

National report for Norway

By Ingunn Hagen, with some input from Elisabeth Staksrud

Contribution to the European report:

Stald, G. and Haddon, L. (2008) *Cross-Cultural Contexts of Research: Factors Influencing the Study of Children and the Internet in Europe*. A report for the EC Safer Internet Plus Programme, 2008.

Universities and Disciplines

There are 7 universities in Norway at present, and a number of colleges.

There are media studies in 5 of the universities, and in a number of colleges (at least 6), plus in teacher colleges and liberal arts schools (folkehøyskoler).

Some examples: At University of Oslo there is the Department of Media and Communication (combining humanities and social sciences, see

<http://www.media.uio.no/english/>); at University of Bergen the Department of Media Studies (also social science and humanities based, was recently merged with the Department of Information Science and is now called the Department of Information Science and Media Studies (see

<http://www.infomedia.uib.no/default.asp?kategori=671&version=true>).

At the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) there is the humanistic Department of Arts and Media Studies (see, <http://www.ntnu.no/km/english>, with MAs in Media Studies and Film Studies), the BA is interdisciplinary organized, while the social science media studies MA program is hosted by the Department of Sociology and Political Science (but still interdisciplinary, see

<http://www.ntnu.no/portal/page/portal/eksternwebEN/aboutntnu/facultiesanddepartments/svt/iss?menuSectionId=6036>).

In the colleges media studies is often linked to professional programs, like in journalism or programs for information workers.

There are departments of Informatics or Information Science, mainly at the universities (for example, see <http://www.idi.ntnu.no/>).

But there are also programmes or centres at the different universities where topics related to IT and society are the main focus. For example, at NTNU there was a Centre for Technology and Society. It has now been merged with a Centre for Gender Studies into a Department for Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies (see <http://www.ntnu.no/kult/english>).

National Data Collected

The National Bureau of Statistics performs an annual study of Internet (and other media) use in the age group 9-79 years. The report is called Norsk mediebarometer (the Norwegian Media Barometer, see, www.ssb.no; and also

<http://www.medienorge.uib.no/english/?cat=statistikk&page=it>). This study is mainly paid for by the Media Authorities (Medietilsynet), and also by Telenor (the national phone company). The SAFT studies, located at the Media Authorities (Medietilsynet), performed by MMI Synovate (see http://www.saftonline.no/om/about_english.html)

-TNS Gallup Norway conducts the comprehensive survey Consumer & Media, monitoring different types of media use (including Internet, several times a year, see <http://www.tnsglobal.com/global/europe/norway>)

Markeds og Medieinstituttet (MMI) also does surveys when commissioned (see http://www.norway.com/directories/d_company.asp?id=808), for example for the Media Authorities (SAFT). Studies by TNS Gallup has 12 years as the lowest age limit. Before 2004 the age limit was 13 years+.

For the Norwegian SAFT studies (see <http://www.saftonline.no/digitalemedier/internett/>)

Institutional processes in applying to conduct research

In Norway all research has to be approved by Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste (Norwegian Social Science Data Services – NSD, see <http://www.nsd.uib.no/nsd/english/index.html>). You also need the consent of parents if the child is below 16 years old. In addition there are regional Ethical committees that apply to certain disciplines (like psychology). All research should in principle be approved by NSD, at least when you apply for funding, such as to the Norwegian Research Council.

Pressures to conduct research

For permanent staff, traditionally 47% of their time was supposed to be used for research (however this was hardly ever the case). This system is in the process of being changed. But there is intense pressure to publish, at least 2 international articles a year. And there is constant monitoring and book keeping as regards what the scientific staff publishes, in a system called FRIDA (see <http://wo.uio.no/as/WebObjects/frida.woa/5?la=en&inst=185>). In terms of cooperating with industry, in some fields, at our university (NTNU) this is more the case in technology related fields, and in the natural sciences, in the former national Civil Engineering part of the university (earlier NTH).

Factors influencing the orientation of research

Industries approaching universities for research is more common in the above mentioned disciplines. Ministries approach universities too, for example related to refugees and children of refugees lately. The Norwegian research council mainly supports programmes that last for some years and with certain themes that they prioritize (see <http://www.forskningsradet.no/en/Home+page/1177315753906>). An example of such a programme related to ICT is the KIM programme (Kommunikasjon, IKT, medier – Communication, ICT, and Media, see <http://www.forskningsradet.no/en/Funding/KIM/1049653792087>) that lasted from 2003-2007, with a 20 million NOK budget annually. The earlier programme for ICT related research was SKIKT (Samfunnsvitenskapelige og kulturelle forutsetninger for Informasjons- og Kommunikasjonsteknologi – Societal and cultural premises for ICT, see <http://www.forskningsradet.no/servlet/Satellite?cid=1088005959163&pagename=skikt%2FPa ge%2FHovedSide>). Universities also approach industry for research funding for example Studio Apertura (see <http://www.samforsk.no/sitepageview.aspx?sitePageID=1201>) has been able to get funding from Statoil for a number of studies.

National Research Traditions

Quantitative research dominated the social sciences and education, especially until the late 1980s. What kind depended on which academic fields. Surveys were dominant in many of the social sciences, while experiments were common in many areas of psychology. Qualitative research and textual analysis were more common in the humanities. In media and film studies these were for example based in semiotics, phenomenology, hermeneutics, or psychoanalytic theory. But since the late 1980s qualitative research – like research interviews, observations, case studies, and focus group interviews – became more common also in the social sciences and education. In media studies, traditions like cultural studies, reception analysis and media ethnography legitimated these changes. There were Centres for media research and for Press research both at the University of Bergen and the University for Oslo since the 1970s. In Bergen this was related to the establishment of the Nordic documentation centre for mass communication research (Nordicom, see <http://www.nordicom.uib.no/index.html>) 1972. The first department in Norway related to media was the Department for Drama, Film and Theatre at the former University for Trondheim (now part of NTNU). This is now called the Department of Arts and Media Studies (see question 2). It was established as a field of study in 1974, but it became a department in 1978. The Department of Mass Communication at the University of Bergen was established in 1987, while the Department of Media and Communication at the University of Oslo was established in 1987. Both of them had already had BA students in media studies for a few years. Internet related research has been happening, 1992 (also

according to Terje Rasmussen; who has written extensively about Norwegian Internet research, see <http://www.media.uio.no/lasso/personer/83.html>)

Sources of Funding for Research

The majority of funding comes from the Norwegian Research Council. For media studies there is also the Council for Applied Media Studies, which distributes smaller, annual funding. Then there is funding from the state budget directly to the universities. This finances permanent staff with research obligations and also PhD-projects. In addition there is an increasing amount of research that is funded by the EU. This is rare in Norway, at least for the social sciences and education.

It was surprising that so much of the research on children and the Internet had been funded by EU and the Government/Regulator. But a number of the research projects on children and Internet that were funded by the Norwegian research council did not focus on risk issues. Actually, more of the Norwegian research in the data repository is co-financed, for example by the Regulator and EU (according to Elisabeth Staksrud).

Political initiatives influencing research

The Norwegian action plan on children, youth and the Internet (Barne- og Familedpartementet, 2001), promoted knowledge enhancement, and resulted in an annual budget ensuring the replication of the SAFT survey in 2006 and 2008. The re-organisation of the Norwegian Board of Film classification in 1997, to an institution that also gives advice regarding new media (computer games and the Internet) lead to several new studies initiated and financed by the NBFC (Bjørnstad & Ellingsen, 2002; Karlsen & Syvertsen, 2004; Skjulstad, 2000), and to the establishment of the SAFT project and its studies on children and parents knowledge and use of the Internet in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Ireland (2003), Norway and Ireland (2006) and Norway (2008). The *"Kunnskapsløftet"* Beginning the school year 2006, the Norwegian student, from primary level to high school, will be taught according to the Norwegian national learning reform *Kunnskapsløftet* This substantial reform defines *the ability to use digital tools as one of the five basic skills needed to become an educated citizen*, along with the ability to express one self verbally, the ability to read, mathematical skills, and the ability to write (Kunnskapsløftet 2006).

Knowledge Promotion ("*Kunnskapsløftet*") is the latest reform in primary and lower secondary education. It introduces certain changes in substance, structure and organisation from the first grade at basic school (primary and lower secondary school) to the last grade at upper secondary school – 13 grades in all. The reform took effect in autumn 2006 for pupils in grades 1-9 at basic school and for pupils in the first year of upper secondary school (i.e. the 11th grade) (Norwegian Ministry of Education and research Ministry of Education and Research.

Kunnskapsløftet, see

<http://odin.dep.no/kd/english/topics/knowledgepromotion/bn.html>)

From their webpage: The Network for IT Research and Competence in Education (ITU) was founded in 1997 as a key project in the Ministry of Education and Research's first action plan, "Information Technology in Education 1996–1999" and was continued in the second action plan "Information and Communications Technology in Norwegian Education. Plan for 2000–2003". ITU was originally founded as a national research and competence network for information technology (IT) in education, under the administration of the University of Oslo (UiO).

In 2003, ITU was evaluated by the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education (NIFU). NIFU's evaluation report states: "Our main conclusion is that ITU has lived up to its mandate in a constructive manner within the constraints of the resources that were provided." The evaluation concluded with the need to promote the further development of the ITU community as a separate organisation from 2004. On 1 January 2004, ITU was established as a permanent national academic unit at the University of Oslo. Ola Erstad (see <http://www.itu.no/Personer/ola/view>) and Morten Søby (see <http://folk.uio.no/mortenso/>) have been central in ITUs work.

We must mention the SAFT project (2002 – 2006), followed by Norwegian awareness Node, both supported by the EC Safer Internet Action Plan/Safer Internet Plus and situated at the Norwegian Board of Film Classification/Norwegian Media Authority, projects with a strong cooperation with other governmental organizations as well as other stakeholders, and financially supported by the Norwegian Action Plan for Youth and the Internet. The leading ISP Telenor has, together with several others and the Norwegian Police, implemented a self-regulatory based child pornography filter, later exported to several other European countries. The Safer Internet Programme supported the initial SAFT project and hence were part of leading the SAFT surveys

The Influence of media coverage, events and lobbies on research

Recently the work of Barnevakten (the Child Minder, see <http://www.barnevakten.no/>) and also of Redd Barna (http://www.reddbarna.no/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=11539), Norway has been influential.

Particular debates and concerns about children

There is some concern about the commercialisation of childhood for example through the NOU 2001, 6 (Norwegian Public Documents), *Oppvekst med prislapp. Om kommersialisering og kjøpepress mot barn og unge* (Childhood with a price tag. About commercialisation and buying pressure towards children and young people). Two recent government initiative include a webpage for parents (<http://www.foreldrepraten.no>) and a recent brochure called "Blir du påvirket? (Are you influenced?, see <http://www.barneombudet.no/cgi-bin/barneombudet/imaker?id=30212&tvingmal=2830>) to be used for raising consciousness about advertising and commercial pressure in secondary school. There has also been concern about this in the media. A recent academic concern about this topic can be found related to the research project "Consuming Children" (see <http://www.svt.ntnu.no/noseb/Consuming/>), and also the recent conference on "Child and Teen Consumption 2008" (see <http://www.svt.ntnu.no/noseb/Consuming/events.htm> and also <http://flowtv.org/?p=1298>).

There is some recent public and political debate on allowing 16 year olds to vote in parliamentary and local elections (voting age at present is 18). This has been the major focus in a lot of the research performed at NOSEB, the Norwegian Centre for Child Research, NTNU (see <http://www.svt.ntnu.no/noseb/english/>, <http://www.svt.ntnu.no/noseb/costa19/>, e.g. <http://www.svt.ntnu.no/noseb/english/staff/annekjo/>, and <http://www.svt.ntnu.no/noseb/english/staff/jensq/>).

There is not much of a debate around public spaces and children. But there is some media attention related to youngsters being out in cities during especially weekend evenings, and drinking age. Adults and parents have a number of places organized themselves to be present out among the youngsters. These organized efforts are called *Natteravnene* (Nightly Ravens, see http://www.natteravn.no/cat_page.asp?cat=23&PageType=M).

Case Studies

I participated in the research project "New Information Technology and the Young Generation: Evolving Identities and Values in a Mediated Environment." Partner: Usha S. Nayar, Tata Institute, Bombay, India.

Some of the publications include:

Hagen, Ingunn (2007): "We cannot just sit the whole day and watch TV." Negotiations about Media Use Among Youngsters and their Parents". (Accepted to be published in Sage's journal *Young*, No. 4).

Hagen, Ingunn (2003): "Being a computer user – what does that mean? A discussion about young people's talk about computers and themselves." I: Thomas Tufte (Red.): *Medierne, minoritetene og det multi-kulturelle samfund – skandinaviske perspektiver*. Gøteborg: Nordicom. (p. 197-227).

Hagen, Ingunn (2003): "Eit liv utan media? Kjedeleg!" Om betydninga av nye media barn og unge sitt liv. I: Lundby, Knut (red.) *Flyt og forførelse. Fortellinger om IKT*. Oslo: Ad Notam, Gyldendal (s. 197-224).

Decisions were mainly based on our research interests, and our wish to cooperate in doing research, but also by the possibility to get funding related to this area. Theoretical and methodological background, research interests, the perspectives that inspired us included reception analysis and media ethnography. We actually increased the age span, inspired by the "Young Children, New Media" project. We received funding from the SKIKT programme (described earlier) in the Norwegian Research council. We received funding, basically for one researcher and some assistance from 1999-2002. SKIKT also funded a large number of PhD-projects, though Strategic funds that the program allocated to the universities (called SUP).