TINIUS DIGEST

Changes Trends Developments

WITHIN THE MEDIA ECONOMY

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Plummeting newspaper
ad revenue due to pandemic

The pandemic is accelerating the decline of ad revenue for Norwegian media organizations.

Figures obtained by the Norwegian Media Authority highlights the economic consequences of COVID-19.

Download the report.

Three main findings:

1. Sharp decline for ad revenues
From April to August this year, advertising revenues for Norwegian media organizations were down 19 percent compared to the same period in 2019.

2. Overall revenue loss
Growth in subscription revenue is not compensating for the decreasing ad revenues. Norwegian newspapers, radio, and television have seen an overall revenue loss of 7 percent from April to August.

3. Contrasting 2019
Last year Norwegian media organizations created a profit of NOK 1.7 billion (€160m). An increase of almost 50 percent from 2018. Subscription revenues increased by NOK 700 million (+6.4%) to NOK 11.6 billion (€1.1bn). The increase is mainly due to increased revenues in Norwegian TV 2 and reduced costs in Discovery.

A long delay for GDPR complaints

A new report from The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) reveals a systemic lack of effectiveness in applying the GDPR.

Download the report.

Three main findings:

1. Slow process

Decisions take years whilst infringements continue. Two years ago, seven consumer organisations filed GDPR complaints against Google. It took nine months before the Irish Data Protection Commission (DPC) was appointed lead authority for the complaints – and another six months for it to open an inquiry.

2. Opening of own volition inquiries

Instead of investigating the complaints against Google, the Irish DPC choose to start an own volition inquiry that 'is likely to inform' its handling of the complaints. The inquiry will investigate Google's business practices as of February 2020 – and not from 2018, when the complaints were filed. The implication of this procedure is not known.

3. Favouring companies

The lack of binding harmonised procedural laws, coupled with the main establishment criterion to determine lead supervisory authority, ends up favouring the companies under investigation.

Growing audiences for news podcasts

News podcasts are gaining traction during the pandemic.

Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism has conducted an analysis of podcasts in six countries, and found 102 daily news podcasts.

[Download the report.](#)

Four main findings:

1. More podcasts
The report found 102 daily news podcasts, of which 37 were launched in the last year. The format pioneered by The Daily – a deep-dive of around 25 minutes – has proved remarkably successful and has been most widely adopted by other publishers worldwide.

2. Many listeners
Daily news podcasts account for only 1 percent of published podcasts but account for about 10 percent of all downloads.

3. Significant differences
News podcasts account for 45 percent of France's largest podcasts, while they make up only 14 percent in Denmark and 6 percent in Sweden.

4. Younger audience
Daily news podcasts have successfully reached younger audiences, but not those who are less interested in news in the first place. Podcasts – specifically daily news podcasts – help increase loyalty and reduce churn among existing subscribers.

NATO: Russia is actively spreading disinformation in the Nordic countries

A NATO-report claims Russia is still systematically spreading disinformation to influence the Nordic and Baltic countries' inhabitants.

[Download the report.](#)

Four main findings:

1. Highly active
The report describes Russia as 'highly active', and the strategies used are both sophisticated and have a long time horizon. By exploiting connections in complex information environments, the Kremlin can strategically mislead audiences without incurring substantial political or military costs.

2. Information Laundering
Information Laundering is a central strategy: False or misleading content is produced and gradually legitimized through a network of actors. At the same time, these actors use various techniques to delegitimize or hide original sources.

3. Local support
More than 100 Russian, international and national actors are active influencers in Scandinavia. In Norway the report points directly to the newspaper Friheten and Folkediplomati Norge as Kremlin-friendly disseminators of content.

4. Key focus areas
Key focus areas for Russian disinformation are: Refugees and immigrants as a destabilizing factor. Islamic culture as a threat. Conflicts involving child welfare in the Nordic countries. NATO as incompetent and aggressive. Emergence of right-wing extremist nationalist movements and ridicule that Russia can be a threat.

Systemic gender bias in
image recognition systems

Researchers from universities in Germany, Ireland and the U.S. have tested and compared image recognition technology from Google, Microsoft and Amazon.

The study looks into the potential gender bias of commercial image recognition platforms using photographs of U.S. members of Congress and a large number of Twitter images posted by these politicians.

Download the research article.

Three main findings:

1. Men are described as leaders
The most commonly used labels for men were 'official', 'businessperson' and spokesperson. The image recognition systems also frequently used positive labels as 'gentleman', 'energy' and 'manager'.

2. Women are judged on appearance
Images of women received three times more annotations related to physical appearance. The most commonly used labels for women were 'smile', 'chin' and 'outerwear'. They are also often categorized as 'girl' and 'beauty'.

3. Women less recognized
Women in Congress are recognized in only 75.5 percent of images of women in Congress in comparison with 85.8 percent for men in Congress, a difference of 10 percentage points (see the left panels of Figure 3). Thus, in high-quality photos in which only one individual is presented, women are still 'seen' by the algorithm significantly less than men.

Less than half of Danes trust the media

Roskilde University has published their annual survey on Danes' media habits and trust.

Download the report.

Four main findings:

1. Declining trust
Only 46 percent of Danes trust traditional news organisations. The level of trust is the lowest since 2016. Danes generally have higher confidence in the news sources they use themselves (52%), and less confidence in search engines (21%) and social media (14%).

2. Fake news
Few Danes are concerned about fake news, but when asked who they believe are spreading fake news, they point to foreign authorities (26%), Danish politicians (17%) and news organisations and journalists (12%).

3. Mobile usage still growing
67 percent of Danes consume news via mobile. 37 percent consume news via Facebook, followed by YouTube (10%), Messenger (9%) and Twitter (5%).

4. More willing to pay
The proportion that is willing to pay for news in Denmark has increased from 15 to 17 percent in one year.

Computer games may inoculate people against online manipulation

Can a computer game be a useful tool in the fight against online manipulation and fake news? Researchers made a game (Harmony Square) to find an answer.

Download the research article (and play the game here).

Three main findings:

1. A psychological 'vaccine'
Drawing on 'inoculation theory', the game functions as a psychological 'vaccine' by exposing people to weakened doses of the standard techniques used in political misinformation, especially during elections.

2. More confident
People who play the game find misinformation significantly less reliable after playing. They also become substantially more confident in their assessment of misinformation.

3. Effective tool
Increased knowledge of how misinformation and fake news are made and distributed makes people less likely to report sharing such content within their network.