

Summary – Little kids & Media 2012/13

Facts about young children's use and experience of the media, ages 0–8

Foreword

New media – is it really so new? No, not really. ARPANET, which developed into the Internet, was launched in 1969, more than 40 years ago. The commercial Internet had its breakthrough among the general public in the early 1990s, two decades ago. The first successful video game console, Pong, came out in 1975. In 2014 Facebook, the undisputed king of social media, turns 10.

What we call “new media” is, for many today, a completely integrated part of daily life. This applies especially to children and young people who grew up with it, and who take it more or less for granted. Being online is becoming a normal condition, and a lack of Internet access is more of an irritating exception.

An ever greater number of children and young people also spend an ever greater amount of time with various on-line activities and – above all – the users are getting younger and younger. The average age for first-time Internet use – that is, the age at which more than 50 % of children use the Internet, was nine in 2005. Today, it's three. As recently as 2010, only 12 % of 15-year-olds used their mobile phones to access the Internet. Now 94 % do. Today's eight-year-olds surf on their mobile phones to the same extent that 15-year-olds did in 2010.

What do children and young people actually do on the Internet, how often, and for how long? What happens when nine out of ten young people have the Internet in their pocket and can be online around the clock? What do children and young people perceive as unpleasant online, in film, or on TV? Does increasing media usage lead to increased Internet bullying and conflicts within the family? These issues are answered, at least partially, in this report.

Kids & Media is now being carried out for the fifth time since 2005. This report is the result of a survey of media habits among children between the ages of 0 and 18, and attitudes about the media. The results are being published in two reports: Little kids & Media, about children ages 0–8, and Kids & Media, about children and young people ages 9–18. The purpose is to provide a knowledge bank and source of facts that are easily accessible for parents, teachers, and others who work with or are interested in children and young people and their daily media lives. Both reports are available for downloading at www.statensmedierad.se/ungarochmedier

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Introduction, background, method and reading instructions

The Little kids & Media report is an account of the results of the survey of media habits among children ages 0–8. It also includes questions about guardians' attitudes towards their children's use of media, aspects of protection as regards media content, and opinions on harmful media influence. The portion of Kids & Media being reported here was carried out through questions to guardians; it was therefore not the children themselves who responded to the questions. The results are reported thoroughly and divided into three age groups, which are mentioned only by numbers in the running text: 0–1 (years), 2–4 (years) and 5–8 (years). Little kids & Media was also carried out in 2010 by the Media Council committee, which came to an end on 31 December 2010, when the Swedish Media Council was formed. This did not cover children younger than 2 years, which is why the result from the 0–1 group cannot be compared with the results of the earlier survey. The media landscape is changing quickly, which is why new questions are arising while others lose their relevance. The 2012/13 survey has also been designed in collaboration with the Norwegian Media Authority and the Department for Media Education and Audiovisual Media, Norway's and Finland's counterparts to the Swedish Media Council, for the purpose of generating a joint Nordic report with comparable data. This has meant reformulating certain questions and changing response alternatives, which makes it so that direct comparisons from the 2010 survey cannot always be made over time. In the cases where there are comparable results between both studies, this is reported in the running text and tables. Kids & Media 2012/13, where media habits and attitudes toward the media among children and young people aged 9–18 were studied, is also being published in parallel with this report.

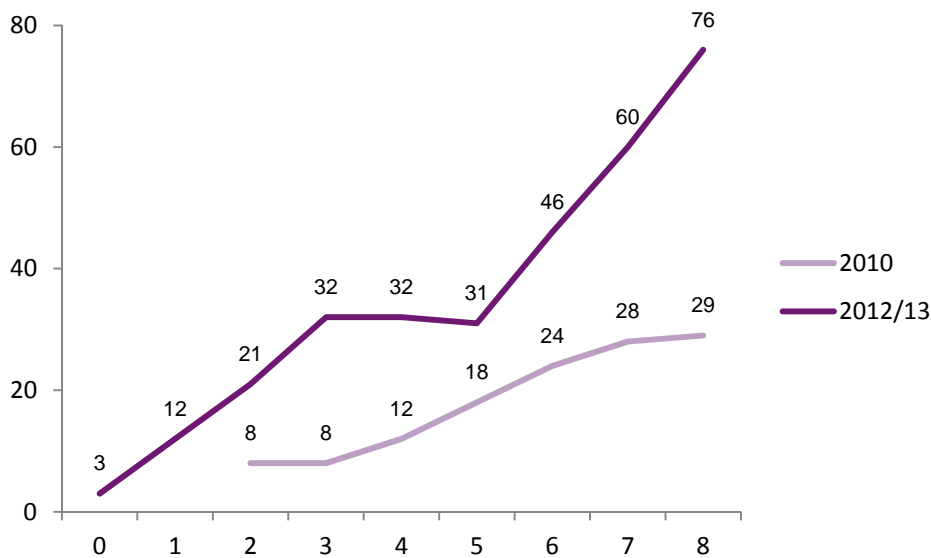
The basis for this report consists of two different postal surveys, which were sent out to 1 000 parents of children ages 0–4 and 1 000 parents of children ages 5–8. Statistics Sweden carried out the collection of data. The selection of respondents was independent and random. The data collection ran from 26 October 2012 to 16 January 2013. The frequency of response was 42.3 % for parents of ages 0–4 and 43.7 % for parents of ages 5–8. This is relatively low compared with earlier Kids & Media surveys. The decreasing frequency is nothing unique for Kids & Media, or even for surveys of media habits; it is something that has been observed for a long time in various types of polls with random selection, both in Sweden and internationally. The causes for this have not been made completely clear, but a reasonable assumption would be that a generally increasing number of surveys – both academic and market surveys – has led to an unwillingness in more and more people to respond to surveys. The future will show us whether it is possible to continue with surveys that use independent and random selection, or if alternative methods for data collection may be used.

Summary

This section summarises the results where the differences are greatest between different groups, or where there has been a substantial development compared to Little kids & Media 2010. In general, media use is increasing, and it is also going further down in the age groups. The differences between media use by boys and girls are non-existent among the youngest, but become larger as age increases. There are, however, large differences between different types of medium. As regards which computer and video games boys and girls prefer, it is possible to distinguish certain gender differences as early as ages 2–4, and extensive differences between ages 5–8. As regards which TV programmes they prefer, the differences are nearly non-existent in this report (they become extensive, however, as the children become older; see Kids & Media 2012/13).

Internet use is generally increasing, and is also starting younger compared with 2010.

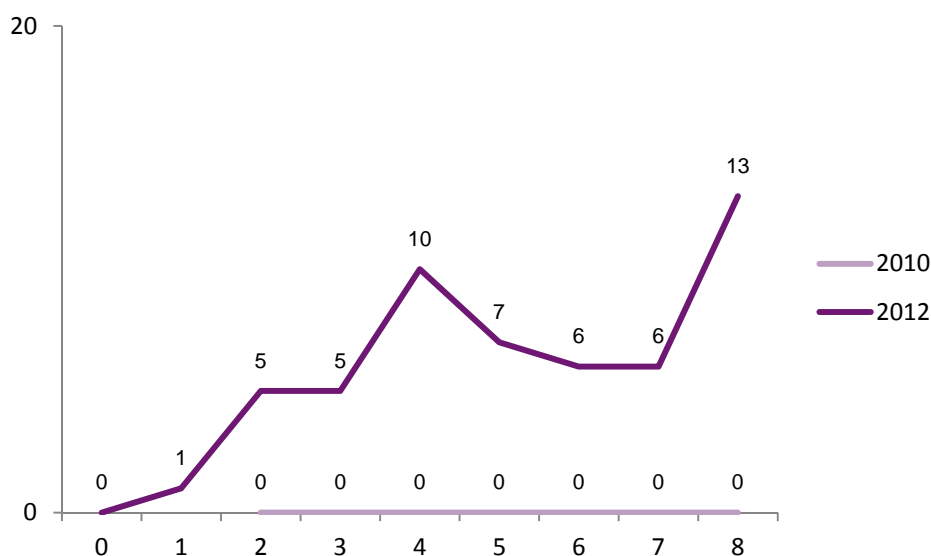
Uses the Internet a few times a week or more, 0-8 years. 2010 and 2012/13 (%)



The diagram above shows Internet use a few times a week or more. Looking at using the internet in general, regardless of how often, it turns out that a majority of 3-year-olds (55 %) and a full 87 % of 6-year-olds have done so in the 2012/13 compilation. Daily Internet use has tripled among both ages 2–4 (from 3 % to 9 %) and among ages 5–8 (from 6 % to 17 %). Looking at how many use the Internet a few times a week or more, the proportions are significantly larger.

The breakthrough for smart phones has entailed great changes as regards mobile Internet use. This is also clearly visible among the small children whom this study concerns. In general, mobile phone ownership has not increased since 2010. As regards Internet use via mobile phone, the situation is entirely different.

Internet use on mobile phones 2012/13, ages 0–8 (%)



In 2010, no children in the study used the Internet on mobile phones. Even if the very youngest children still rarely access via mobile phones, a drastic change has taken place.

The proportions who do not use mobile phones among ages 2–4 has decreased from 78 % (2010) to 62 %, and among ages 5–8 from 66 % (2010) to 58 %. The proportion of children with their own mobile phones has not changed appreciably over time in any of the age groups. At the same time, significantly more children are using mobile phones, primarily for entertainment purposes: the increase in the proportion of children who photograph, film, play or watch films on a mobile phone involve doubling to quadrupling between 2010 and 2012/13. It may be assumed that this, to a great extent, deals with children playing with their parents' or older siblings' phones.

Children start watching TV at an early age; this is the most common media activity among children from the ages of 2 to 8. Among children below 2, reading – or, rather, adults reading books aloud – is more common. Watching TV can be said to be the media foundation that forms the background for all other media use at these ages; the older someone gets, the more time they will spend on other media. Watching TV, however, remains at relatively constant levels until the children reach their teens, when watching TV decreases somewhat and the Internet is the most popular media activity instead.

Computer games and video games are the areas where the differences between genders appear earliest, and are also the most substantial. Even among children ages 2–4, boys' and girls' choices of games begin to differ; among ages 5–8, they have only one game in common on their respective "top five" lists of the most popular games. Among the very youngest, gender differences are marginal as regards frequency and scope for gaming, while among ages 5–8, 39 % of boys are already playing at least one hour a day compared to 13 % among girls. These gender differences increase the older the children become, culminating in the 13–16 age range.

The use of social media is starting at ever younger ages: 10 % of ages 5–8 use such things (4 % in 2010; the younger ages were not questioned). When the parents were questioned about which three Web sites their children visited most often, however, very few purely

social services were indicated. Strictly speaking, only YouTube was indicated more than a few times. Information is missing, however, on the extent to which YouTube's social functions are used, or if people visit the site only to see film clips.

Compared with 2010, a general tendency in the proportion of guardians who indicate that they "often" are with their children when the latter use various media to increase for both ages 2–4 and 5–8 can be seen regarding watching films and TV programmes, and using the Internet and mobile phones. While involvement in children's media use seems to have increased with regard to being with them, it has decreased when it deals with talking with children about their media usage. Compared with 2010, the proportion of guardians who answered that they "often" talk with their children about their media usage has decreased for computer and video games, the Internet, and what kind of films and TV programmes they watch. This may possibly have its explanation in the fact that increased joint media usage results in further talking about the media being seen as unnecessary.

Parents are more worried about their children ages 5–8 getting into trouble on the Internet in this year's study than compared with 2010. What they are most worried about is coming in contact with porn (44 % in 2012/13 compared with 27 % in 2010) followed by their children being contacted by adults seeking sexual contact (28 % in 2012/13, 20 % in 2010). There are however, very few children who were reported as having met with anything like that. Only 3 % of ages 5–8 were reported by their parents as having come into contact with porn, and none were contact by adults for sexual purposes. Quite the opposite; the proportion of children who met with nothing at all increased from 91 % in 2010 to 94 % in 2012/13. 1 % of children ages 5–8 reported being subjected to Net bullying.

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