Disability digital divide: the use of the internet, smartphones, computers and tablets among people with disabilities in Sweden

# Details

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* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Literacy and skills
* Access, inequalities and vulnerabilities

## Sample

A total of 771 persons were participated. All a priori defined 35 disability groups were represented. Of them, 419 were women, 283 men and 22 persons of other gender. 67% of participants were in the age categories 31–54 years (48%) and 17–30 years (19%), which is a larger proportion than in the general Swedish population (52%); 12% of participants were in the age category 65 years and older, which is a smaller proportion than in the general Swedish population; 3% of participants were 16 years or younger.

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Other

## Other PolicyMaker Implication

There is not one digital disability divide but several digital divides facing people with disabilities; people with disabilities are not a homogenous population

## Implications For Stakeholders About

# Abstract

Although Sweden is one of the most digitalized countries and the Swedish population’s use of the internet is among the most studied in the world, little is known about how Swedes with disabilities use internet. The purpose of this study is to describe use of and perceived difficulties in use of the internet among people with disabilities and to explore digital divides in-between and within disability groups, and in comparison with the general population. This is a cross-sectional survey targeting the same issues as other nationwide surveys but adapted for people with cognitive disabilities. Participants were recruited from May to October 2017 by adaptive snowball sampling. The survey comprised questions on access to and use of devices, and use of and perceived difficulties in use of internet. A total of 771 people responded to the survey, representing 35 diagnoses/impairments. Larger proportions of people with autism, ADHD and bipolar disorder reported using internet than other disability groups. Women with autism used the internet more than any other disability group, and women with aphasia used the internet the least. People with disabilities related to language and understanding reported more difficulties using internet than other disability groups. Larger proportions of participants than the general Swedish population reported not feeling digitally included. In many but not all disability groups, larger proportions of men than women reported not feeling digitally included. Our findings show that there are differences in digital inclusion between sub-groups of diagnoses/impairments. Thus, disability digital divides are preferably investigated by sub-grouping disabilities, rather than studied as one homogeneous group.

# Outcome

"We mirrored two large surveys of the whole Swedish population, SCB [52] and IIS [51]. Our survey presents larger proportions of people with disabilities whom find the internet difficult, than the SCB and IIS surveys. This suggests that difficulties related to disability might have been underestimated in previous nationwide surveys, and that estimations of how many people with disabilities that find the internet difficult need to be reconsidered.... In summary, the results of this survey to people with disabilities show that there are differences between disability groups in access to devices, use of the internet and in perceived difficulties in use of the internet. Among disability groups related to language and intellectual impairments the lowest proportions reported having access to devices and the highest proportions reported difficulties in use of the internet. Among the ADD, ADHD, autism and bipolar disability groups, large proportions reported having access to devices and reported the least difficulties in using the internet. Overall, the results of this survey suggest that most people with disabilities are lagging behind the general population, in that:
- they have less access to devices;
- they use the internet to pay bills less;
- they use the internet for online shopping less;
- they use mobile bank ID for identification less;
- they feel less included in the digital society."
(Authors, 114)