and of great concern for the future – is the low willingness to pay for news and quality journalism.
Download the English summary (PDF 227 KB)
Find the summary in English on the site, Report on Media Development in Denmark (under Special reports: Comprehension of news and current affairs in the Danish population)
Find the full report in Danish: Aktiv, overvældet, adspredt eller afhængig?
Watch the conference video in Danish: from the launch of the report on 22 October

More information: The report on Danes' news understanding is based on just over a hundred interviews plus a survey, and was made by the Danish Media and Journalist School on behalf of the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces. It is published as a special report in the Agency’s annual "Reporting on the media development in Denmark". The survey was made by the following researchers at the Danish School of Media and Journalism: Jakob Linaa Jensen (research leader), Roger Buch, Jakob Dybro Johansen, Poul Thøis Madsen (also AAU) and Flemming Tait Svith.

NORDIC OUTLOOK: Media, Culture and Public Connection in Norway

In connection with the report's publication on 22 October, the Agency for Culture and Palaces organised a conference on news and current affairs (in Danish).

At the conference, Jan Fredrik Hovden, Professor at Bergen University, presented the Norwegian research project Media, Culture and Public Connection: Freedom of Information in the 'Age of Big Data'.

The project studies how people in Norway experience and make use of their freedom of information, as well as the significance of media and cultural arenas in people’s public connection across sociocultural differences.

About the project: Media, Culture and Public Connection: Freedom of Information in the 'Age of Big Data'. See Jan Fredrik Hovden's presentation at the conference (video in Norwegian).

New report about the media development in Denmark

In 2018, more Danes accessed a news site daily than read a printed daily newspaper. During the same year, half the newspaper titles in Denmark lost more than ten per cent of their readers. These are some of the trends shown in the Media Development in Denmark 2019 report.

The 2019 report on the media development from the Danish Agency for Cultural and Palaces shows how more and more Danes are streaming, listening to podcasts, using news sites, etc. Conversely, fewer and fewer Danes are reading print newspapers, watching flow TV, or listening to the radio.

Some of the report’s conclusions:

- In 2018, for the first time, there were fewer Danes reading a printed newspaper (1,624,000) than using a news site (1,916,000) on an average day. At the same time, 16 out of 32 dailies lost more than ten per cent of readers. Almost all daily newspapers’ sites reach a larger audience than their printed edition.
• Traditional TV viewing is falling, while streaming is growing. From 2017 to 2018, the proportion of Danes who watch traditional TV on a weekly basis dropped from 80 to 77 per cent. Parallel to this, the share who weekly stream audiovisual content increased from 54 to 57 per cent.

• Households without a traditional TV set are becoming increasingly common. From 2017 to 2018, the share of households without a TV signal grew from 11 to 15 per cent. However, the majority (85 per cent) of Danish households still has at least one TV set with a TV signal.

• Age affects the content streamed. People under 55 years most often stream series/programmes on DRTV, Netflix, YouSee, etc. Among the 55+ age group, most stream news on a weekly basis.

• Radio listening is falling, while podcasts are becoming more popular. From 2017 to 2018, daily radio listening decreased by four minutes, continuing the downward trend. The fall in radio listening is evenly distributed across age groups and radio channels. In contrast, there is an increase in podcast listening. In 2018, half of the population has listened to podcasts (up from 43 per cent in 2017 to 49 per cent in 2018).

Extensive English summary
The conclusions above are reported in an extensive English summary, which highlights and discusses the most important conclusions in the 2019 report, including developments in Danes’ media consumption, their confidence in and use of technological opportunities, and how media consumption is shared between the media companies operating on the Danish market.

Media development in Denmark – English site
The full online report in Danish: Mediernes udvikling i Danmark 2019

About the report: This is the sixth edition of the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces’ annual “Report on media development in Denmark”. The reports are compiled in consultation with an external editorial panel, consisting of seven expert media professionals, researchers, and industry representatives. Apart from media use, the report also conducts analyses on media content and the media industry. Completed analyses and studies are disseminated partly in a main report every year and partly in ongoing reports and conferences with key themes and results.

NORDIC TRENDS:
Radio listening and TV viewing 2018
How are radio listening and TV viewing developing in the other Nordic countries? Nordic data for 2018 can be found in Nordicom’s media statistics database (search: Nordic – Radio/Audio or Television/Video – Use)

The Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces is a member of Nordicom’s statistical network, and contributes data to the comparative Nordic media statistics.
The Swedes & the Internet: Digitisation is affecting our media lives
Media use | Sweden October 2019 | KH

The use of traditional media is decreasing and the use of social media is levelling out. At the same time, the use of digital streaming services for video and sound is increasing. This is stated in the report *The Swedes and the Internet 2019*, presented by the Internet Foundation in Sweden on October 15.

The Internet has revolutionised our society, and is now often the preferred medium in many types of everyday communication. A majority of the population uses digital community services, Mobile BankID, and social media. The use of traditional media on traditional platforms is decreasing, while more and more people are consuming the digital versions of traditional media.

Below, we highlight some of the results regarding media use on digital platforms.

Internet users (16+ years) who use different media at least sometimes or daily 2019 (per cent)

Note 1: The term Internet users refers to questionnaire respondents who say they use the Internet at least sometimes.
Note 2: The proportion of social media users refers to Internet users aged 12+ years.
Source: The Swedes and the Internet 2019   |   Download the graph as PDF

**Digital reading**

In Sweden, the regular habit of consuming newspapers on paper has been decreasing for many years. The newspaper is also the most read medium on the Internet. Reading a daily newspaper online is most common in the age group 35-45 years, at 50 per cent. Among pensioners, the corresponding figure is 41 per cent.

Reading blogs has never been a daily habit among the majority of Internet users in Sweden; in recent years, it has remained stable at around 7 per cent. However, almost half of Internet users state that they
access blogs sometimes. Reading a blog sometimes is most common in the age group 26-45 years, at about 60 per cent. Among the youngest, aged 12-15 years, 35 per cent state that they sometimes read blogs, while 38 per cent of pensioners read blogs sometimes.

The paper book has a strong position, with 88 per cent of Internet users stating that they read paper books. Yet the popularity of digital books has increased. This is especially true among those who state that they sometimes access digital books: the proportion has increased from 20 per cent in 2016 to 42 per cent in 2019. The proportion who consume digital books is highest among Internet users between the ages of 12 and 45, at about 50 per cent.

Moving image platforms
A majority of viewers still do most of their watching on traditional television sets, with 57 per cent of Internet users watching traditional television daily; however, the proportion of daily viewers has decreased. With increasing viewing of digital video, especially among teens, a decline in traditional television viewing is not surprising.

There are several services for watching movies, videos, and television online. The report *The Swedes and the Internet* focuses particularly on the streaming services of traditional television channels, Netflix, and YouTube. YouTube is the biggest channel, with 32 per cent watching this service daily, after which comes Netflix with 20 per cent viewing daily, and lastly, television channels’ streaming services with 15 per cent watching daily.

Generally, the popularity of streaming services is much higher among younger than older people. A majority of children in the age group 12-14 years and adolescents/young adults 16-25 years use YouTube daily, with respective shares of 80 and 72 per cent. Among those over the age of 55, the corresponding proportion is less than 10 per cent.

If we look at the proportion of people watching sometimes, it is clear that watching streaming services is not a typical daily activity. As much as 81 per cent of Internet users state that they watch sometimes. The corresponding figure for Netflix is 58 per cent. This means that more people watch the streaming services of traditional television channels than that of Netflix.

Radio and music services on the Internet
Digital platforms are changing the way we consume audio. Daily listening to AM/FM radio is decreasing, but is still the most common way to access radio. The proportion of Internet users who listen to live radio over the Internet is slowly increasing, as is podcast listening. The Spotify audio service, which includes music as well as podcasts and radio stations, is steadily increasing.

In general, older Internet users listen more to regular radio than younger ones, while younger users listen to podcasts more than older ones. Among adolescents/young adults 16-25 years, 11 per cent listen daily to radio on a conventional radio, 16 per cent to podcasts, and 6 per cent to a radio station on the Internet. Corresponding figures among pensioners are 63 per cent daily listeners of regular radio, 2 per cent of podcasts, and 14 per cent of a radio station on the Internet.

Social media
A majority of Internet users use social media, with 83 per cent using it sometimes and 65 per cent using it daily. The successive increase in daily users since 2010 has stopped. A look back at previous years’ measurements shows that the proportion of people using Facebook has dropped significantly.
among people under 25. Among children aged 12-15 years, 4 per cent use Facebook daily, while among adolescents/young adults aged 16-25 this proportion is 61 per cent. Five years ago, 69 per cent of children and 50 per cent among adolescents/young adults used Facebook daily.

Read more:
The Swedes and the Internet 2019, English summary
Svenskarna och internet 2019, full report in Swedish

About the survey: The Swedes and the Internet is an annual individual survey on Internet use, and was first conducted in 2000. This year’s survey covers February to March, 2019. The principal for the survey is the Swedish Internet Foundation, an independent non-profit organisation that works for a positive development of the Internet. The Swedes and the Internet is the Swedish contribution to the World Internet Project, an international research project that follows the spread and use of the Internet around the world.

Nordic children’s and young people’s cultural habits
Media use | Nordic September 2019 | EH

The Nordic Agency for Cultural Policy has launched a research anthology, providing new insights into the leisure culture among Nordic children and youth. Digital media, smart phones, and online gaming are among the trends highlighted in the report.

Published in September, the anthology Making Culture – children’s and young people’s leisure cultures presents current research on children’s and young people’s cultural habits in the Nordic region.

The anthology discusses the driving forces behind children’s and young people’s engagement in cultural activities, as well as the meaning of concepts such as children’s creativity and participation. Among the cultural trends on display are online gaming, cosplay, and fanfiction.

Furthermore, the meanings of different cultural practices for various groups of young people, such as ethnic minorities, LGBTQ youth, and disabled youth are also discussed in the anthology.

Two chapters deal with quantitative surveys on cultural habits among children and young people. One of the chapters presents and develops a previous mapping of current surveys in the Nordic countries (published by the Nordic Agency for Cultural Policy in 2018), while the other analyses the challenges involved with survey-based research when studying children’s and young people’s use of culture and media.

Read more and download the report here

More information: The anthology is published in cooperation with 19 Nordic researchers from Denmark, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Editor is Anna Sparman, Professor in Child Studies at Linköping University in Sweden.
The Nordics – Europe’s busiest users of culture and media online
Meda Use | Nordic Europe October 2019 | KC

With almost universal household Internet access, Iceland leads in using the Internet for streaming TV and movies, reading online news, listening to web radio and streaming music and purchasing films, music and reading material. The other Nordic countries usually follow closely.

Eurostat’s 2019 Culture Statistics report compares culture-related data from the EU28, EFTA and enlargement countries. Below, some of the findings featuring the Nordics are highlighted, focusing on the Internet and media related activities.

Nordics in the top tier of Internet access and media usage — Iceland leads in all categories
Iceland had the highest rate of household Internet access among all countries surveyed with 99 per cent, and only the Netherlands (98%) kept Norway from second place with 96 per cent. The three Nordic member states followed: Finland (94%), Denmark (93%) and Sweden (92%).

Iceland again leads the pack when it comes to Internet use for watching streamed TV and movies, with 91 per cent of the Internet users using it for that purpose in the three months preceding the survey. Finland came in second with 90 per cent (tied with the Netherlands), followed by Norway (89%), Sweden (88%) and Denmark (87%).

With 95 per cent of the adult population using the Internet for online news, Iceland again comes out on top. Norway (tied with Lithuania) came in second place with 93 per cent. When it comes to web radio and music streaming, Iceland takes first place with 81 per cent, followed by Finland and Sweden (both 76 %), Norway (tied with Greece at 72%) and Denmark (69%).

Nordics lead in using the Internet to purchase films, music and reading material
Among all countries surveyed, Iceland had the highest number of individuals using the Internet to purchase films and music with 54 per cent of the Internet users, followed closely by Sweden (49%) and Norway (44%). That is contrasted with less than 17 per cent of EU28 Internet users. When it comes to using the Internet to buy books, magazines and newspapers, Sweden tops the list with 37 per cent.

1 The percentages using Internet for different purposes are based on Internet users throughout the article.
2 Data from 2017.

Read more and download: Culture Statistics – 2019 edition
Read Culture Statistics – 2019 edition as an online publication

More about Eurostat’s data: In the cultural field, Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, compiles statistics from several different data collection exercises. The vast majority of the data in the 2019 report may also be found in the culture domain of Eurobase, Eurostat’s online database. Further statistics on ICT usage can be found in the digital economy and society section of the database.
Nordic statistics close up

To find out more about Internet access over time in the EU28 and other countries in Europe (incl. Iceland and Norway), as well as individual Internet activities per Nordic country, download the following tables from Nordicom’s table database (filter Region by ‘Nordic’ and Media by ‘Internet/ICT’):

- Internet access in EU28 and per European country 2002–2018 (Excel)
- Use of Internet for social networks, news, games, music, TV and video services per Nordic country 2011–2018 (Excel)
- Use of Internet for social networks, games, music, TV and video services per Nordic country, by age 2018 (Excel)

Telecommunications report: Mobile data usage up in the Nordics

In the Nordic countries, mobile call minutes are generally stagnating, but high-speed broadband and the use of mobile data are increasing. These are some of the main findings from a 2018 telecommunications report.

The national regulatory authorities in the Nordic and Baltic countries produce an annual comparative report on their telecommunications markets. Here, some findings from the Nordic countries are highlighted.

Finland leads in mobile subscriptions per capita and mobile data usage
While the other Nordic countries range 1.1–1.4 mobile subscriptions per capita, Finland leads with 1.7 subscriptions per capita.

Data traffic on mobile networks is increasing in all Nordic countries, but Finland has the largest mobile data usage with 30.7 GB used per capita per month. This is more than three times higher than the next highest Nordic country, Denmark, who uses 10.1 GB per month. These findings are likely influenced by the popular unlimited-data mobile subscriptions in Finland. Interestingly, Finland sends the least amount of SMS messages per capita per month (29), less than half the number sent by Swedes (67), Danes (76) and Norwegians (77).

Among Nordic countries, Sweden is the only one with an increasing number of mobile call minutes – the rest have stagnated.

Denmark leads in fixed broadband subscriptions – Sweden leads in speed
With 0.44 fixed broadband subscriptions per capita in 2018, Denmark leads the Nordic countries. However, when adding dedicated mobile broadband subscriptions to the fixed, Finland leads with 0.72 subscriptions per capita (Denmark follows with 0.64).
Sweden has the most high-speed (100 Mbps or more) broadband subscriptions, with 0.29 subscriptions per capita. The second highest subscription rate is Iceland with 0.24 per capita. In all Nordic countries, the penetration rate continues to increase.

Iceland leads in investments – Norway leads in revenues

Iceland invests EUR 247 per capita in tangible fixed assets and infrastructure, more than two and half times more than the lowest Nordic country (Finland with EUR 95 per capita), followed by Norway (EUR 189), Denmark (EUR 162) and Sweden (EUR 152). Though investing the least, Finland was the only Nordic country other than Iceland to increase their investments from last year.

Revenue from mobile and fixed call services and broadband (TV and international roaming revenue not included) is highest in Norway, at EUR 446 (adjusted for purchasing power). The remaining Nordic countries range from EUR 361–380.

Find report and data:
Documents and tables: Nordic-Baltic Telecommunications Market
Download the full report (PDF, 1.3 MB)
Find links to the national Nordic telecom markets 2018 reports (PDF, 198 KB, from Nordicom's table database)

Press releases from the national authorities, 5 September 2019:
Finnish Transport and Communication Agency Traficom: Finland is the Nordic mobile services leader – fixed network is falling behind
Liikenne- ja viestintävirasto Traficom: Suomi Pohjoismaiden kärjessä mobiilikehityksessä - kiinteä verkko laahaa perässä
Nkom: Høyt investeringsnivå og sterk vekst i fiberutbygging i Norden og Baltikum
PTS: Sverige i nordisk fibertopp

About the report: Telecommunications Markets in the Nordic and Baltic Countries 2018 includes data for the five Nordic countries and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The report is published annually by the national telecom regulatory agencies and presents developmental trends for the individual countries through 2018.
Worst year ever for Swedish daily press

This year’s Swedish media economics report, Medieutveckling – Medieekonomi 2019, is produced by Nordicom in collaboration with the Swedish Press and Broadcasting Authority. It shows that commercial radio and TV are performing well, while the daily press has been hit hard by new competition in the media market.

2018 was a contradictory year for Swedish media companies’ economy. The report shows that the daily press had its worst year ever, while the largest companies in commercial radio and television continued to be very profitable. Jonas Ohlsson, director at Nordicom, says:

The analysis of the Swedish media companies’ financial results from 2018 reinforces the image that today’s increasingly global media landscape has both clear winners and clear losers, even here in Sweden.

The new and tougher competitive situation in the media market has left its mark on most companies. The daily press, as an individual media branch, was hit hardest.

The daily press needs support

Charlotte Ingvar-Nilsson, director general of the Swedish Press and Broadcasting Authority, says:

The report shows a great need for continued support for the daily press, whose significance for democracy cannot be underestimated. This development is especially disturbing for local journalism – local dailies, after all, account for about 70 per cent of the municipal news.

The report was presented by Jonas Ohlsson at a seminar in Stockholm on 24 October. The seminar was organised by the Swedish Press and Broadcasting Authority, Kantar Sifo and TU — Swedish Media Publishers’ Association.

Download the report (in Swedish): Medieutveckling 2019 – Medieekonomi (3868 KB)

Press release (in Swedish): Vind i seglen för både radio och tv – dagspressen kämpar i hård motvind

Report series: Medieekonomi [Media Economy] is part of the Swedish Press and Broadcasting Authority’s report series Medieutveckling [Media Development] in which annual reports on media policy and media consumption are also published. In December 2019, Mediemångfald, a report on media plurality on the Swedish media market was published. (EH)
The Norwegian Media Economy 2018
Media Economy | Norway December 2019 | EH

For the first time, TV advertising is declining in Norway. But as TV viewers pay more for premium content and distribution, the total TV economy is still growing. The Norwegian newspaper industry has a stable level of revenue for the first time since 2011, reports the Norwegian Media Authority.

The Norwegian Media Authority has published its annual media economy report, analysing the development of television, radio, and newspapers in Norway. It shows that in 2018 the Norwegian media revenue amounted to almost NOK 27 billion (EUR 2.8 billion), an increase of just under one per cent, compared to the previous year. In a five-year perspective, the industry's total revenue has increased by 0.1 per cent.

Ad loss continues – now also hitting radio and TV
In 2018, the Norwegian media’s revenue from advertising decreased. For newspapers this was a continuation of several years of losses – in five years, the newspaper industry has lost over NOK 2 billion (EUR 240 million) in advertising revenues – while for radio and television the ad loss was a new experience.

At the same time, online advertising investment increased. In 2018, Google and Facebook raised more advertising money than newspapers on the Norwegian advertising market. Over the past five years, global players, with Google and Facebook at the forefront, have more than tripled their revenues from the Norwegian ad market.

Increasing user payments for newspapers and TV
Since 2017, the Norwegian media industry earns more money from its audience than from advertising. Behind this development is increasing user payments in combination with declining advertising revenue. For newspapers, the breaking point came already in 2015, when revenue from readers for the first time accounted for more money than advertising. For national commercial television, 2018 was the first time that sales to viewers generated more revenue than advertising. See graph below.

Graph: Distribution of media revenue by different sources of income 2014-2018 (per cent)

Source: Medieøkonomirapporten 2018 [The Media Economy Report 2018], PDF, pages 22 and 51
For the first time since 2011 – stable revenue for newspapers

After several dramatic years for the Norwegian newspaper economy, 2018 was relatively stable, according to the report. For the first time, digital revenue compensated for the loss on paper, resulting in newspapers’ total revenue being roughly at the same level as in 2017, mainly explained by more readers’ payments from an increasing number of digital subscriptions.

Looking at the advertising side only, digital revenues also increased, but not enough to compensate for the ad losses for print. Therefore, the total advertising revenue also decreased during 2018 – though not at the same pace as before.

Despite the digital development, the paper-related revenue is still the largest. In 2018, more than 70 per cent of the newspaper industry's total revenue came from print papers.

Radio’s only source of revenue decreasing

For commercial radio, advertising is the only source of income. In 2018, revenues for nationwide radio channels fell for the first time, while local radio had approximately the same revenue as the year before.

Growth in TV industry – despite ad loss

Despite an advertising loss in 2018 of NOK 212 million or EUR 22 million (4.7 per cent), total revenues for the national TV channels increased compared to the previous year. This is because revenues from viewers increased by almost NOK half a billion (EUR 50 million), corresponding to 13 per cent. User revenue mainly comes from sales of premium content and distribution, which together have almost doubled over the past five years.

Read more about and download the report here (in Norwegian)
Download the report in PDF format 1.4 MB (in Norwegian)

About the report: Medieøkonomirapporten 2018 [The Media Economy Report 2018] is the Norwegian Media Authority’s annual report on the media industry's economic development, with a focus on news and current-affairs media. Included are paid-for newspapers, national TV and radio, as well as local TV and radio and free papers. Foreign pay-TV services (such as Netflix and HBO) are not included. This year's report looks at developments over a five-year period, from 2014 to 2018. The report is published in Norwegian. Read more about the Media Authority in English.
In Finland, the total value of the media market remained unchanged from 2017 to 2018. But for the media sectors, there were both ups and downs. While for example newspapers and magazines showed a weakened position, the TV industry grew, boosted by pay-TV and video-on-demand services.

Last year, the value of the Finnish media market amounted to 3.8 billion euros. Compared to the previous year, this meant a marginal increase of 33 million, or just under one per cent (0.9 per cent), according to Statistic Finland’s annual overview of the Finnish mass media market.

The TV industry is Finland’s largest media sector, accounting for almost a third (1.2 billion euros) of the total market value in 2018. Boosted by an increase in pay-TV services and particularly video-on-demand services, this was a five per cent growth from the previous year.

The largest increase was in online advertising, up 14 per cent from 2017 to 2018. But audio media also had a favourable year in 2018, with commercial radio and audio recordings both growing by around six per cent compared to 2017. In contrast, daily newspapers and magazines continued their decline. Compared to 2017, daily newspapers’ revenue fell by more than three per cent, and magazine revenue by over four per cent.

Read more on Statistics Finland’s website
Lue lisää Joukkoviestinnän markkinatrendit ennallaan vuonna 2018
Tilastotietoja vuosilta 1997–2018 Tilastokeskuksen taulukkotietokannassa

About the statistics: The calculations presented here describe the media market at end-user level: for example, the figure for the newspaper market is comprised of retail prices of subscription and single-copy sales of newspapers, and their revenue from advertising. The figures cover domestic production and imports, but not exports. There is some overlap between Internet advertising and other media groups.
Hyperlocal media does not replace discontinued local news media

While local news media outlets are closing down, the ecosystem of new digital media providing local news is growing. But the new hyperlocal media is usually found in areas that already have local papers and other news outlets, and their economic situation is often unpredictable. Therefore, hyperlocal media rarely become substitutes for discontinued local news media. These are some of the conclusions from a new collection of studies on hyperlocal media published by Nordicom at the University of Gothenburg.

Various forms of digital news services with a hyperlocal focus have increased in recent years. Media researcher Carl-Gustav Lindén at the University of Helsinki says:

There are many different variants of hyperlocal media, ranging from pure hobby projects to professional services established by former journalists. Some have a clear business model; others want to offer their neighbours information about what is happening in the locality.

Carl-Gustav Lindén is one of three editors of ‘Hyperlocal Media in the Nordic Region’, a special issue of the scientific journal Nordicom Review which includes the work of fifteen researchers investigating the role of hyperlocal media in the new media landscape.

Some have previously suggested that hyperlocal media could replace discontinued local newspapers and other local news, but a study in the special issue challenges this idea. Lottie Jangdal at the Mid Sweden University found that hyperlocal projects most often exist in places where there are already local newsrooms. Carl-Gustav Lindén comments, ‘Hyperlocal media rarely fill the void of the discontinued local newsrooms’.

Different news with local editors
Smaller hyperlocal actors and remote newsrooms are not able to provide the quality of coverage that a local newsroom can, and when journalism's business model is threatened by declining advertising revenues, many media researchers think this could lead to problems for democracy.

Without local editors, news sources are often replaced with unverified information distributed in groups on Facebook and other social media. The absence of local journalism can have consequences for social cohesion and local democracy, writes Gunnar Nygren from Södertörn University.

Uncertain finances
Today, there are differences in the Nordic countries regarding the possibilities of providing support for hyperlocal projects. Sweden and Norway do provide media support for hyperlocal media that meet basic criteria; in the Swedish case that means having at least 1,500 regular users and at least 50 per cent editorial content.

According to a study by Carina Tenor at Södertörn University, many of the hyperlocal actors have driving forces other than purely economic ones. Carl-Gustav Lindén comments, ‘Many are driven by
a great measure of passion and sense of doing something important, and for them, it outweighs the uncertain economic situation’.

There are also some examples of public sector actors, such as municipalities, creating hyperlocal media. ‘They raise questions about one of journalism's most important functions, to scrutinise power’, says Carl-Gustav Lindén.

Download the publication from Nordicom’s website or from the Sciendo publishing platform (open access).

More information: ‘Hyperlocal Media in the Nordic Region’ is a special issue of the scientific journal Nordicom Review. The editors are Carl-Gustav Lindén, Jaana Hujanen and Katja Lehtisaari from the University of Helsinki in Finland.

European Media Policy no. 3/2019
Media policy | Europe December 2019 | AC

Welcome to this year’s December issue of our European Media Policy newsletter, providing an update on policy developments at the European level. Focus is on policy news from the European Union.

Some of the contents in this new issue (PDF):

- Mark Zuckerberg and his fellow tech czars may have reason to be wary of what the new EU Commission has in store for them.
- It’s no longer only hackers and extremists who spread false information on the web. Governments seem quite good at it too.
- Many are looking forward to the Digital Services Act, a new EU regulatory framework in the pipeline. Digital platforms are probably less excited.
- Europeans used to worry a lot about American dominance in the media sector. Now some are beginning to fret about Chinese influence, for example, in building 5G networks. Others feel they could use some investment.
- Being poor and digitally illiterate is no fun, shows a report recently presented to the UN General Assembly.

Download European Media Policy 3/2019 (PDF, 463 KB)
Find the previous issues of the newsletter
Media and Information Literacy

From Individuals to Communities: 
Towards New Enhancements of Media and Information Literacy

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has been criticised for having become a term that is too overarching and inclusive to have proper meaning. While concept’s breadth has also been its asset, as the term has enabled its mobilisation in many contexts, many scholars have recently suggested that it be further developed. We are in need of a more nuanced set of vocabulary and concepts.

In the final chapter of a newly published anthology, Alton Grizzle and Masatoshi Hamada present an outline for a “new-generation expansion” of the concept, the “Media and Information Literacy Expansion”, MILx. The authors, arguing that in its current form MIL focuses on the development of individual competences, call for widening the approach to cover community, group, and institutional levels.

To accomplish a conceptual expansion, the authors propose a “next-standard“ concept for addressing MIL: MIC, “Media-Information-Communication”. This framework should provide media educators with possibilities to subscribe to global aims such as the sustainable development goals. This would help make MIL education more inclusive and support its application to vulnerable groups in need of media education, such as children and youth in disaster, refugees and immigrants, and girls and women.

MILx resonates with recent developments of media-related literacies – from transcultural literacy to multiliteracy – which share the aim of making the concept of MIL more culturally sensitive and embedded in social contexts and changing institutional landscapes.

The chapter is published in the anthology Understanding Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in the Digital Age – A Question of Democracy, edited by Ulla Carlsson and launched at the UNESCO Global MIL Week Feature Conference in Gothenburg on 24–26 September 2019. Alton Grizzle is a programme specialist in the Communication and Information Sector of UNESCO in Paris, and Masatoshi Hamada is a statistician at the University of Paris VIII.

Altogther, the English anthology includes 33 chapters by 50 authors from Sweden and abroad. The anthology was published by the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.

Read more and download the publication

Finland’s national policy for media education updated
Media and Information Literacy | Finland December 2019 | MJ

In Finland, the national policy for media education has been updated. The Ministry of Education and Culture published the new policy document, Media Education in Finland (PDF in Finnish), on 16 December 2019.

The new national policy will replace the previous document, Good media literacy: National guidelines for 2013-2016, published six years ago. The update is a result of a media policy initiative to strengthen media literacy in Finland.

According to the new vision, all individuals will have the opportunity to develop their media literacy. The new policy is marked by being more inclusive than the previous one, implying that the enhancement of media literacy is to apply to the whole population. Previously, the focus was more on children and young people.

The new guidelines are informed by three overarching goals: media education in Finland, in all its forms, shall be extensive, of high quality, and systematic.

- To be extensive, according to the document, media literacy activities should include a wide variety of topics and be directed at different groups. The activities should be networked, use the possibilities offered by digitalisation, be locally and regionally embedded, and be based on the existing organisations’ strengths. Communication related to media literacy should be enhanced and the results openly shared.

- To increase the quality of media education, activities should be research-based, topical, relevant, and goal-oriented. Furthermore, activities should be rooted in international cooperation and reflect human values. The continuing education of different professional groups working with media literacy issues shall be strengthened, as shall the evaluation of educational processes.

- To make media education more systematic, the foundations for knowledge and financing have to become more solid, the new guidelines state. In addition, leadership in the area has to be developed, and the activities should be developed into models that can be reapplied in different contexts.

Read more: Information page in Finnish: "Media literacy in Finland"

Download the report in Finnish (PDF): Medialukutaito Suomessa: kansalliset mediakasvatuslinjaukset [Media Literacy in Finland. National Guidelines for Media Education]

Information leaflet by KAVI in English (PDF): Finnish Media Education: Promoting Media and Information Literacy in Finland

About the work process: The new national media education guidelines were drafted by the national media authority KAVI, known as the National Audiovisual Archive. To stimulate a dialogue with different stakeholders, the authority launched an open online survey that inquired into the status quo and future of media and information literacy in Finland. Moreover, the authority organised local workshops around the country and mapped the role of media education in different sectors of governance. The draft version of the policy document was opened for comment online in October on the online service lausuntopalvelu.fi.
Global Outlook: Freedom of Expression

Global Internet freedom continues its decline
Freedom of Expression | Global Iceland November 2019 | KC

The latest Freedom House report notes that global Internet freedom has continued its decline for nine consecutive years. Unregulated social media has been exploited for political and societal manipulation, and these tactics are being adopted around the globe. Iceland, however, maintains the integrity of their Internet freedom with a top ranking of 95/100.

Social media allow ordinary citizens to access information and communicate globally, but they also create the opportunity for political manipulation. In 38 of the 65 countries that Freedom House assessed, political leaders paid for secret actions intended to shape political opinions – this is a new high. These manoeuvres for influence are increasingly crossing borders, for example the Russian interference in the 2016 American presidential election.

Along with active manipulation, mass surveillance is an increasing concern. Government agencies – including in democratic countries – are using social media to collect and analyse data from their population. A record-high 47 of the 65 countries assessed arrested social media users based on their political, social, or religious speech. The report asserts that fixing social media is crucial to the future of Internet freedom.

Only 16 countries had net improvements, compared to 33 who have experienced consistent decline since 2018. Countries with the largest declines were Sudan, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Bangladesh, and Zimbabwe. China is in the fourth consecutive year of being the worst abuser of Internet freedom, from enhanced information controls to the closing of individual accounts.

Iceland (the only Nordic country included in the assessment) leads the group as the best protector of Internet freedom, with almost universal connectivity, limited content restrictions, and robust users’ rights protections. Social media are used as a platform for civic engagement free from government manipulation or interference. In 2018, Iceland’s protection of Internet freedom was challenged by a cyber-attack (not politically motivated) affecting thousands of users and compromising hundreds of individual bank accounts.

Freedom on the Net 2019, full report
Country report for Iceland
About Freedom House

About the report: Freedom on the Net 2019 covers 65 countries – accounting for an estimated 87 per cent of Internet users worldwide. Countries are selected on the basis of the size of their internet population, their regional or global relevance, and the unique quality of their national Internet policy. The 2019 edition focuses on developments that occurred between June 2018 and May 2019. Read more about the report and the methodology.
Transnational Othering – Global Diversities
Media, Extremism and Free Expression

This anthology, published by Nordicom, addresses complex, interconnected issues, such as the rise of extremism and terrorism, diversity and minority rights, as well as the situation for freedom of expression in eight different countries, most of them with a Muslim majority population.

Extremists recruit terrorists through social media, and target minorities as well as freedom loving people by utilizing their freedom of expression to threaten the rights of others. This happens not least in countries with a long experience of dictatorship. Journalists face huge challenges when reporting on these issues.

The contributors to this publication are academics and journalists, conveying their experiences from transnational research co-operation as well as reporting from the ground in conflict areas. Thus, this volume addresses itself to journalism students as well as professional journalists and others who need to navigate in a world in which both extremists and authoritarian states may stifle gender and minority rights, as well as the right to report and express oneself freely.

Editors are Elisabeth Eide, Kristin Skare Orgeret and Nil Mutluer.

Read more on Nordicom’s website and download the book as open access or order a print copy
More News from Nordicom

Nordicom Review 2/2019
Nordicom Review | Nordic December 2019 | EH

Nordicom’s journal Nordicom Review is a scientific journal in English, applying double-blind peer-review. This year’s second issue, which includes nine research articles (and book reviews), is available for download via Nordicom’s website (open access).

Some examples of the articles in Nordicom Review, volume 40, issue 2/2019 (links to PDF documents):
- Journalism and the Political Structure: The Local Media System in Norway [Helle Sjøvaag, Truls André Pedersen & Ole Martin Lørgreid]
- Framing Gender Justice: A Comparative Analysis of the Media Coverage of #metoo in Denmark and Sweden [Tina Askanius & Jannie Møller Hartley]
- A Pilot Study on Developing Newsgames in Collaboration between Journalism and Computer Science Students [Marko Siitonen, Panu Uotila, Turo Uskali, Jukka Varsaluoma & Tanja Välisalos

Find all articles in Nordicom Review 2/2019 here.

Nordicom Review shifts to digital-only publishing
Nordicom Review | Nordic December 2019 | KA

The scientific journal Nordicom Review published its first issue in 1981 and is today an established forum for Nordic media, journalism and communication research.

“The main reason why we will stop printing the journal is that we want to invest more resources in our digital publication and increase the dissemination of our scientific articles on the channels in demand with today's researchers,” says Jonas Ohlsson, Nordicom's director and editor-in-chief of Nordicom Review.

Nordicom Review is published in collaboration with the digital publishing platform Sciendo. In 2019, our collaboration with Sciendo has been deepened through, among other things, efforts to increase the searchability of published articles. More technological improvements are planned for 2020.

“The Nordicom Review will, of course, continue as Open Access, that is, all articles and theme numbers can be read for free as soon as they have been published online”, explains Jonas Ohlsson.

For information about the release, you can follow Nordicom on Facebook (@NordicomNews) and Twitter (@Nordicom_News). You will also find all the information on our website www.nordicom.gu.se
**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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