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# Local newspapers directly impact election turnout rate

According to a study conducted for the British government, local journalism has a crucial role in civil society.

The study's main task was to identify and understand the relationship between local news provision and consumption and local democratic participation.

[Download the study.](#)

Three main findings:

## **1. Impacts the turnout**

Local newspaper circulation has a positive and significant effect on local election turnout. A 1 percentage point increase in daily circulation amongst the adult population results in a 0.37 percentage point increase in the turnout rate.

## **2. The more, the merrier**

An additional daily or weekly local newspaper title in a community results in a 1.27 percentage point increase in turnout rate.

## **3. Democracy suffering**

The decline of the local newspaper industry and negative impacts on journalism reduce scrutiny of democratic functions.

# Swedes are becoming increasingly more digital

The digitalization of Swedes' media habits is accelerating – and the pace will increase through the introduction of 5G.

The Swedish Media Authority (Myndigheten för press, radio och tv) has published its annual report on media consumption. The report is a 'best of' report where findings from other reports are highlighted.

[Download the report \(in Swedish\).](#)

Three main findings:

## **1. Stable consumption**

The total time spent on various media has only increased by 7 minutes in the last 20 years.

## **2. A digital shift**

Online news consumption (48%) surpassed print newspapers (31%) for the first time in 2019 – marking the highest daily readership since 2012.

## **3. Linear TV is losing ground**

Viewing time on traditional linear TV has fallen by 24 percent from 2010 to 2019. The numbers are stable among Swedes over the age of 60, while the numbers plummet among the youths. 54 percent of Swedes watch TV programs and movies on desktop, mobile or tablet.

# Disinformation gets twice as much engagement

Over the last few months, the Digital New Deal project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States set out to look at deceptive sites that masquerade as journalism.

[Read more about the study.](#)

Three main findings:

## **1. More disinformation**

The level of engagement with articles from outlets that repeatedly publish verifiably false content has increased 102 percent since the run-up to the 2016 election.

## **2. Superspreaders**

Most of the interactions come from a small number of incredibly popular deceptive spreaders: The top ten of our deceptive sites are responsible for 62 percent of interactions.

## **3. Record number**

There were more interactions with content from manipulating websites on Facebook in the second quarter of 2020 than in all of 2017. Conservative websites dominate, but the study has also identified several liberal and apolitical websites.

# Fact-checking count tops 300 for the first time

There are now 304 active fact-checkers in 84 countries, shows new data from Duke Reporter's Labs.

See Duke Reporter's Labs [map](#) and [summary](#).

Three main findings:

## **1. Record increase**

The number of active fact-checkers has increased by 100 in the last year, with more than 19 new organizations in 2020 alone. For the first time, the number of politically independent fact-checkers has surpassed 300.

## **2. US-politics**

There are now 58 fact-checking projects in the USA. 36 of them are focused on state and local politics, especially during regional elections.

## **3. Europe leading the way**

In comparison, there are 85 fact-checkers in Europe. That's more than any other region – and more than in South America, Africa, and Australia combined.

# The pandemic is fueling digital repression

For the 10th consecutive year, global internet freedom is in decline.

According to Freedom House, the phenomenon is contributing to a broader crisis for democracy worldwide. Freedom on the Net assesses internet freedom in 65 countries worldwide, accounting for 87 percent of the world's internet users.

[Download the report.](#)

Three main findings:

## **1. Iceland nr. 1**

Iceland is the only Nordic country in the report, and once again, the top protector of internet freedom. Iceland has the highest access rates, fewest restrictions on content, and strong safeguards for human rights online. Runners-up are Estonia and Canada.

## **2. Countries in decline**

26 countries' scores worsened during this year's coverage period, while 23 countries registered net gains. The largest decreases occurred in Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan, followed by India, Ecuador, and Nigeria.

## **3. Cyber sovereignty**

Rising cyber sovereignty threatens to further splinter the internet. Hong Kong, Russia, Turkey, and Vietnam have recently imposed restrictions on the flow of information across their borders. China and Iran have closed their internet entirely with The Great Firewall (China) and a national 'intranet' (Iran).