

Summary - Little kids & Media 2015

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

Foreword

For a majority of young people in Sweden - and for many parents - digital media are now fully integrated in their everyday lives. Both traditional and new media are self-evident sources of information and entertainment, as well as tools for maintaining social contacts. Who could have imagined only a few decades ago that we now carry with us almost all the information in the world in our pockets and can access it wherever and whenever we want to? "Using the internet" is no longer about hurrying home from school to be able to sit down at your desk and turn on the computer. The difference between being on-line or off-line is almost non-existent. With the correct setting in your mobile phone, you are on-line around the clock.

When the first "Kids & Media" survey was carried out in 2005, the average age for starting to use the internet was nine. Today, most children have been on the internet by the time they are 3. As recently as 2010, only 7 % of 16 year-olds used their mobile phone to connect to the internet. The figure is now 96 %. Mobile internet use is still increasing, but the mobile internet explosion took place in 2010–2012. In this year's survey it is the possession of technology that is behind the dramatic changes. Smartphones have almost entirely replaced traditional mobile phones, and children's ownership of tablets has multiplied many times since 2012/13. Tablets enable younger and younger children to use digital media. The proportion of under two's who play digital games has almost quadrupled in two years: from 7 % in 2012/13 to 26 % in 2014. But not everything is new. Television is still the most popular form of media for children until they reach their teens. Then internet-related activities gain the upper hand.

The Kids & Media survey has now been carried out for the sixth time since 2005. The report is the result of the largest national survey of media habits and attitudes to media among children between 0 and 18 years old. It is published in three separate reports: "Little kids & Media 2015" on children 0-8 years, "Kids & Media 2015" on children and young people 9–18, and "Parents & Media 2015", in which parents or legal guardians of children 9–18 give their opinions about children's media habits and experiences. The aim is to provide a knowledge bank and source of facts that is easily accessible for parents, teachers and others who work with, or have an interest in, children and young people and their media life. The reports are available for download at www.statensmedierad.se/ungarochmedier.

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Introduction, background, methodology, and reading instructions

This is a presentation of the results of the survey of media habits among children 0–8 years old. It also includes questions about guardians' attitudes regarding children's use of media, protection aspects regarding media content and opinions about harmful influence by media. The part of Kids & Media presented here has been carried out through questions to guardians; it is not the children themselves who have responded to the questions. Results are presented throughout in three age groups, which in body text are named using figures: 0–1 (years), 2–4 (years) and 5–8 (years).

The first “Little kids & Media” survey was carried out in 2010. The current Swedish Media Council was then not formed in its current organisational form yet, and the survey was carried out by a committee under the Swedish Ministry of Culture, also called the Swedish Media Council. The report in 2010 did not include children younger than 2, so the results from the group 0–1 cannot be compared with the results from this study.

In 2012/13 the Swedish Media Council carried out a study in which 0–1 year-olds were also included. The media landscape is changing rapidly, causing certain new issues to be added while others lose their relevance. This has resulted in some questions being reformulated and some response options being changed, which means that direct comparisons with results from previous studies are not always possible. In cases where results are comparable between the two studies, these are presented in the body text and tables. At the same time as this report, two other reports are also being published. These are “Kids & Media 2015”, where children and young people 9-18 were asked about their habits and attitudes regarding media and “Parents & Media 2015”, where parents of children 9-18 were asked about their attitudes to children's use of media.

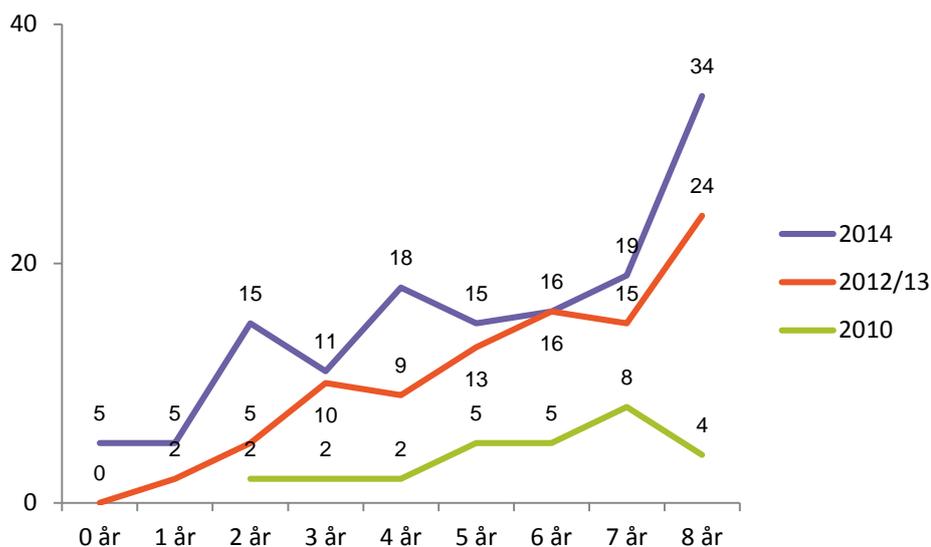
The basis for this report consists of two different postal questionnaires that were sent out to 2,000 parents of children 0–4 and 1,996 parents of children 5–8 years old. Compared with the 2012/13 study, this one has twice as many respondents and is Sweden's largest statistical survey of children's media habits. In order to compare it with previous studies, three age ranges were used for the children in the analysis: 0–1, 2–4 and 5–8. Parents could answer the questions on the internet or using traditional postal questionnaires. Statistics Sweden carried out the collection of data. The selection of respondents was an independent, random sample stratified by age: 0–4 and 5–8. Data acquisition was between 2 September and 17 November 2014. The response rate was 41.8 % for 0–4 and 39.7 % for 5–8. This is a couple of percentage points lower compared with the “Little kids & Media” survey from 2012/13. Declining response rates are not unique for this series of reports, or even for media habit surveys, but have been observed over a long time period for different types of surveys with random selection, both in Sweden and internationally. The reasons for this are not fully understood, but a reasonable assumption is that a general increase in the number of studies - academic as well as market research - have led to a more widespread reluctance to respond to surveys. Time will tell if it is possible to continue with questionnaire surveys with independent random selection, or if it is possible to use alternative methods of data collection.

Summary

This section summarises the results where the differences are greatest between different groups, or where there has been a significant development over time compared with previous studies. One clear trend is that certain forms of media use are becoming more widespread among younger age groups. The differences between boys' and girls' use of media is non-existent among the youngest, but increases with age. There are, however, large differences between the various forms of media. Regarding which computer games and video games boys and girls prefer, it is possible to discern certain gender differences as early as the 2–4 year group and wide differences among 5–8 year-olds. Differences in preferences for TV programmes are close to non-existent among 2–4 year-olds (they are, however, much wider as children get older, see “Kids & Media 2015”). A particularly interesting result is the large proportion of very young children who play games on tablets.

This is a clear change compared with 2012/13 regarding use of the internet. Internet usage is increasing in general, and starts at ever earlier ages compared with 2010 and 2012/13. Already in their first year, 5 % of children use internet daily.

Use internet daily, 2010-2014 (%)



The graph above shows the daily internet usage for 2010, 2012/13 and 2014. The increase that could be observed between 2010 and 2012/13 continues, but at a lower rate. Most obvious is the increase in the daily use of internet by children aged 0–4. There is also a significant increase in 8-year-olds' use of internet compared with the result for 2012/13. The trend is for more children to use the internet daily, and that the proportion of very young children who are daily internet users is increasing. It is worth noting that today's 0–1 year-olds use internet as much as 5–6 year-olds did in 2010. There is also a significant difference in daily internet usage between 7-year-olds and 8-year-olds; almost twice as many 8-year-olds use internet daily compared with 7-year-olds.

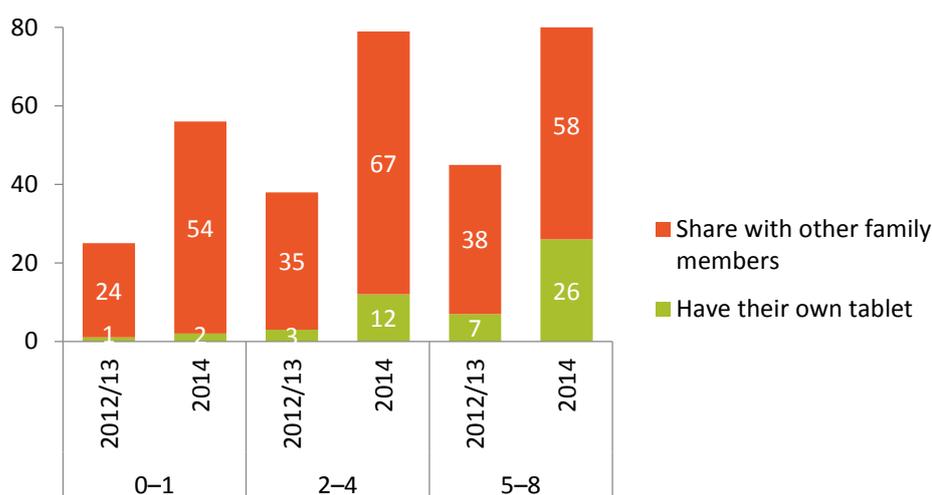
In the case of media use in general, films/TV dominate viewing; it is the media habit that starts very early among children. The proportion of children in the 2–4 year-old group who watch films/TV daily is comparable to that in the 9–12 group, and the proportion of children 2–4 (who watch daily) is greater compared with the proportion of children over 12 (see also “Kids & Media 2015”). However, the younger children watch for a significantly shorter time per day than the older children. 58 % of 2–4 year-olds

watch films/TV for more than 1 hour per day and 7 % watch films/TV for more than 3 hours per day. The corresponding figures for 9–12 year-olds are 71 % and 14 %. At the same time, the proportion of children in all three age groups who watch films/TV daily has decreased compared with 2012/13. TV viewing can be said to be the media background for all other media use in these age groups; the older they become, the more time is spent on other media. The proportion of children who watch films/TV every day is relatively constant until children reach their teens, when viewing starts to decrease (see “Kids & Media 2015”). At the same time, the proportion of children in all three age groups (0–1, 2–4, 5–8), who watch films/TV daily has decreased in comparison with 2012/13. The two most popular TV programmes/TV channels for all age groups are, as in 2012/13, SVT's Bolibompa and Barnkanalen. Among 0–4 year-olds there are no clear differences between girls and boys in their choice of TV programmes, but at 5–8 a certain gender difference appears in the choice of TV programmes.

Regarding the use of mobile phones, 0–1 year-olds using them daily (4 %) was equal to the 2–4 year-old group. However, the use of mobile phones did not increase in any of the age groups compared with 2012/13. Daily reading of books and daily viewing of TV was most frequent in the 2-4 group. 23 % of all 5–8 year-olds and 10 % of all 2–4 year-olds play games on a tablet every day.

A large difference can be observed in children's access to a tablet in the home between 2012/13 and 2014.

Access to a tablet in the home 2012/13 and 2014 (%)

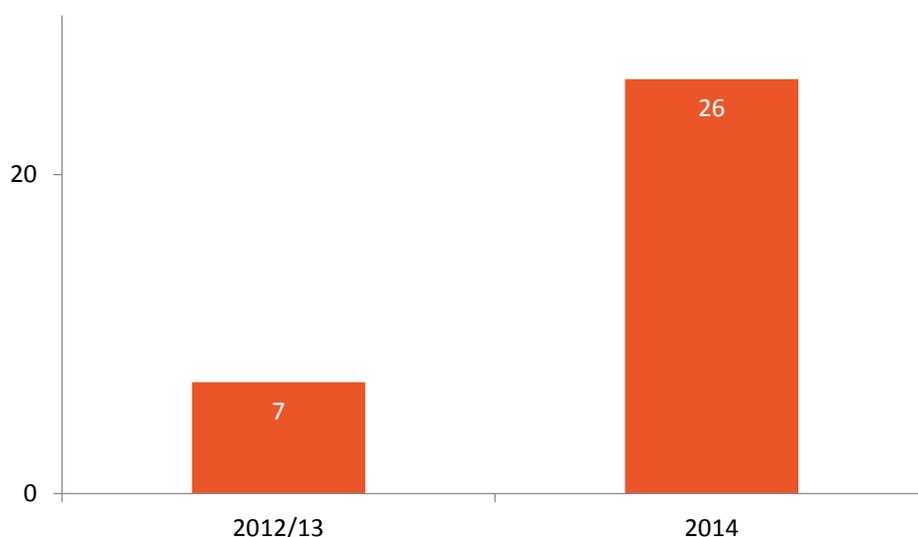


Compared with 2012/13, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of children in the 2–4 and 5–8 groups who have their own tablet. In 2012/13, only 3 % in the age group 2–4 and 7 % of those aged 5–8 had their own tablet. The proportion of children with their own tablet (in these age groups) has quadrupled since 2012/13. Looking at the total access to tablets in the home (0–8 year-olds who have their own or who share one with others), the increase is also significant. Among children in the 0–1 group, 56 % have access to a tablet, among 2–4 year-olds the corresponding figure is 79 % and among 5–8 year-olds, 84 % have access to a tablet in the home. This is roughly a doubling of children's access to tablets in the home compared with 2012/13. Parents are also more positive to children's gaming compared with 2012/13; for example, twice as many fully agree with the statement that children learn good things through gaming.

At the same time, the proportion of children who say they have their own handheld game console has fallen significantly. Access to own TVs, PCs and game consoles has also dropped slightly compared with 2012/13, probably due to tablets replacing other media devices among children aged 0–8.

A large difference between 2012/13 and the present report is the proportion of 0–1 year-olds who have played computer games/video games/tablet games. The proportion of 0–1 year-olds who have gamed has almost quadrupled, from 7 % to 26 %. This can largely be explained by the fact that the youngest children play games on a tablet.

Proportion of 0-1 year-olds who play computer games/video games/tablet games, 2012/13 and 2014 (%)



Computer games and TV games are the area in which differences between the sexes occur earliest and are most significant. Already among children of 2–4, boys' and girls' choices of games differ and among 5–8 year-olds, there are only two games on both genders' top-five lists of the most popular games. Among the youngest, gender differences in terms of frequency and extent of gaming are marginal, and among 2–4 year-olds 6 percentage points more girls play games than boys. Among the 5–8 group, 88 % of boys play games compared with 81 % of girls. There are, however, significant differences between girls and boys in how long 5-8 year-olds play games: 26 % of boys play at least one hour/day, compared with only 12 % of girls. 25 % of parents of children aged 5-8 think that they spend too much time playing games.

YouTube is the most popular internet site among 2–8 year-olds, and among the 16 % of 0–1 year-olds that have visited sites, YouTube and SVT Play/Barnkanalen/Bolibompa are mentioned. These sites are located at the top among all the age groups. The proportion of children aged 5–8 who use social media has decreased slightly in comparison with 2012/13; only 3 % of the 5–8 group said they used social media.

The percentage of parents who are usually with their baby when using media and who talk to the baby about media use/content is generally unchanged from 2012/13.

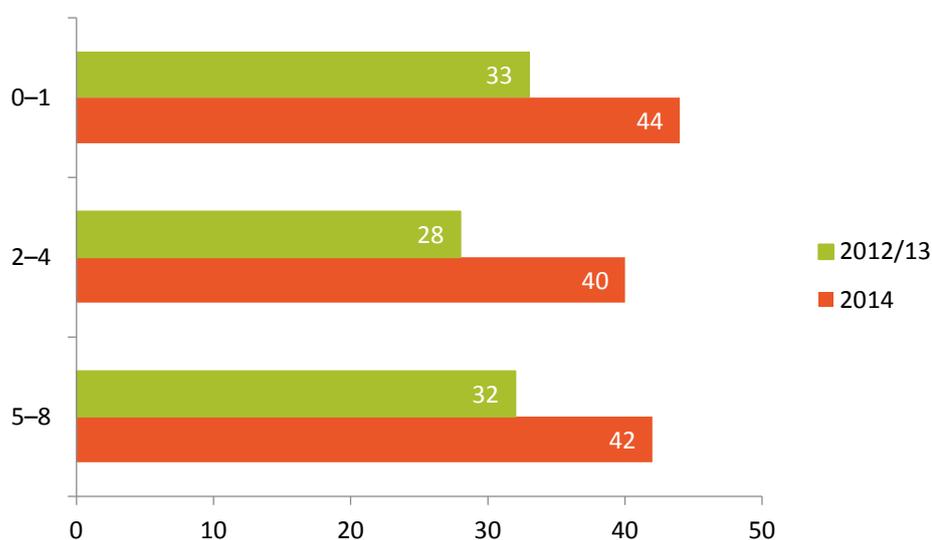
Young children's new consumption shows a small increase in the proportion of children 0–8 who watch the news. Children read news less from newspapers and more from digital platforms (mobiles and internet). TV is still the most common form of media for news consumption among children.

A very large majority (82 % - 88 %) of parents of children 0–8 think that there is harmful content on TV, in films, computer games/video games or on the internet. The percentage of parents who believe that there is harmful media content has increased in all age groups compared with 2012/13.

In general, the proportion of children who have been "scared, sad or depressed" from watching media content such as horror films, violent games and violence in the real world has decreased compared with 2012/13. Parents of 5–8 year-olds are mostly concerned that their children will be exposed to pornography on the internet (45 %) or be bullied or threatened on the internet or via a mobile phone (27 %). A slightly larger proportion is concerned that their child may publish inappropriate visual material on the internet, compared with 2012/13 (an increase from 13 % to 18 %). In practice, however, there are very few children who have actually been a victim of anything unpleasant or risky on the web. Only 4 % of the 5–8 group had come into contact with pornography, as stated by parents, and no-one had been contacted by adults for sexual reasons. The proportion of children who had not had any of the above experiences is 93 %. 1 % of children 5–8 were alleged to have been subjected to internet bullying.

There has been a significant increase in the percentage of parents who think that age limits on cinema films should be defined by law. The increase applies to parents of children in all age groups.

Proportion who believe that age limits on cinema films should be determined by law, 2012/13 and 2014 (%)



Of all the different forms of media, the area of cinema films is considered to be best in terms of social protection. It is currently the only form of media that is covered by statutory age limits. The second best area where social protection works is TV, parents believe. Internet is the area where it is considered that social protection works least well, which can partly be explained by the fact that there is no established system for age recommendations, and that internet is not comparable as a single form of media in the same way as TV or cinema. Compared with 2012/13, the negative reviews for society's protection with regard to the internet and computer games/video games have increased in general; in certain age groups by up to 22 percentage points (parents of 0–1 year-olds regarding computer games/video games).