

Summary - Parents & Media 2015

Foreword

For a majority of young people in Sweden - and for many parents - digital media are now fully integrated in their everyday lives. Both traditional and new media are self-evident sources of information and entertainment, as well as tools for maintaining social contacts. Who could have imagined only a few decades ago that we now carry with us almost all the information in the world in our pockets and can access it wherever and whenever we want to? "Using the internet" is no longer about hurrying home from school to be able to sit down at your desk and turn on the computer. The difference between being on-line or off-line is almost non-existent. With the correct setting in your mobile phone, you are on-line around the clock.

When the first "Kids & Media" survey was carried out in 2005, the average age for starting to use the internet was nine. Today, most children have been on the internet by the time they are 3. As recently as 2010, only 7 % of 16 year-olds used their mobile phone to connect to the internet. The figure is now 96 %. Mobile internet use is still increasing, but the mobile internet explosion took place in 2010–2012. In this year's survey it is the possession of technology that is behind the dramatic changes. Smartphones have almost entirely replaced traditional mobile phones, and children's ownership of tablets has multiplied many times since 2012/13. Tablets enable younger and younger children to use digital media. The proportion of under two's who play digital games has almost quadrupled in two years: from 7 % in 2012/13 to 26 % in 2014. But not everything is new. Television is still the most popular form of media for children until they reach their teens. Then internet-related activities gain the upper hand.

The Kids & Media survey has now been carried out for the sixth time since 2005. The report is the result of the largest national survey of media habits and attitudes to media among children between 0 and 18 years old. It is published in three separate reports: "Little kids & Media 2015" on children 0-8 years, "Kids & Media 2015" on children and young people 9–18, and "Parents & Media 2015", in which parents or legal guardians of children 9–18 give their opinions about children's media habits and experiences. The aim is to provide a knowledge bank and source of facts that is easily accessible for parents, teachers and others who work with, or have an interest in, children and young people and their media life. The reports are available for download at www.statensmedierad.se/ungarochmedier.

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Introduction, background, methodology, and reading instructions

This is a report on the results of a survey of guardian's attitudes to their children's use of media, protection aspects regarding media content and opinions on harmful influence by the media. The data presented here are responses to the questions put to guardians of children between 9 and 18; it is not the children who responded to the questions. Results are presented throughout in three age groups of children, which in the body text are named using figures: 9–12 (years), 13–16 (years) and 17–18 (years).

The first Kids & Media surveys were carried out in 2005, 2006, 2008 and 2010. The Swedish Media Council in its current organisational form was then not formed yet, and the survey was carried out by a committee under the Swedish Ministry of Culture, also called the Swedish Media Council. The now existing Swedish Media Council took over the job in the 2012/13 survey.

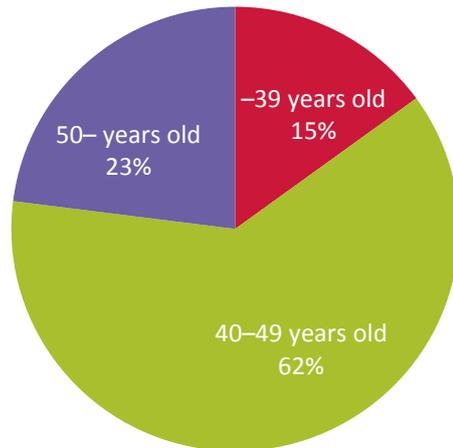
With the exception of 2010, they differ so much from the present report that it is not generally meaningful to try to compare developments over time. The media landscape is changing rapidly, causing certain new issues to be added while others lose their relevance. This meant that some questions have been reworded and response options have been changed, which means that it is not always possible to make direct comparisons, even with the results from the surveys in 2010 and 2012/13. In cases where data are comparable between the two studies, these are presented in the body text and tables.

At the same time as this report, two other reports are also being published. These are “Kids & Media 2015”, where children and young people 9–18 were asked about their habits and attitudes regarding media and “Little kids & Media 2015”, where parents of children 0–8 were asked about their children's media habits and their own attitudes to media. The issues presented in this report are only those of parents of children 9–18 years old. Data on parents' attitudes to younger children's use of media are reported in “Little kids & Media 2015”.

The basis for this report is a questionnaire that was sent out to 3,964 parents of children 9–18 years old. Compared with the 2012/13 study, this one has twice as many respondents and is Sweden's largest statistical survey of children's media habits. Parents could answer the questions on the internet or via traditional postal forms. Statistics Sweden carried out data collection, which took place between 2 September and 17 November 2014. The selection of respondents is an independent, random sample stratified by the children's ages: 9–18. The response rate is 42.4 %, which is 0.9 % higher than the 2012/13 survey. This is unusual, since declining response rates have been observed over a long time period for different types of surveys with random selection, both in Sweden and internationally. The reasons for this have not been clarified, but it is gratifying that this declining trend is not reflected in the present report.

To check how parents' age affects their attitudes to children's use of media, they were divided into three age groups: under 40, 40–49 and over 50.

Share of responding parents per age group (%)

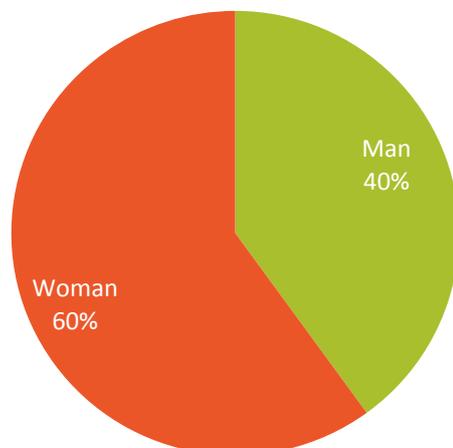


Distribution of age groups parents/children (%)

Parents' age	Children's age			Total
	9-12	13-16	17-18	
<39	72%	24%	4%	100%
40-49	46%	36%	17%	99%
>50	18%	44%	38%	100%

The table shows that there is a large co-variance between their parents' age and the children's age: a majority (72 %) of parents under 40 have children aged 9–12 and almost 40 % of parents over 50 have children aged 17-18. This means that what at first sight appears to be a difference in attitude between parents of different ages may partly be due to the fact that the attitudes relate to children of different ages.

Are you a man or a woman? (%)



It was more common that women answered the questionnaires than men. Despite the fact that questionnaires were sent out to men and women in equal proportions, 60 % of responses are from women and 40 % from men. This is a consistent pattern in most questionnaire surveys. In two of the three parent age groups in particular, under 40 and 40–49, the gender difference is significant.

Gender distribution in parent age groups (%)

Parents' age	Proportion of respondents		
	Women	Men	Total
<39	79%	21%	100%
40-49	62%	38%	100%
>50	46%	54%	100%

Summary

In this section we present in particular the results where the differences are greatest between different groups: guardians' gender, age or age of children, or where there have been substantial changes over time.

In general, a larger proportion of parents express positive attitudes to TV/films, internet and computer games than negative attitudes. Computer games, however, are the form of media which has the highest share of negative views from parents. Above all, computer games are considered to be more addictive than other media. The claim that media make children aggressive has very little support, whatever the form of media.

With the occasional exception, women are significantly more concerned than men about problems a child may encounter in connection with the use of media. Parents are also more concerned that girls may be the target of online abuse more than boys are. The only aspect parents are more concerned about with boys is that they may spend so much time playing games or on internet that they become socially isolated.

Parents of girls state that their child has been threatened or bullied on the internet to a slightly higher degree than boys, particularly in the age group 13–16. Gender differences also occur in the two older age groups when it comes to sexual comments or the child being targeted by adults looking for sexual contact; parents of girls state this to a greater extent than parents of boys.

Women report to a greater extent than men that their children have become "scared, sad or depressed" by media content. It is also more common for parents of girls to state that this has occurred.

What parents in particular wish to avoid is that their child may come into contact with pornography and depictions of sexual threats/abuse. For parents of children aged 9–12, there is a majority that does not want their child to watch horror films and acted violence. There are large differences between what parents believe their child has been scared, sad or depressed by watching and what they as parents do not want their child to be exposed to.

A majority of parents state that protection of children on the internet is poor. They are also - to a somewhat lesser extent - critical to the protection of children in the context of computer games, while they are reasonably satisfied with how it works regarding TV and DVDs. Parents are most satisfied with the protection of children in cinema theatres. Cinemas are the only area in media where age limits are statutory. Paradoxically, parents think that age limits in all areas - TV, internet, DVD, video games and cinema theatres - should be recommendations rather than statutory. Women are considerably more critical than men regarding the practical protection of children, and are more positive to statutory age limits. Compared with 2012/13, only very small differences in response patterns can be seen. The general trend is that more and more parents are critical of how society's protection works in practice. This does

not apply to the perception of society's protection regarding cinema films, where the proportion who believe that society's protection in that area is "very good" has increased by between 4 and 9 percentage points.

Parents with more than one child are generally more sympathetic to statutory age limits; for cinema films the differences are as large as 14 percentage points between parents with one child and parents with more than one child.

A significant majority of respondents believe that parents themselves should have the main responsibility for the protection of children and young people when they use media. At the same time, it is said that all players have a rather large responsibility: the different media industries, schools, the government and its authorities.

A majority of parents believe that there is content in media which can be harmful to children (9–12: 92 %, 13–16: 88 %, 17–18: 78 %). Compared with 2012/13 these proportions have increased significantly; for 9–12, by 12 percentage points, for 13–16 by 21 percentage points and for 17–18 by 11 percentage points.

Parents were asked if they think that their children spend too much time, too little time or a moderate amount of time doing different activities, both physical and social, such as using media. It is clear that the use of media is what parents believe takes up too much time. In particular, they think that children spend too much time on computer games/video games/ tablet games, internet, social media and mobile phones. The three last forms of media are intertwined. The use of mobile phones includes internet usage and social media to a large extent. Compared with 2012/13, the number of parents who think that the child spends too much time on these types of media increased by between 3 and 9 percentage points. They consider that children devote too little time to books and magazines, above all. Parents think that children should spend more time doing homework/school work and sports/training activities.

Generally parents feel that boys spend too much time playing computer games, TV games and tablet games, while girls use internet, mobile phones and social media too much. This is basically because boys play more than girls while girls use social media and mobile phones more than boys. The differences between boys and girls also increase with age.

If we compare parents' dissatisfaction with how much boys and girls actually use the various media, parents are generally more dissatisfied with girls' use of media than with boys.

Concerning the parents' perception of their own use of media, there are large differences in the use of mobile phones in relation to their age: 34 % of <39, 18 % of 40–49 years and 11 % of >50 consider that they use their mobile phones too often. Similar differences can be seen in attitudes to social media: 25 % of <39, 12 % of 40–49 and 6 % of >50 consider that they spend too much time on social media.