

The time devoted to both conventional and social media each day is growing

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Smartphones have made it far easier for people to find and exchange information and to make their views heard. In 2010, 14 per cent of the people of Sweden had access to a smartphone; three years later, in 2013, the figure is 67 per cent. More time is devoted to both online editions of traditional media and social media. And, for the first time in several years total time spent with media has increased in the entire population, to an average 6 hours and 18 minutes.

Men and women under the age of 45 are leading the trend; fully 90 per cent of this age group have access to smartphones and use them for intensified media use and communicative activity. Measured in time, men use smartphones primarily to access audio and visual media and to read daily newspapers; women spend more time interacting in social networks and reading blogs.

At the same time, new digital divides have emerged, particularly between different categories defined by level of formal education. The differences between the most highly and least educated groups with respect to access to both smartphones and other mobile media, like laptops and tablets, are striking. The differences in access are reflected in all forms of online media use. 'Divides' in information-gathering and social participation have become more accentuated.

Independent and plural media have long been considered a cornerstone of democracy. Democratic rule presumes well-informed citizens equipped with critical faculties. Well-informed citizens are in turn

dependent on reliable media and journalists who take their 'watchdog' role seriously. What implications may existing digital divides have for democracy and freedom of expression?

"One thing is certain," says Professor Ulla Carlsson, who is responsible for the survey. "Any media and communication culture that undergoes such profound changes as those we see at present requires media- and information-savvy citizens with sharp eyes."

Visual digital media continue to displace reading. Traditional media and new platforms co-exist, side by side. Traditional media continue to dominate media use in all but the youngest group (9-14 years). In many respects, we still live in a TV-oriented world. Eighty-three per cent of the population watched television the average day in 2013. The vast majority (81 percent) still watch television via a conventional television set. The corresponding figure for web-TV is 6 per cent the average day, but weekly use of web-TV increased from 27 to 33 per cent between 2012 and 2013.

Reading of daily newspapers, particularly morning papers, continues to decline. The reach of the morning press has fallen from 72 per cent in 2007 to 56 per cent in 2013 (reading of both hard-copy and web editions). The time spent reading morning newspapers the average day differs between hard-copy and online editions: readers of morning papers spend 30 minutes with their newspaper on paper, compared to 15 minutes online.

Different media and platforms complement one another in an increasingly fragmented [media](#) landscape – among those who have access to both and are free to choose.

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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