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45 percent of Norwegians have seen fake news about the coronavirus outbreak

According to a survey conducted for the Norwegian Media Authority, the spread of fake news about the coronavirus outbreak has now reached Norway.

[Download the survey](#) (in Norwegian)

Three main findings:

1. **Nearly half the population:** 45 percent of Norwegian have come across fake news about the coronavirus outbreak during the last seven days. Only 27 percent are sure they have not seen any fake news during the last week.
2. **Social media is the problem:** Of the people that have seen fake news about the virus, 38 percent names social media as the source. Nine percent stated that they saw the news on Norwegian websites, and six percent saw fake news on foreign websites.
3. **Highest numbers among the young and educated:** 53 percent of Norwegians between the age of 30-44 and 52 percent under the age of 30 have seen fake news about the coronavirus. People of higher education are reporting seeing fake news more often than other people.



Ads alongside coronavirus-related content do not affect brands negatively

A new survey from Schibsted looks into Swedish newsreaders' perception of advertising during the coronavirus pandemic.

[Download the survey](#) (in Swedish)

Four main findings:

1. **Brand suitability is not affected:** Only eight percent believe that their perception of a brand is negatively affected if their advert is shown alongside coronavirus-related content.
2. **Clarify benefits:** Readers request ads that help them stay healthy (45%), help them with their personal finance (31%), and offer an immediate difference for the readers (28%).
3. **Build the brand:** 43 percent of the respondents want information about companies and brands they are interested in.
4. **Be positive:** There is a time after Corona. In the free text field in the survey, a large proportion of respondents state that they want positive messages, easy and regular ads, and entertainment tips until the Corona crisis is over.



Seven crucial tech trends (which has already started)

Future Today Institute has published its 13th annual edition of Tech Trends Report. This year's report addresses a mind-boggling 406 strategic tech trends which spans over 31 trend sections.

The report is, as usual, neatly divided for different industries – and journalism has its own chapter (p. 138). But media organizations are, of course, not limited to a narrow circle of tech trends.

[Download the report.](#)

Seven key takeaways:

1. **The Synthetic Decade:** We are facing a breakthrough in the mass production of design molecules. This enables substantial medical advances, but also food based on synthetic proteins and ingredients. All industries will be affected by the emergence of synthetic products, which also raises difficult questions about ethics and security.
2. **Augmented hearing and sight:** Smart earbuds and glasses will digitally overlay audio without others hearing, and while you continue to hear what's going on around you. Audio augmented reality (or AAR) will not only help runners stay safe, but can help the visually impaired by verbally describing what – or who – you're looking at. The connected glasses and AAR ecosystem offer tremendous new business opportunities.
3. **A.I.-as-a-Service and Data-as-a-Service:** The future of digital transformation is rooted in two key areas: A.I.-as-a-Service and Data-as-a-Service. Microsoft, IBM, Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple are all developing new services and tools ranging from robotic process automation to offering GPUs (graphics processing unit) in the cloud – enabled by fiber- or 5G-connections.
4. **China's new world order:** China has a rapidly-expanding middle class, an educated and trained workforce, and a government that executes long-term plans. China will continue to assert prolific dominance in 2020 across multiple areas, including the development of critical digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence, data collection and scoring, bioengineering, and space.
5. **Smarter homes and offices:** Home and office automation are becoming mainstream. The next-generation network infrastructure will accelerate the adoption of sensors, cameras, and microphones. The global market could reach \$214 billion by 2025.

Which company's operating system controls all those devices, and what happens to the collected data will spark public debate.

6. **The inevitable social scoring:** Automated systems need data and a framework for making decisions. Every living person is shedding a vast amount of data continuously, and this data is analyzed by automated systems to make decisions for or about us. The score determines the price to show us on e-commerce sites, or if we are a potential security risk. The report anticipates that regulators will take a more profound interest in scoring in the coming year.
7. **The end of forgetting:** The beginning of the end of the end of the beginning of forgetting has begun. After a decade of posting photos, videos, and written messages on social media, it's now clear that it isn't possible to truly delete or erase our pasts. Detailed information about everyone will persist far into the future, creating a wormhole of future challenges.



Five important digital trends in Scandinavia

Danish AudienceProject has published a new report looking into the penetration of connected devices in Scandinavian households.

In addition to the Scandinavian countries, the report contains data from Germany, Finland, the UK, and the US.

[Download the report.](#)

Five main trends:

1. **The decline of the computer:** The number of Scandinavian households owning a computer has been falling rapidly since 2015. Today 87 percent of Norwegians have access to a computer in their home (down from 97 percent in 2015). The same number is 88 percent in Sweden (down from 98%) and 91 percent in Denmark (down from 98%).
2. **No sign of a smart speaker-boom:** While one third in the US and UK have access to a smart speaker, the technology is adapting slowly in the Scandinavian countries. Today 15 percent of Swedes have access to a smart speaker at their home, with the adoption rate even slower in Denmark (9%) and Norway (7%).
3. **Ok, Google – Norwegians love you:** The smart speaker adoption in Norway may be slow – but Google has a whopping 81 percent market share. In Sweden 41 percent chooses Google Home-products, while Danes tend to buy Sonos One (42%). Sonos supports both Google Assistant and Amazon Alexa. Amazon is dominating the smart speaker market in the UK (74%), Germany (72%) and the US (70%).
4. **Children and money decide.** The more children and the richer you are, the more connected devices in a household: In Norway, a household of four has 13 connected devices. Households without children have an average of 7.5 units. The same numbers for Sweden (10,8/6,8) and Denmark (10,7/6,3).
5. **Virtual reality is a narrow, narrow niche:** It's becoming virtually impossible to see a future where VR glasses go mainstream. Today only three percent of Scandinavians have access to a virtual reality device in their household. In the US, the number has shrunk from eight percent in 2017 to six percent in 2020.



The growing concern with major technology companies in the US

In a new report, the Knight Foundation tries to better understand how Americans view the roles the major technology companies play in their lives and society as a whole.

The report found widespread concern about the effects of internet and technology companies on society and democracy and their ability to self-regulate.

[Download the report.](#)

Three main findings:

1. **A dividing force:** Americans have largely negative views of major internet and technology companies' impact on society. Their top concern relates to the amplification of misinformation on the internet (74%). Americans believe the companies do more to divide society (60%) than to unite it (11%).
2. **Too much power:** 77% of Americans say major internet and technology companies like Facebook, Google, Amazon, and Apple have too much power. But: Americans are equally divided among those who favor (50%) and oppose (49%) government intervention that would require internet and technology companies to break into smaller companies.
3. **Distrust ability to self-regulate:** Americans do not trust social media companies much (44%) or at all (40%) to make the right decisions about what content should or should not be allowed on online platforms. However, they would still prefer the companies (55%) to make those decisions rather than the government (44%).

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People trust their employer over news organizations

The communications firm Edelman has conducted a survey about trust and the coronavirus in 10 markets (Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, S. Africa, S. Korea, the UK, and the US).

The result is presented in a special report in their Edelman Trust Barometer-series.

[Download the report.](#)

Three main findings:

1. **Not (that) interesting:** While 93 percent of Italians are following daily news updates about the coronavirus, only 50 percent of Germans and 56 percent of the French do the same.
2. **Read the news – but distrust journalists:** 64 percent are getting most of their information about the pandemic from major news organizations. But: Among all the professions and relations listed, journalists are pointed to as the least trustworthy source.
3. **Trusting their employers:** 63 percent report they believe coronavirus information from their employer. That's higher than government websites (58%) and health company websites (56). Only 51 percent believe information from traditional media companies.



A racial divide in speech-recognition systems

Researchers at Stanford University have found that speech-recognition technology from Amazon, Apple, Google, IBM and Microsoft tend to make far fewer errors with users who are white than with users who are black.

Several previous studies have exposed that technology using machine learning tends to have a built-in bias.

[Download the study.](#)

Three main findings:

1. For white users, the systems misinterpreted 19 percent of the words. For black users, the system misinterpreted 35 percent of the words.
2. Only two percent of audio recordings from white users were recorded as unreadable by the systems. The percentage increased to 20 percent for black users.
3. Apple (worst results) misinterpreted 23 percent of the words spoken by white users and 45 percent of the words spoken by black users. The same numbers for Microsoft (best results) were 15 percent misinterpretation for white users and 27 percent for black users.