

Children's Reading Habits in a Digitized World

& the Changing Role of the Public Library



A study on children's media usage and reading habits

Main findings

Children are spending less time on reading in their spare time

The number of children reading several times per week is decreasing from 61% in 2010 to 56% in 2017.

The decline is greatest among girls (from 68% to 59%) and in the 5th grade.

Children read in school and not at home

Children perceive reading as a school activity.

The experience of reading in school has an impact on how much children are reading outside of school.

Reading is difficult

57% of the children read only because their parents tell them to.

Children find it difficult to read longer texts.

What do children read?

70% of all children read text messages every day on a digital device.

79% of all children never read an e-book.

28% read printed novels, and Fantasy is the top genre.

Who inspires children to read?

Children are inspired to read by their friends, movies and their mother.

The Public library gets the lowest rank as a source of inspiration.

Children are mostly spending time on screens

49% of the children in 7th grade use 1-3 hours/day on streaming services.

35% of the boys use minimum 4 hours/day on digital gaming.

19% of the girls use minimum 4 hours/day on social media.

Strategic Recommendations

- 1 It's a shared task to ensure literate generations – both schools, libraries and parents must partake.
- 2 Children from 9-14 still need adults actively helping them with a good reading culture – even if they are good readers.
- 3 The school–library partnership is essential.
- 4 Public libraries must rethink their outreach effort – all children go to school, but not all children go to the library.
- 5 The lack of digital reading calls for action.

The study 'Children's Reading Habits 2017' is a mix of two data sets, quantitative and qualitative, ensuring exploration and analysis in the same study.

The quantitative analysis is based upon data from almost 9,000 children aged 7-14 studying children's media usage, reading and library habits. The quantitative study is supplemented by an in-depth qualitative analysis focusing on children in 6th grade, where the reading behavior is changing radically.

Supported by: