



Summary: Media literacy levels in the Norwegian population

Chapter 1 presents the background, methodology, and purpose of the survey, and the relevant theories related to media literacy.

Chapter 2 deals with *disinformation and fake news*. The main findings (questions apply to experiences made within the last 12 months) are:

- 44 percent report that they have been "sent or seen false or untrue news" online.
- A smaller portion of older people compared to the general population have seen fake news. While about half of the population under the age of 59 (16-59 years) answer that they have experienced fake news, 30 percent of the elderly (60-79 years) say the same.
- 68 percent have experienced "*to come across information that they doubted was true*"

About half (51 percent) report having come across fake news about the corona pandemic. One in three has seen fake news about the corona on Facebook. Facebook and non-editorial websites are the most common sources of fake news.

- The oldest (60 years +) and the youngest (16–24 years) find it more difficult to deal with disinformation and fake news than the rest of the population. The most common method of investigating whether a news story is fake, is to check other sources you trust. Around 50 percent report that they do this. Furthermore, a high share does "web searches to check if it is true" (39 percent) and 35 percent "check the address of the website". 18 percent answered that "they did nothing".

Chapter 3 analyzes online harassment and the consequences for democracy and participation. The main findings (questions apply to experiences made within the last 12 months) are:

- Eleven percent have experienced some form of harassment on the internet.
- The proportion who have experienced harassment decreases with age. 20 percent aged 16–24 have experienced at least one of the four forms of harassment measured in the survey (hate speech, bullying or harassment, threats of violence or incitement or ridicule in debates/discussions). Six percent of people between 60-79 have experienced this. Among those over the age of 80, only two percent have experienced online harassment.
- Hate speech is the most common form of online harassment, and seven percent have experienced this.
- Men generally consider themselves more competent at dealing with online harassment than women. The most common way to deal with online harassment is to "block people".
- Five percent answer that they have been harassed in discussions/debates. A certain proportion of these express that harassment affects their freedom to express themselves online: In the group that has been harassed, four out of ten answered that they have become more careful about expressing their opinion on the internet. Two out of ten of the people being harassed, respond that they have completely stopped participating in online debates.

Chapter 4 deals with *online commercial pressure*. The main findings (questions apply to experiences made within the last 12 months) are:

- Four out of ten reported that they have clicked on something they thought was news story, but then turned out to be advertising.
- Approximately one in ten have paid for a digital subscription they thought they had terminated.



- Almost one in ten aged between 16–24 answer that they have been tricked into buying something online in the last year. For the general population, four percent answer that they have been tricked into buying something on the internet in the last year.
- 45 percent have experienced that companies or organizations collect data about them that are used for commercial purposes. This online harm is what most people feel exposed to and are the least capable of handling online. Only about two out of ten consider themselves competent to handle this form of commercial pressure.
- Those over 60 years of age generally consider themselves less competent at handling online marketing/advertising than the rest of the population. It is also more challenging for them to distinguish commercial- from editorial texts, compared to those under 60 years of age
- 60 percent of the respondents answer that they understand what "algorithms" are. One in three (32 percent) understand what "content marketing" is.
- Almost six out of ten have taken actions to handle online marketing/advertising. The most common action is to "block companies or organizations" (43 percent).

Chapter 5 deals with attacks on *privacy and the competence to regulate one's behavior online*. The main findings (questions apply to experiences made within the last 12 months) are:

- Two out of ten report that they have experienced attempted fraud of money online (22 percent). 25 percent in the age group over 80 years report that they have experienced this, compared with 24 percent among the youngest (16- 24 years).
- 14 percent have experienced that someone has tried to steal their passwords.
- Three percent have experienced having personal information stolen/hacked, two percent have felt pressured to send photos or information about themselves to others, and one percent have had photos of themselves published against their will. In these three forms of invasion of privacy, the group 16 - 24 years is overrepresented.
- Young people (especially 16-34 years old) consider themselves more competent at dealing with privacy challenges on the internet than older people (60 years +).
- 15 percent have experienced that they, or others in their household, have spent so much time on the internet and activities such as social media, computer games, and surfing, that it has affected everyday life.
- The youngest (16 - 24 years) are overrepresented in this group (26 percent).

Chapter 6 deals with all the topics at once. There is one online harm that stands out: "That individuals and companies collect data about them for commercial purposes". About seven out of ten feels exposed to this, and less than two out of ten consider themselves competent enough to handle this online harm. In this area, there is thus an unfortunate combination of low competence and high vulnerability.

- A big portion of the population feel that they are lacking competency wise, when facing many of the online harms we find within the "privacy" risk zone. This especially applies to "having personal information stolen/hacked" or "having photos or videos of me published against my will". However, a small portion of the population considers themselves vulnerable regarding this occurrence.

The report can be read in its entirety or used as an introduction to the knowledge and analysis of each individual topic.

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