Digital participation? Internet use among adolescents with and without intellectual disabilities: A comparative study

# Details

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* Internet usage, practices and engagement
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* Risks and harms
* Online safety and policy regulation
* Access, inequalities and vulnerabilities

## Sample

114 Swedish adolescents with intellectual disabilities aged 13 to 20. Reference group n=1161.

## Implications For Parents About

## Implications For Educators About

## Implications For Policy Makers About

* High-quality content online for children and young people
* Stepping up awareness and empowerment
* Creating a safe environment for children online
* Other

## Other PolicyMaker Implication

Cognitive adaptation of surveys for populaton-based studies. Digital adaptations in the physical environment for people with ID. Word, picture, and voice-based strategies to facilitate digital participation for people with ID.

## Implications For Stakeholders About

## Other Stakeholder Implication

Role of friends and other adults in facilitating safe Internet use and digital citizenship for children and young people with intellectual disabilities. Word, picture, and voice-based strategies to facilitate digital participation for people with ID.

# Abstract

Internet use is an integrated part of everyday life, especially among young people. However, knowledge of this for young people with disabilities is scarce. This study investigates digital participation of adolescents with intellectual disabilities by comparing aspects of Internet use among adolescents with and without intellectual disabilities. Cross-sectional comparative design was used and a national survey from the Swedish Media Council was cognitively adapted for adolescents with intellectual disabilities aged 13–20 years. The results reveal that a significantly lower proportion of the 114 participating adolescents with intellectual disabilities had access to Internet-enabled devices and performed Internet activities, except for playing games, than the reference group ( n = 1161). The greatest difference was found in searching for information. Analyses indicate that adolescents with intellectual disabilities are following a similar pattern of Internet use as the reference group, but a digital lag is prevalent, and a more cognitively accessible web could be beneficial.

# Outcome

"A lower proportion of adolescents with intellectual disabilities had access to smartphones (67% vs 98%) and computers of their own (54% vs 77%).... [A] higher proportion of adolescents with intellectual disabilities had no access to devices at all. However, more adolescents with intellectual disabilities had a tablet of their own (61% vs 48%).... [A]dolescents with intellectual disabilities [were] less active on the Internet than the reference group. There [were] significant differences for most Internet activities, with adolescents with intellectual disabilities more likely to not perform them at all compared with the reference group. An exception is play games which [was] performed by more adolescents with intellectual disabilities (84%) than the reference group (63%).... [There was] a significantly higher degree of difficulties for adolescents with intellectual disabilities compared with the reference group to send text-based messages such as e-mails and find and understand information on the Internet.... A significantly higher proportion of adolescents with intellectual disabilities [had] experiences of being bullied on the Internet than adolescents in the reference group.... Managing the risks through talking daily or weekly with an adult about things seen on the Internet was significantly less common among adolescents with intellectual disabilities (24%) than in the reference group (57%)," (Authors, 2133–2136).