

The role of PR in the Innovation Information System

A case study on how media can facilitate public debate and increase common knowledge and understanding of the social aspects of innovations

Jan Sandred

Office of the Director General, Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems VINNOVA

E-mail: jan.sandred@vinnova.se

Phone: +46 (0)8-473 3000, +46 (0)70 688 1603

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A teaching aid, Livstid¹ (“For Life”), was produced to promote safe use of the Internet, especially among children and young people. The aim is to reduce ‘risk’ behavior, promote responsible Internet use and support ‘shared responsibility’ for the protection of the rights and needs of citizens, in particular children and adolescents. It involved actors within the entire Swedish educational cluster/triple helix. Industry representatives (Microsoft) and Government (the Media Council and Swedish National Agency for School Improvement) cooperated and each contributed to the project with knowledge and networks. The educational sector (‘academy’) did not contribute with research but with experience and competence. It was also the target for the project. The project was controversial among some groups, especially policy makers and the government, and occasional media. It is not considered politically correct that a multinational company should sponsor school textbooks and teaching aids. Expert and editor roles within the team, especially the teacher’s, were questioned and accused by the media as ‘Microsoft paid consultants’ or similar. It was hard to realize that someone could do this kind of innovative cooperation as part of their ordinary work to produce material that is available at no cost.

1 Introduction – Media Reality is not Reality

It is mostly the journalist’s or media’s view that has been addressed in innovation journalism studies. An increasingly important actor is the role of public relations (PR) and information consultants.

The common opinion is that there is a trench warfare going on between the journalists, spin doctors and lobbyists—the ‘dark force’ that influences the media. This is not true. Media has always been an actor and not an observer. Media is part of the innovation network/innovation system, for better or for worse.

For a long time, Swedish society was characterized by ‘corporativism’. The only opinion makers, and thus those who had the real influence on new laws, were corporations that represented large economic, industrial and professional groups. Corporations like these—trade unions for example—had the real influence in society and thus, the legislative power. The influencing of public opinion was

¹ Photos taken from the Livstid teaching aid. With kind permission from Microsoft Sweden AB. All other photos and pictures by the author.

institutionalized and decisions were made according to fixed procedures and practices. There was no media society, no Internet, no Al-Qaeda, no morning TV talk shows, no SMS. And Donald Duck appeared on Swedish public television only once a year, at Christmas.

During the late 1970's and early 1980's, private ownership of satellite dishes was considered dubious among important European political organizations.² The German Deutsche Bundespost was the first Post, Telephone and Telegraph Administration in Europe to introduce cable television to private households. But in the late 1970's, the social democrats (SPD) blocked the service, as the Bonn government was afraid that cable technology would lead to private television.

The same arguments were used in Sweden with the often-talked-about "Prohibit Possession of Private Satellite Dishes" bill in late 1970's signed by the presidents of the National Federation of Social Democratic Women in Sweden and the Swedish Christian Social Democrats (Broderskapsrörelsen), among others. At that time, there were only two news programs on Swedish TV: Aktuellt and Rapport.

Today, there are eight Swedish TV channels with a dozen Swedish news programs. And media's role is changing with blogs, podcasts and other Internet tools. The media landscape is an arena where everyone, from media columnists with their own political agenda to private opinion leaders and amateur politicians, can both influence and rightly claim to be part of the media landscape. The media landscape is becoming much more nuanced. The border between journalism, entertainment, information and propaganda is becoming very unclear.

There is no longer a separation between 'professional lobbyism' and democratic opinion making. It is neither considered strange nor wrong; opinion making and lobbying are both the right and responsibility of all organizations and citizens.

According to recent research,³ there is less investigative and news reporting in journalism and more commentary in Sweden today. There are various reasons for this: Media's commercial change from traditional news reporting and investigative journalism to entertainment is an obvious one. Today, many interest groups compete for attention (and ultimately control of the state). Important social decisions are no longer made among high-ranking politicians behind closed doors. Public opinion is influenced by many lobbying groups and organizations through media, PR, marketing, advertising and culture.

In the 1980's, it was hard for one individual to reach more than 100 people (unless you were interviewed in the media). Today, with the Internet, anyone can (in theory) reach everybody at any time in any place. Individuals are both content providers and content receivers. Information is everywhere. For media, content is almost out of control.

² Funny enough you get a lot of Human Rights Report on China, Iran and similar countries, if you Google key words like "prohibit possession private satellite dish".

³ http://www.vvojn.nl/vvoj_org/live/eu_report.pdf for example

It is no longer a given that the media sits on the whole story and understands all issues. It is no longer a given that the media agrees on the same truth. It is no longer a given that media understand who has the power over information.

2 Not Only a Technical-Economic Issue

The discussion around innovation journalism has so far only covered the technical, business, legal and political implications of innovations and innovation networks/systems. The social consequences are as important as these others.

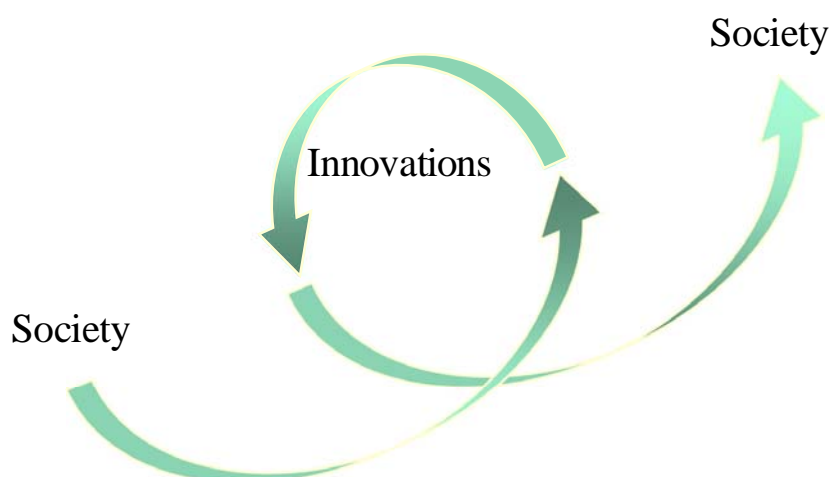
Informing society about new innovations is pretty straight-forward journalism. Covering innovation's influence on society is a different matter.

Political, economic and social science studies of technology often have ethical dimensions. There have always been political attempts to regulate technology that reflect and influence ethical decision-making. The same is true for how to more effectively manage social investments in innovation at state and corporate levels, and even for welfare economics.

The ethical implications of social science approaches to technology often rely on technological determinism. The idea is that technology determines social life and develops in an independent or autonomous manner.

During the technologically optimistic 1950's and 1960's, critics often opposed the popular view of the unqualified benefits of technological progress with technological determinism theories. These efforts almost immediately aroused moral protests against technology.

This led to the theory of diffusion—an understanding of how new technology and new innovations follow certain patterns when they “diffuse” into society.



Society influences the development of innovation, but innovation changes society. Attitudes change, laws change, politics change, markets change, etc. According to innovation journalism theories and studies, one of the major actors and influencers

in this system is the media. The media influences opinion makers, visionaries and forecasters.

The social impact of innovations is not an exact art. New innovations are greeted with mixed emotions.

On the one hand, new innovations are feared because of the social, cultural or political impact they may have. You often hear arguments about social disintegration, trash culture, immoral lifestyle, 'consumerism' (buying things you do not need). In this view, there is very little that is 'new' about new technology. It's simply a way of repackaging old content or giving people content they do not want or need.

On the other hand, new innovations are embraced thanks to the social, cultural or political impact they may have. New ideas can be easily disseminated. Knowledge about new areas is available and new media can be used to empower individuals and groups. New innovations provide people with new opportunities: more and faster information, entertainment, education and culture.

Thus, opinions on innovation's impact on society tend to be polarized: either they are very positive or very negative. This is emphasized by media, which often focuses on conflict in news stories. This media logic often leads to cheers and ovations about innovations, or creates moral panic⁴.

What's really important is not the technology, but the use of it. When an innovation is successful, it always means there's some sort of successful content or that the innovation satisfies some need, often social. Newspapers arrived with the high-speed rotation press, soap operas are the heart of television, rock music shaped the music industry forever and sex was one of the first travelers along the electronic highway.

There are many actors who influences the diffusion process, with the motive being to make new innovation a success: the scientist behind the research, the researcher behind the product/service based on the research, the company behind the scientist and the researcher, the capitalists behind the company, the politicians who promote some new growth policy based on certain innovations, the journalist who would like to break a news story on the innovation, etc.

There are also many actors with the incentive to strongly oppose new innovations, like special interest and single-issue groups.

One hundred years ago, Sweden had 100 non-profit organizations. Today, there are slightly more than 52,000 in Sweden, most of them

⁴ Moral panic is false or exaggerated perception that some frequently a minority group or a subculture, is dangerously
Moral panic is inspired by real or imagined phenomena. I
1950s it was comic books and communism (McCarthyism)
And now it is child pornography and harassment, especially



small special interest and single-issue groups⁵. The use of the concept "NGO" (non-governmental organization) is today seventeen times as common in Swedish media as it was in 1992.

For instance, in Sweden, there are quite a few groups that pursue Internet safety and security policies, like Ecpat (child pornography), Childhood Foundation (child pornography), Save the Children (child pornography), Barnombudsmannen (child pornography), Friends (harassment), BRIS (harassment), Föreningen Mot Mobbning (harassment). Some of these have hotlines and direct reporting procedures to the Swedish Police.

These groups are working on very important and worthwhile issues, but there is stiff competition for the media's attention. Therefore, these groups rely heavily on PR and information not only to promote their issues, but also to create attention and, by that, get a better position for funding and grants. All have full-time PR and information managers, and most of them also cooperate with PR agencies.

This creates a huge and ever-expanding supply of information and a growing competition between information, propaganda and, sometimes, entertainment. In this environment, media companies, and innovation journalists for that matter, must create meaning in a multimedia culture flooded with information and opinions, but lacking in knowledge.

And the risk of being scrutinized by the media is low. It's much harder to write a critical article about Save the Children, than it is to write an exiting story about "Online Danger Zone Chat-room Predators: Cyberspace presents an array of risks that may be hazardous to your child's well being"⁶.

3 Internet Safety Initiative

During 2004-2005, the debate on the "dangers and threats of Internet" culminated in Swedish media. The coverage consisted mostly of scaremongering articles about restricting development and controlling access to new communication technology, mainly initiated by special interests and single-issue groups that pursue Internet safety and security policies.



There was a germinating moral panic with loud demands on prohibition and restrictions. It became evident for different actors, both governmental and commercial, that Internet safety and security issues had to be addressed in a broader, more nuanced and constructive way to balance the one-sided media coverage. The fact that crimes are being committed online is

⁵ Volontärbyrån, <http://www.volontarbyran.org/>

⁶ <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/02/12/INGU9H51EF1.DTL&hw=Insight&sn=001&sc=1000>

not a reason to avoid using these services.

Microsoft Sweden AB took the initiative and, in cooperation with the communication agency GCI Sweden AB, where the author worked as Senior Consultant, in late 2004, contacted the Swedish Media Council⁷ and the Swedish National Agency for School Improvement⁸ to form a program to address these issues. Late distribution and marketing was made possible by publishing house Gleerups Utbildning AB⁹, second largest educational publisher in Sweden.

The author was assigned an editor and a project leader. From the start, it was decided that the project should follow the innovation journalism model.

In January 2005, Microsoft, together with the author, had discussions with some of the previously mentioned special interest organizations, but were not able to convince them to compromise on their own agenda and adapt to the broader scope of the project. It was decided to involve government, educators, parents, media and industry to promote shared responsibility for the protection of the rights and needs of citizens, in particular children and adolescents.

4 Security is not safety



First, it was decided to separate security from safety, as security is mostly a technology issue, while the safety is not. The subjects have to be tackled from fundamentally different perspectives.

The security campaign was coined “Surfa Lugnt” (Safe Surfing) and focused on traditional technical-user security areas such as virus, spam and infringement.

The safety campaign was coined “Livstid” (“For Life”). A teaching aid for use in elementary schools, it promoted safe use of Internet, especially among children and young people.

⁷ See Appendix 1

⁸ See Appendix 1

⁹ <http://www.gleerups.se>

The aim was to reduce ‘risk’ behavior and promote responsible Internet uses and to “empower citizens to use the Internet, as well as other information and communication technologies, safely and effectively.”

Livstid focused on how to find and handle inaccurate information, harmful material, intrusive advertising and online bullying, while at the same time emphasizing the positive aspects of Internet use among young people.

The object was also to empower parents, educators and the Internet industry to help children reach this goal. Livstid consisted of student material and a teacher’s manual with suggestions for activities.

5 Method

Livstid follows the fundamental values expressed in the Swedish Education Act and School Curriculum, LPO94¹⁰. It is based on the EU project SAFT–Safety Awareness, Facts and Tools¹¹, a cross-European project that promote the safe use of the Internet among children and young people.

The aim of SAFT is to reduce ‘risk’ behavior and promote responsible Internet users. It is supported by the EU Commission’s Internet Action Plan for a Safer Internet¹². The program has four main objectives:

- Fight-illegal content
- Tackle-unwanted and harmful content
- Promote-a safer environment
- Raise awareness

The SAFT program covers all online technologies, including mobile and broadband content, online games, peer-to-peer file transfer and all forms of real-time communications such as chat rooms and instant messages, primarily with the aim of improving protection for minors.

Microsoft Sweden decided not to address intellectual property ownership and use, as it is treated separately in other campaigns.

The group, formed by Microsoft, the Swedish Media Council and the National Agency for School Improvement, decided that Livstid should address the following important issues for Swedish schools.

¹⁰ Democracy and Fundamental Values, <http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/354/a/1257>

¹¹ <http://www.saftonline.org/>

¹² http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/index_en.htm

- **Netiquette:** “Citizenship online.” How to contribute to the online community in a positive and appropriate way. How to recognize and react to inappropriate behavior, like bullying. How to protect oneself from different types of threats from persons that use the Internet to engage potential victims and how to respond.
- **Integrity** – “Personal safety online”. How to protect and manage personal identity online, including display of private information (as opposed to expressing personal opinions and views) on forums, blogs, chat rooms, webcams, etc.
- **Criticism of the sources** – To critically check and interpret a document, an image or a statement. To find out if the source is accurate. To find out what is true or at least probable. The National Agency for Education has expressed the importance of criticism of the sources, printed as well as electronic. “Check the Source”¹³ is a special program within the Swedish Schoolnet¹⁴ that started in 1994 intended to be an aid for teaching children how to search for and evaluate webpages and other sources of information.

Focus groups with young people 12 to 15 years and teachers were formed for reference and input.

6 Cultural Issues and Localization of Content

Fundamentally, parenting a child in cyberspace requires the same techniques, time and involvement as parenting a child ‘in real life.’ Livstid encourages an open dialogue and discussions between teachers, parents and children about objectionable material and good behavior.

Ethical issues cannot be taught as a subject like history or math. It can only be learned through the student’s own reflection and understanding by “ethical dilemma discussions,” scenarios, role-playing or the like.

Laws, restrictions and regulations cannot create good morals—they can only express good ethics.

The use of Internet blocking software or other technologies are only technical safeguards and not the whole answer to the problem. These technologies are seldom applicable to languages other than English. You have to address many cultural issues in discussions regarding Internet safety and security.

The ‘moral rating systems’ and classifications used in ‘censorware’ and filters are based on fundamental Anglo-Saxon social values.

¹³ http://www.skolutveckling.se/skolnet/english/e_check.html

¹⁴ <http://www.skolutveckling.se/skolnet/english/index.html>



Fundamental social values differ between countries and between different societal groups. Each group has its own preferred styles and strategies for dealing with and managing ethical issues.

The differences among western countries are subtler than those between eastern and western, but in the right context, obvious. There are large regional differences in attitude within a country. For example, the request “Be civilized!” has one meaning

in the countryside and another in a suburb that is home to a large number of immigrants; nudity has one definition in Sweden and another in Ireland, etc.

Other materials concerning Internet safety and security were examined at an early stage in the project for a possible localization, but they were too focused on technology issues.

7 Launching

Livstid was pre-launched at daily luncheon seminars and one-to-one meetings with high-level managers and decision makers at the Almedalen Political Week in July 2005. Almedalen Political Week is the leading Swedish political event where Sweden’s party leaders traditionally launch their campaigns. It takes place every year in the beginning of July at Almedalen,¹⁵ in the city of Visby, on the island of Gotland.¹⁶

It started in 1968 and today, has expanded to more than 5,000 participants at 250 high-level public and invitation-only seminars and conferences. All the national political leaders are present, all major trade unions, professional and industrial organizations, various non-governmental associations, as well as public authorities and departments.

¹⁵ “Elm Valley”, which actually is a park in the town center.

¹⁶ Visby is an extremely well-preserved Swedish early medieval city with a network of narrow, cobbled streets. It was during the middle ages the centre of trade around the Baltic Sea. In 1995 Visby was put on UNESCO’s World Heritage list. <http://gotland.net/english/visby.asp>

The official launch of Livstid was at Skolforum,¹⁷ October 31 through November 2, 2005, at the Stockholm International Fairs. The show brings together more than 260 exhibitors and almost 20 000 visitors, all of whom are education professionals. Skolforum is the largest fair in the Nordic region.

Representatives from the whole spectrum of the Swedish school system—from pre-schools to universities—attend the seminars and the show. This year Skolforum had 18,844 visitors, ranging from teaching staff and head teachers, to administrative personnel and education policy-makers.

MSN Sweden AB and Microsoft Sweden AB collaborated on the Microsoft booth. A mix of GCI and Microsoft personnel and external experts—a principal, an IT pedagogue and two college students—teamed at the booth. They handed out the materials and answered questions about the teaching aid and IT-related questions and also demonstrated how schools can use MSN Spaces and Messenger 7.5.

The Swedish Media Council and the National Agency for School Improvement distributed the Livstid material at their own booths.

Around 2,500 copies of Livstid and 4,000 flyers were handed out at the show and 2,000 mouse pads with the Livstid logo were given away. The reach was approximately 10 percent of the 18,844 visitors.

8 Result

The project as a whole was a huge success. The first printed edition of 30,000 copies sold out in a couple of weeks, with a back-order of 14,000 copies. It also got extremely good reviews and huge press coverage.

The seminars at Almedalen were also a success. The goal was set at five to six participants per seminar during the week, and the seminars averaged 10 participants per day. Most of the participants were politicians, public officials and media. A number of one-to-one meetings with high-level political officials were also held.

The Livstid project has become one of the most successful citizenship projects ever for Microsoft Sweden. Microsoft shot directly to # 8 in policy and social related issues on the Top-20 list of the most successful opinion makers measured by press coverage by media intelligence company Agent25.

Microsoft surpassed Almega (an organization with 8,300 member companies supporting service companies in Sweden) and the Swedish blue collar trade union LO (an organization with two million members)

¹⁷ <http://www.skolforum.com/>

1. Svenskt Näringsliv	56
2. Apoteket	40
3. Lärarförbundet	40
4. Riksteatern	27
5. Timbro	22
6. Skattebetalarnas förening	14
7. TCO	14
8. Microsoft	12
9. Almega	11
10. Byggbranschen i samverkan	10
11. SSU	9
12. LO	7
13. BIL Sweden	6
14. ITPS	6
15. Motorbranschens Riksförbund	6
16. SACO	6
17. SCB	6
18. Hyresgästföreningen	5
19. Svensk Biblioteksforening	5
20. Vattenfall	5

The table shows number of media articles during the Almedalen week July 3 to 7. The survey is based on more than 700 sources (news media, blogs, party- and organizations web sites).

Livstid has also become Gleerups Utbildning's most successful teaching aid. The first printed edition of 30,000 copies sold-out in only three months and quickly had a backlog of 14,000 copies. A second edition of 30,000 copies is now on the market. Gleerups Utbildning estimates that the potential distribution is over 100,000 copies.

The Swedish Media Council will use Livstid at its annual regional training days during 2006. The pedagogical method in Livstid, as well as the material itself, has been adapted by the Department of Teacher Training at Uppsala University.

9 Where to get it

The Livstid teaching aid is free of charge (without payment being required) and distributed through Microsoft and the partners in the project. Distribution and marketing of the printed material is made possible by publishing house Gleerups Utbildning AB. The material is also available for download at:

<http://www.livstid.org/>

<http://www.microsoft.se/Livstid>

<http://www.gleerups.se/visatitel.asp?titelid=4106>

http://www.medieradet.se/templates/Shopindex_120.aspx

<http://www.skolutveckling.se/skolnet/kolla/index.shtml>

More information on the project (in Swedish only):

<http://www.microsoft.com/sverige/pr/articles/200506201.asp>

<http://www.microsoft.com/sverige/pr/articles/200602171.asp>

10 Discussion and Conclusions

10.1 Concerning the cooperation

The Livstid project involved actors within the whole Swedish educational cluster/triple helix. Industry representatives (Microsoft) and Government (the Media Council and National Agency for School Improvement) cooperated, and each actor contributed knowledge and networks to the project. The educational sector ('academy') did not contribute research, but experience and competence. It was also the target for the project.

The project was somewhat controversial among some groups, especially among some groups of policy makers and the government and, occasionally, the media. It is not considered politically correct that a multinational company should sponsor school textbooks and teaching aids. The experts and editors on the team, especially the teachers, were questioned by the media and accused of being 'Microsoft paid consultants' or similar. It was hard for many to realize that someone would be willing to participate in this kind of innovative cooperation to produce a material that is free of charge.

On the other hand, the resulting material would not have been as successful or high quality had it been produced as a commercial textbook or teaching aid. The budget is not official, but the production cost was much higher than what is standard for textbooks. A publishing house might have taken the risk, but most likely not. The governmental agency might have produced this type of material, but teaching aid production is not part of their 'core business.'

It is the author's strong belief that this type of high quality material and the success would not have been possible without the PR component.

In the end, it's not important who pays—it's the quality assurance and final result that counts. This type of cooperation within the 'educational innovation network' producing sponsored high-quality teaching aids and textbooks could most certainly be more common in the future.

10.2 Concerning the innovation journalism issue

In covering the social aspects of innovations and technology, media got low grades. If media had done its job professionally and not acted as megaphone for all these one-issue groups, Livstid would not have been necessary.

The author has talked to many journalists about Internet safety and security, but none had the knowledge or the interest to scrutinize the published scaremongering stories. The general knowledge and interest in discussing the consequences of new innovations on society was surprisingly low. Often, the journalists were biased and had preconceived ideas that a commercial company (and especially not Microsoft) was unable to act as a responsible citizen, or to produce a teaching aid without a 'secret motive'.

The one-issue organization had a much better reputation— perhaps thanks to better PR? The journalists were not able to see through these organizations' anti-commercial reputation. There definitely is an overwhelming bias that all voluntary organizations are good guys and all commercial actors are bad. They are, no doubt, working for well justifiable and simple goals, but their motives are not even questioned. Their media PR strategy is very well thought-out, with clear stories that contain all media archetypes: villains, heroes, victims and experts, that is exciting and easy to write.

There definitely is a need for innovation journalists who could see the whole picture; who could recognize the changed media landscape and the real opinion-makers; and have the knowledge too see through and scrutinize PR spin from seemingly harmless organizations.

Some conclusions:

- **Ask everyone—trust no one.** From an innovation journalistic view (or journalistic view in general) it is important to question all statements, especially if the facts are presented by voluntary organizations/groups with noble aims. Many claim to have a good purpose and good intentions, but as the number of organizations that is dependent on contributions and grants increases, all have the economic or political motive to strengthen their own position to get more aid/grants/support/political attention. All major organizations have their own PR and information departments.
- **Friends are found in completely new places.** PR companies and journalists often have the same goal nowadays: to give a different perspective of the truth. There is no longer a 'two front war' between media that sits on the 'truth,' and the 'others'. The (Swedish) media landscape is an arena with everything from journalists with their own political agenda and enterprising politicians to PR-consultants and lobbyists that work for a living. PR consultants are also humans with opinions and ethics.
- **Opinions belong to everyone.** Journalists have opinions, as all people do. With blogs and the Internet, the common man has (almost) the same power as traditional organizations. Journalists and media companies have to offer readers new, higher quality packages of custom-tailored content.

11 APPENDIX 1 – Actors in the Swedish Educational Cluster

11.1 The Swedish National Agency for School Improvement

The Swedish National Agency for School Improvement¹⁸ has the overall responsibility for, among other things, the use of IT and the Internet in education in pre-schools, schools and adult education. The agency initiates and supports local school development and improvement to ensure quality and equal opportunities for students.

The agency supports the use of IT in learning environments and spreads knowledge about the use of IT through its Web site. The agency was included in the latest Swedish IT Government Bill 2004/05:175 “Från IT-politik för samhället till politik för IT-samhället” – “From an ICT Policy for Society to a Policy for the ICT Society,” requested to support the further use of IT and Internet in schools.

11.2 The Swedish Media Council

The Swedish Media Council¹⁹ is a Committee of Inquiry in the Government Offices. Their task is to reduce the risk of the harmful effects of the media on children and young people. The Council has to give particular attention to portrayals of violence and pornography and to apply a clear gender perspective in its work. Children and adolescents must also be actively involved in the Council’s activities.

The Council’s remit covers all media with moving images like movies, TV, video, computer and TV games, and the Internet. It is also responsible for SAFT, an EU project for safer Internet use among children and teens.

The Media Council’s tasks are to:

- Act as an expert on developments in the media and the effects of the media on children and young people
- Follow research on the effects of the media and spread factual information and provide guidance
- Press for self-regulation in the media industry
- Work for increased media knowledge in schools

¹⁸ <http://www.skolutveckling.se/>

¹⁹ <http://www.medieradet.se/>

- Protect and strengthen children and young people in the new media landscape through cooperation with other actors
- Follow international developments and take part in international cooperation in its field

The Media Council continuously publishes reports and other material on developments in the media, media effects and the media situation of children and adolescents. The Council also follows research in its field.

12 Appendix 2 – The Swedish School System

The Swedish public school system is made up of compulsory and noncompulsory schooling. Non-compulsory schooling includes the preschool class, upper secondary schools and municipal adult education.

All education throughout the Swedish public school system is free. There is usually no charge to students or their parents for teaching materials, school meals, health services or transport.

12.1 Responsibility and governance

The Swedish school system is a goal-based system with a high degree of local responsibility. The main responsibility for education activities lies with the municipalities and authorities responsible for independent schools.

The Swedish Parliament and Government lay down the guiding principles for the curriculum, national objectives and guidelines for the public education system. The federal budget provides municipalities with a sum of money to carry out the various activities. Within the objectives and framework, each municipality determines how its schools are to be run and adopts a local school plan describing the funding, organization, development and evaluation of school activities. The principals of each school then draw up a local work plan in consultation with the school's teachers and other personnel.

The Swedish National Agency for Education evaluates, follows up and supervises the public school system. Every three years, the agency publishes a national development plan for schools.

12.2 The school year

The school (academic) year consists of two semesters. It typically begins at the end of August and runs to the beginning of June the following year, a total of about 40 weeks. The regular school week is five days, Monday through Friday. A longer holiday of just over two weeks is taken from around the 20th December to the beginning of January.

13 APPENDIX 3 – Photos



One of the luncheon seminars when launching the Livstid teaching aid on Internet safety at Almedalen Political Week, 3-9 July 2005.



Mr Fredrik Reinfeldt, MP and party chairman of the largest Swedish opposition party the Moderate Party, being interviewed at the launching of the Livstid teaching aid.



The Livstid booth at Skolforum 2005.



Launching the Surfa Lugnt Campaign on Internet security with Steve Ballmer April 29, 2005, in Grand Hotel close the Royal Castle in downtown Stockholm. Microsoft hosted a national campaign focusing on educating users about computer security. Title of the day in Sweden is “Surfa Lugnt”²⁰ (Safe Surfing). The campaign was launched April 29 in Grand Hotel close the Royal Castle in downtown Stockholm.

The campaign is organized by Microsoft in cooperation with the National Post- and Telecom Agency, the Swedish Emergency Management Agency, The 24/7 Agency Delegation, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the Swedish Data Inspection Board, The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, Svenska IT-företagens Organisation AB (the Association of Swedish IT Companies), Dataföreningen (the Swedish Association of Computer Users), I-Stiftelsen (IIS) (the Internet Infrastructure Foundation), The Swedish Bankers’ Association, TeliaSonera, Symantec, F-Secure and IBM.

²⁰ <http://www.surfalugnt.se/>

The launch's keynote speakers were Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, Swedish Minister for Communications Ulrica Messing and Microsoft partners like F-secure and Symantec.

Surfa Lugnt focuses on user security areas such as virus, spam and infringement.

14 Appendix 4 – Acknowledgements

Project leaders

Jan Sandred	Project leader, GCI Sweden
Anders Johansson	Corporate Affairs Manager, Microsoft Sweden

Editors and experts

Pernilla Bjarman	Teacher Swedish, Swedish as a second language, Bolandsskolan, Uppsala
Daniel Boije	Swedish Media Council, Webmaster,
Ulf Engström	Principal Östhammars skolområde
Anette Holmqvist	Swedish National Agency for School Improvement, Kolla Källan
Peter Karlberg	Swedish National Agency for School Improvement
Karin Larsson	Swedish Media Council, Project leader SAFT
Christina Szekely	Swedish National Agency for School Improvement, Head of Skoldatanätet subdivision

Design and production

iDS Reklambyrå

Distribution

Gleerups Utbildning, Malmö

Booth staff Skolforum

Marie Lundmark	Booth Manager, GCI Sweden
Lena-Stina Eriksson	IT pedagogue, Olandsskolan, Alunda
Karl Engström	College student, Katedalskolan Uppsala.
Erik Sundsten	College student, Katedalskolan Uppsala.

Others involved in the project

Fredrik Wallner	Marketing Manager, MSN.
Jessica Börjel	MSN, training.

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