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Microsoft: Three driving forces for the future of work

Microsoft has published a report about the future of work, which summarizes recent research from Microsoft and other institutions.

[Download the report.](#)

Three driving forces:

1. The Hybrid Work Era has begun

The pandemic has highlighted the possibilities of hybrid work and changed employees' mentality and expectations. Jobs that shifted to remote work during the pandemic are unlikely to return to pre-pandemic practices. Instead, people and organizations will develop new hybrid work practices that are fundamentally different. Increased use of hybrid work solutions will significantly impact society as a whole.

2. New technologies are rapidly improving work

The pandemic significantly accelerated the digital transformation already underway at many companies, generating work-related data at an unprecedented pace. Significant advances in artificial intelligence will provide better employee feedback, fewer routine tasks, automation and asynchronous meetings. Future AI assistants will be much more general and could revolutionize the workflows of most employees.

3. Working and training in the metaverse

The metaverse will mainly be for training and work. Workers will increasingly access their corporate training via the metaverse. They will benefit from new capabilities within immersive training, such as learning in teams, that will lead to a new wave of workforce skills.

Scandinavia tops index for press freedom

Reporters Without Borders have published the World Press Freedom Index, which assesses freedom of the press and expression in 180 countries. The annual index was first published in 2002.

[Read the index.](#)

Four main findings:

1. Scandinavia leading the way

Norway tops the World Press Freedom Index for the sixth year in a row, followed by Denmark (up from 4th place last year) and Sweden (unchanged).

2. Increasing polarization

There is an increasing polarization in many democracies due to the 'Fox News model'—as Reporters Without Borders phrases it—and the spread of disinformation exacerbated by social media.

3. Harassment and radical opinions

Reporters Without Borders finds occasional online harassment and threats against media professionals in Nordic countries. There is also a more radical opinion journalism trend developing online in recent years.

4. Press freedom still in decline

Freedom of the press is described as 'very bad' in 28 countries—a record high. The five worst countries for press freedom are North Korea (180), Eritrea (179), Iran (178), China (177) and Turkmenistan (shared 177th place with China). Russia is now in 155th place.

Video games can help boost children's intelligence

Researchers at Karolinska Institutet (Sweden) and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (the Netherlands) have studied the link between screen habits and intelligence over two years. 9,855 American children and their parents participated in the study.

[Read the article.](#)

Four main findings:

1. Positive correlation

The study finds a positive correlation between video games and children's cognitive abilities. Children who reported spending more time than the norm (2,5 hours a day) on video games increased their intelligence by 2.5 IQ points more than the average.

2. No gender differences

There is no difference in the effect for girls and boys who play. The study has also taken into account genetic and socioeconomic variables.

3. Usage of social media had no effect

Watching videos (+1.8 IQ points) also had a positive correlation—while no significant effect was observed, positive or negative, on TV-watching or social media.

4. Not conclusive

The study did not differentiate between video game types, is solely dependent on self-reported screen time, and the correlation was weak. But: The study backs up the view that intelligence isn't a fixed constant and may be influenced by environmental factors. The findings also support the claim that screen time generally doesn't impair children's cognitive abilities.

Data about you is shared 376 times daily with ad-tech companies

An Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) report reveals the widespread sharing of users' private data through Real-Time Bidding (RTB). ICCL calls it 'the biggest data breach ever recorded'.

[Download the report.](#)

Three main findings:

1. 376 times a day

On average, a person in Europe has their online activity and location exposed 376 times every day by the RTB industry. There are significant differences between countries: Norway (340 times) has the highest number among the Nordic countries, followed by Sweden (294), Denmark (280) and Finland (244). The report does not include Iceland.

2. Global spread

Europeans and U.S. internet users' private data is sent to firms across the globe, including Russia and China, without any control mechanisms to prevent storage or surveillance.

3. Vast number of companies

The biggest RTB companies include Google and Microsoft. A staggering 1,058 companies in Europe and 4,698 companies in the U.S. receive RTB data from Google.

Google and Meta earn €1bn a year from U.K. news content

The British News Media Association has published a report looking into the value of news to digital platforms in the U.K. The academic report is written by University of Cambridge economics professor Matthew Elliott.

[Download the report.](#)

Three main findings:

1. Valuable content

The report estimates that content from British news publishers is worth between 998 million euros and 1.27 billion euros for Google and Meta each year. News is worth considerably more to Google (€723m-€987m) than Meta (€276m).

2. News important for search engines

In a survey, 70 percent of British respondents reported that they likely would use a different search engine if news was removed from their preferred search engine.

3. Essential for engagement

For Facebook, news content is essential for engagement and time spent on the platform. While Facebook is an important distribution channel for many news publishers, examples from Facebook outages have shown that people seek out news content by going directly to news publishers when Facebook is inaccessible.

Listen up: Four new reports about podcasts

Four reports from Norway, Sweden and the U.S. cast light on changing podcast listening habits and ad revenue.

Download the reports:

Sweden: [Årsrapport Poddindex och Poddlyssnande 2021](#)

Norway: [Den store podrapporten 2022](#)

U.S.: [The State of Social Listening in 2022](#)

U.S.: [U.S. Podcast Advertising Revenue Study](#)

Four main findings:

1. Norway

The growth in the number of podcast listeners in Norway is leveling off. 65 percent of Norwegians state that they have listened to podcasts in 2022—the same number as in 2021. Listeners prefer episodes with a length of between 30 and 44 minutes.

2. Sweden

Half of Swedish 16 to 29-year-olds listen to podcasts weekly. The age divide is noteworthy: 70 percent of all listeners to podcasts are younger than 44 years.

3. The U.S.

Almost 61 percent of businesses now have a social listening system in place and monitor for keyword mentions. 82 percent see social listening as highly valuable and a key planning element.

4. Podcast advertising on the rise

For the first time ever, the podcast advertising market in the U.S. surpassed 1 billion dollars in 2021. Revenues increased 72 percent YoY to 1.4 billion dollars and are forecasted to exceed 2 billion dollars in 2022 and almost triple by 2024 to over 4 billion dollars.

Increased media consumption in Sweden

Nordicom has published its annual report about Swedish media habits.

[Download the report.](#)

Five main findings:

1. Increased media usage

In 2021, the total daily time spent on media consumption in Sweden increased to an average of 411 minutes—or almost seven hours. This number also includes simultaneous use of media platforms.

2. Audio most popular

Swedes consume 140 minutes of recorded audio daily, including podcasts, radio, and music. The consumption of video and TV was 139 minutes.

3. Social media with the most prominent reach

83 percent of Swedes use social media on an average day. Social media platforms have greater daily reach than digital and analog radio (76 percent) and print and online newspapers (68 percent).

4. Facebook important for news

26 percent of Swedes consume news via Facebook on an average day. Among the youngest (9-14 year-olds), Instagram and TikTok were the most important social media platforms for news consumption.

5. More streaming than linear TV and video consumption

On an average day, 93 percent of Swedes consume TV- or video content. Streaming services reach 58 percent, while traditional linear TV consumption has a daily reach of 57 percent. Worth noting that YouTube has a daily reach of 42 percent.