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Eight out of ten have confidence in the Norwegian press

83 percent of Norwegians say that 'Norwegian press is mainly to be trusted' shows a survey conducted by the Norwegian Media Authority among 1,363 Norwegians.

[Download the report.](#)

Five interesting findings:

1. Men have much less confidence in the Norwegian press compared to women. 17 percent of men disagree that the Norwegian press is mainly to be trusted, while only nine percent of women disagree.
2. People have the highest confidence in NRK 1 (79%), TV 2 (68%), Aftenposten (59%) and 'their local/regional newspaper' (58%).
3. The Norwegian news organization VG lost much confidence in the public after wrongly accusing a Norwegian politician of inappropriate behavior towards a young woman in March. But: the confidence in VG is now about to normalize.
4. Confidence in Facebook plummets. Between March and September this year, the percentage of people who have low confidence in the news they read on Facebook has increased by 15 percentage points (to 66 percent).
5. Only four percent say they have high confidence in the news they read on Facebook. This is even lower than the right-leaning website document.no (5%).



Produces disinformation for future searches

A new report from Data & Society shows how actors produce content to fill the web with disinformation - intended for future searches.

The report provides a fascinating description of how actors systematically work to disseminate disinformation and conspiracy theories.

And to make matters worse: These data voids are hard to detect, impossible to stop, and the dissemination of disinformation can be easily enabled by actors through the use of keywords in speeches, in fake news, or other communications. When people search for information, the disinformation is already there.

Download the report.

Five strategies for disseminating information:

1. **Breaking News:** Given the weight of journalistic content and the flood of search queries, media manipulators often seek to capitalize on breaking news to influence public perception.
2. **Strategic new terms:** The strategic creation of new terms to divert discourse and search traffic alike into areas full of disinformation. This technique's focus on specific terms not only preys on the infrastructures of hashtags and keywords that exist on social media, but it echoes a longstanding political PR strategy for reshaping public debate. When combined with a breaking news situation, this type of data void can be especially damaging.
3. **Outdated terms:** As search engines respond to new trends and new words, old terms can be left behind, associated only with outdated content, leaving more and more room for manipulators. Search engines are programmed to balance between content that is recent and content that is authoritative.
4. **Fragmented concepts:** Manipulators intentionally separate manipulated content from more popular content through the creation of distinct terms that are too fraught to connect. They can also exploit search engines' resistance to addressing politically contested distinctions to help fragment knowledge and rhetoric.
5. **Problematic Queries:** While some media manipulators produce original content to optimize for problematic search queries, others focus on increasing the visibility of content produced for other reasons.



88 percent of cases of journalist-killings remain unresolved worldwide

The overwhelming majority of cases of killings of journalists recorded by UNESCO remain unresolved, with perpetrators of violent acts against journalists walking freely.

A new report from UNESCO further shows a rise in the number of journalist killings and other attacks, as well as the continued trend of widespread impunity.

[Download the report.](#)

Eight findings from the report

1. The period between 2014 through the end of 2018 has seen close to 500 journalists killed. On average, two journalists are killed every week.
2. The number has increased by 18 percent compared to the preceding five-year period (2009-2013).
3. 91 percent of the victims were local journalists.
4. Although the vast majority of journalists killed are men (449), killings of women journalists almost doubled relative to the previous 5-year period.
5. While in 2014 and 2015, a majority of journalist killings occurred in conflict regions, in 2017 and 2018, more killings occurred outside conflict regions.
6. Only 12 percent of cases of killing of journalists between 2006 and 2018 has been resolved.
7. 33 percent of the victims were TV journalists, followed by print (26%), radio (19%), and online (15%).
8. The most dangerous countries for journalists are Syria, Mexico, and Afghanistan.



An explosive spike in fake news on Facebook

One year out from the US 2020 elections, a new Avaaz report uncovers a tsunami of fake political news flooding US citizens on Facebook.

Politically relevant disinformation has reached over 158 million estimated views, enough to reach every reported registered voter in the US at least once.

The report shows that Facebook's measures have largely failed to reduce the spread of viral disinformation on the platform.

[Download the report.](#)

Six main findings:

1. The top 100 fact-checked political fake news stories have been posted over 2.3 million times and reached an estimated 158.9 million views.
2. This is more than twice the estimated views of the official Facebook pages of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party in 2019.
3. The number of views and interactions for the most viral fake news stories has spiked in the last three months and has got more than three times as many views as the preceding three months.
4. The number of interactions on fake news in the last three months appears to be 1.5 times more than reported in the period three to six months before the 2016 elections.
5. Negative fake news stories account for 91 percent of the views – 62 percent of the disinformation was against Democrats/Liberals. 29 percent was against Republicans/Conservatives.
6. Only nine percent of the disinformation stories were positive. All of them were pro-Republicans/Conservatives.



The global decline for internet freedom

More censorship. More surveillance. More manipulation. According to Freedom House, global internet freedom declined for the ninth consecutive year in 2019.

Their annual report *Freedom on the Net* tracks internet freedom in 65 countries around the globe, covering 87 percent of the world's internet users.

[Download the report.](#)

Here are five main findings:

1. Of the 65 countries in the study, half have a decrease in online freedom. Only 16 countries had an increase.
2. Iceland is the world's best protector of internet freedom, followed by Estonia and Canada. Norway, Sweden, and Denmark are not included in the report.
3. China is the world's worst abuser of internet freedom for the fourth consecutive year.
4. False news and disinformation affected the elections in 26 of the 30 countries that had elections last year.
5. Social media is the key distribution platform for disinformation to influence choices.



Bots can help people more efficiently by pretending to be human

An international study published in the journal Nature drills into the core dilemma of human-machine cooperation: Humans often have a deep-seated bias against bots.

Recent advances in artificial intelligence and deep learning have made it possible for bots to pass as humans. One example is Google Duplex – an automated voice assistant capable of generating realistic speech that can fool humans into thinking they are talking to another human.

Putting aside the ethical dilemma for a while: Should bots be transparent when communicating with humans?

In the experiment, the researchers made participants play a repeated prisoner's dilemma game with a human – or a bot.

[Download the report.](#)

Here are the three main findings:

1. The virtual assistant does better than humans at inducing cooperation.
2. But disclosing their true nature negates this superior efficiency. People just don't trust bots as much as humans.
3. And the bias remains: Human participants do not recover from their prior bias against bots despite experiencing cooperative attitudes exhibited by bots over time.



Going digital-only has a huge drawback

Yet another study from Niel Thurman and Richard Fletcher suggests that print audiences simply vanish if news organizations go digital-only.

In the case study, Thurman and Fletcher mapped out what happened when the British magazine New Musical Express (NME) closed their print edition in March 2018.

[Download the report.](#)

The four main findings:

1. After the transition to digital-only, estimated reading time for New Musical Express dropped by 72 percent.
2. The decline in reading time corresponds to numbers from The Independent.
3. Shutting down print does not drive readers to digital platforms.
4. The findings show that digital is growing – but not at the expense of print.



Facebook and Google threatens basic human rights

Amnesty International has published a report tearing apart Googles and Facebooks surveillance-based business models.

In the report Amnesty International issue a warning that the platforms are 'enabling human rights harm at a population scale'.

Download the report.

Here are five main conclusions:

1. Google and Facebook's business model is incompatible with human rights.
2. Google and Facebook threaten freedom of speech and belief, freedom of thought, and the freedom to live without discrimination.
3. Governments must take measures to ensure that people have the right not to be tracked by advertisers and other third parties.
4. Clear regulations must be introduced to protect users privacy.
5. Truly independent national data protection regulators must be granted adequate resources and expertise to investigate and sanction future violations.



No need for publishers to fear a shutdown of Google News

If Google News disappears tomorrow, online news sites will only have a temporary decline in traffic.

That's the conclusion of a compilation study conducted by the News Media Alliance.

The topic is highly relevant as the new EU Copyright Directive will force technology companies to pay media organizations to display short text snippets in search results and previews. All EU countries will implement the directive by June 2021.

In October, Google pushed hard against France when implementing the directive, announcing that it would remove snippets of text and only show titles and links (not covered by law) in French search results.

But according to News Media Alliance, publishers have little to fear.

They have, among other things, looked at what happened to Spanish news sites after Google (in protest of a link tax) shut down its news service in the country in 2014.

Download the report.

Five interesting findings:

1. Spanish news sites experienced only a brief fall in traffic when Google News was shut down in 2014 in protest of a link tax.
2. The smaller news sites (which have less direct traffic) felt the impact harder than larger news sites. But the effect was temporary for both large and small news sites.
3. According to Spanish media organizations, their news sites have increased the organic traffic (direct traffic) since 2014.
4. After Google News disappeared, several Spanish media organizations entered into agreements with other news aggregating services (such as Squid and Upday).
5. The study also points to Denmark and Finland, which do not have Google News.



Closing in on peak subscription

There seems to be little room for growth in digital subscriptions in Norway.

According to a new report from the Norwegian business school BI, and associate professor Erik Wilberg, publishers may be closing in on peak subscription.

[Download the report.](#)

The five main findings:

1. The number of digital subscribers is closely tied to age. The older you are, the more likely it is that you subscribe to digital news.
2. Norway has a high proportion of digital subscriptions in all age-categories (from 19 percent for the young adults to 57 percent of all seniors).
3. The number of seniors apparently paying for digital subscriptions is due to Norwegian publishers' removal of print-only subscriptions.
4. Of those who do not already subscribe, less than ten percent of Norwegians say they are interested in subscribing to digital news.
5. The vast majority of young adults (+50%) is 'not interested' in digital subscriptions, and only eight percent are 'unsure' if they will pay for news.