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## DIVERSE NEWS FOR YOUNG MINDS: SCANDINAVIAN PERSPECTIVES

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*This study analyzes the visual, content, and digital diversity in newspapers for children in the Scandinavian region, focusing on Aftenposten Junior (Norway), SvD Junior (Sweden), and Postimees Juunior (Estonia). Our findings show that all three newspapers demonstrate a commitment to diversity in their content and visuals, but their approaches vary. Aftenposten Junior focuses on environmental and political issues, while SvD Junior emphasizes cultural diversity and social justice. Postimees Juunior has a stronger focus on children's interests and activities. The study highlights the importance of diversity in newspapers for children and provides insights for publishers and editors to engage young readers through relevant content and visuals.*

**Keywords:** visual diversity, content diversity, digital diversity, children newspapers, Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior, Postimees Juunior.

### КОНТЕНТНЕ РОЗМАЇТТЯ У ВИДАННЯХ ДЛЯ ДІТЕЙ: ДОСВІД СКАНДИНАВІЇ

*У дослідженні ми розглядаємо контентне (візуальне, цифрове, змістове) різноманіття в газетах для дітей шляхом порівняльного аналізу видань Aftenposten Junior (Норвегія), SvD Junior (Швеція) та Postimees Juunior (Естонія). Наші результати показують, що всі три газети продемонстрували прагнення до підтримки розмаїття у своєму контенті та візуальному оформленні, але їхні підходи відрізняються. Aftenposten Junior більшою мірою зосереджується на екологічних та політичних питаннях, тоді як SvD Junior наголошує на культурному розмаїтті та соціальній справедливості. Postimees Juunior приділяє більше уваги інтересам та діяльності дітей. Наше дослідження підкреслює важливість диверсифікації контентного середовища в газетах для дітей і дає уявлення про те, як різні видання підходять до розв'язання цього питання.*

**Ключові слова:** візуальне різноманіття, контентне різноманіття, цифрове різноманіття, дитячі газети, Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior, Postimees Juunior.

**Introduction.** Newspapers for children have gained increasing popularity in recent years, with many media outlets recognizing the importance of engaging young readers and promoting media literacy. Aftenposten Junior [1], SvD Junior [2], and Postimees Juunior [3] are three such newspapers that have emerged in Norway, Sweden, and Estonia, respectively. These newspapers provide a unique platform for children to access news and information that is relevant to their lives and experiences.

The *relevance* of this research lies in the increasing importance of media literacy and civic engagement in today's society. Children are growing up in a media-saturated world where they are constantly exposed to news and information from various sources. Newspapers for children provide a unique platform for young readers to access news and information that is relevant to their lives and experiences, and to develop critical thinking skills.

The *novelty* of this research lies in the comparative analysis of three newspapers for children from the Scandinavian region. While there have been studies on newspapers for children in general, there has been limited research on the similarities and differences among

newspapers from different countries and regions. By examining the approaches of Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior, and Postimees Juunior, this research provides insights into the ways in which newspapers for children can be tailored to meet the needs and interests of different audiences.

Furthermore, the study examines not only the content diversity but also the visual and digital diversity of these newspapers. The inclusion of digital features and interactive elements is becoming increasingly important in engaging young readers and promoting media literacy, and this study provides insights into the approaches taken by these newspapers in this regard.

The *subject* of the study is newspapers for children, specifically Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior, and Postimees Juunior. The *object* of the study is the diversity in visual content and digital features in these newspapers, and how they promote media literacy and civic engagement among young readers.

*The objectives of the study are:*

1. To analyze the visual design of each newspaper for children, including the use of illustrations, infographics, and other visual elements, and to identify the ways in which these design elements contribute to the overall user experience.

2. To analyze the digital diversity of each newspaper for children, including the use of digital tools and platforms, and to identify the ways in which these digital elements enhance the user experience.

**Methodology.** In conducting the comparative analysis of Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior, and Postimees Juunior, we first identified the criteria for evaluating visual, content, and digital diversity. We then systematically reviewed and analyzed the publications, focusing on the selected criteria.

For visual diversity, we evaluated the use of images, colors, and typography in the publications. For content diversity, we looked at the themes and topics covered, as well as the representation of diverse perspectives and voices. For digital diversity, we assessed the extent of digital interactivity and engagement offered by each publication.

After completing the analysis, we compared the findings across the three publications, highlighting similarities and differences in their visual, content, and digital diversity. We also identified potential areas for improvement and offered suggestions for future research in this area.

**Results and discussion.** Since the early 2000s, a new “children’s digital media culture” has been forming on the Internet, which is shaped by technological, demographic, and market forces [4, p. 145]. The format of children’s newspapers differs from that of adult newspapers, as they are designed to be more accessible and engaging for younger readers. Children’s newspapers often use simple language, vivid imagery, and interactive features to present the news in a way that is easy to understand [5, p. 109].

There is research that explores the effects of news tailored for children, which is designed for a specific age group between eight and twelve. The study of NRK Supernytt and Aftenposten Junior aims to examine how news tailored to children affects the news picture [6, p. 11]. The research suggests that children are highly susceptible to the influence of news, and may struggle to discern that news is not an accurate reflection of reality, but rather a selection of events that are shaped and angled. Therefore, the content of children’s news is crucial for their understanding and development [7, p. 43]. The literature review highlights the need to differentiate between news for children and news that is not designed specifically for them. This distinction is made by using the term ‘adult news’ to describe the latter. [8; 9]. J. Matthews writes about a case study of the BBC children’s news program, Newsround, and its production. The study examines how the culture of journalists shapes their understanding of the young audience and how their view of children’s cognitive abilities, interests, and relationship to the news program affects news practices [10]. Many aspects of children’s relationship with media in general and news in particular have not yet been explored [8, p. 255].

Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior, and Postimees Juunior are similar in their mission to provide quality news and information to children, but they differ in their approach to engaging young readers. Aftenposten Junior, for example, is known for its coverage of current events, culture, and entertainment, and aims to promote critical thinking and media literacy among its readers [11]. SvD Junior, on the other hand, focuses on news and feature articles, with a particular emphasis on science and technology [12]. Postimees Juunior aims to foster an interest in reading and writing among children, and encourages young readers to submit their own articles and stories [13].

Despite these differences, all three newspapers play an important role in promoting media literacy and civic engagement among young readers. Research has shown that children who read newspapers are more likely to be engaged in civic activities, have better critical thinking skills, and are more informed about the world around them [14]. In addition, newspapers for children can help bridge the gap between generations by encouraging parents and children to discuss news and current events together. While there has been some research on the emergence of newspapers for children and their impact on media literacy and civic engagement, there has been little comparative analysis of specific newspapers in different countries [15].

With the rise of digital media, newspapers for children have adapted to provide digital content, interactive features, and engaging visuals to appeal to their target audience [16]. Newspapers for children have undergone significant changes over the years to remain relevant and engaging in a world where digital media is increasingly dominant [17; 18].

We know that almost all Norwegian households have the Internet, and that Norwegian children spend much of their time there [19]. This gives Norwegian children almost endless opportunities to obtain all the information they want, and they spend much of their time on websites that offer this [19]. Aftenposten Junior provides a mix of news stories, features, and opinion pieces, all tailored to the interests and reading level of its target audience. It was created to fill the gap in the market for high-quality news and current events reporting for children.

*Aftenposten Junior* launch coincided with the beginning of the trial of the person responsible for the terrorist attack that took place in the government quarter of Oslo and on the island of Utøya in July 2011. This event influenced the newspaper's initial issues, which were dedicated to explaining complex and confusing events to children [20].

The editors of Aftenposten Junior constantly receive difficult questions from children that they strive to answer [21]. To ensure that they provide content that resonates with their audience, the editorial team conducts regular audience behavior research [21]. They analyze the product and the audience's reaction to it, and they continue to study their readers' needs. Through surveys and focus groups, the editorial team identifies the most challenging words for children and attempts to explain them in accessible language.

To make the newspaper engaging and visually appealing to children, Aftenposten Junior uses illustrations, bright infographics, and cartoons. They make use of graphic design tools to convey news in different formats, such as fact boxes, captions, and interviews. By utilizing these techniques, the newspaper has become a success, and it is now used by both children and adults, including non-native speakers of Norwegian [21].

One of the notable features of Aftenposten Junior is its use of visual content to engage its young readers. The newspaper employs a mix of photographs, illustrations, and infographics to support its stories, making it visually appealing and easy to read. Figure 1 shows an example of the Aftenposten Junior advertising campaign.

In addition to its print edition, Aftenposten Junior has a digital version that includes interactive features such as videos, quizzes, and games. The newspaper's digital content is designed to complement the print edition, providing a more immersive and interactive experience for its readers. This approach helps to cater to the needs and preferences of young readers who are increasingly consuming news and media through digital platforms.

Aftenposten Junior is a magazine that targets children between the ages of 8 and 13 and has a staff of six people working on its editorial content. The magazine has adapted to the



*Figure 1 – An example of the Aftenposten Junior advertising campaign*

digital era and during the COVID-19 school lockdown in Norway, 264,693 unique readers accessed Aftenposten Junior in Aftenposten's e-reader. The magazine's circulation has also grown significantly since its launch in 2012, with a circulation of 13,698 in that year and a circulation of 30,171 in 2019 [22]. This experience led the editorial team to create a dedicated digital product for schools, where teachers can easily find and share content with their students. The Aftenposten Junior team is now building a complete educational resource after conducting extensive UX research [22].

Another aspect that sets Aftenposten Junior apart from other newspapers for children is its content diversity. The newspaper covers a range of topics, from national and international news to culture, science, and technology. It also includes opinion pieces written by young readers, which provides a platform for them to express their views and engage with current affairs. This approach to content diversity helps to broaden the readers' horizons and promote critical thinking and media literacy.

Some examples of the visual and content elements in Aftenposten Junior include:

Visuals:

- The use of photos and illustrations to support news stories and features.
- Infographics that help to explain complex issues in an easy-to-understand way, such as graphics on climate change or the workings of the human brain.
- A consistent design and layout, which makes it easy for young readers to navigate and engage with the content.

Content:

- A mix of news stories on both national and international events, such as coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. presidential election, and the climate crisis.
- Feature articles on a range of topics, such as profiles of inspiring young people, interviews with authors and artists, and explorations of different cultures.
- Opinion pieces written by young readers, which offer a platform for them to express their views on current affairs and social issues.

In terms of its digital content, Aftenposten Junior has introduced various interactive features that help to engage young readers. Aftenposten Junior School is a digital news service designed for children and young people, with content specifically developed for

primary school students [23]. The platform aims to make it easier for teachers to incorporate news into their lessons by providing age-appropriate and engaging news stories. In addition to its digital news service and print edition, Aftenposten Junior also produces a podcast for children called “Explained Junior.” The podcast aims to explain news stories in a simple and engaging way for children who may have difficulty understanding complex news topics. Each episode covers an interesting news story that is relevant to children [23].

In conclusion, Aftenposten Junior’s visual, content, and digital diversity helps to make it a standout newspaper for children. The newspaper’s engaging visuals, diverse content, and innovative digital features make it an accessible and engaging platform for young readers to learn about and engage with current events and news.

SvD Junior is a Swedish newspaper for children that has been in circulation since 2016. The newspaper is published by Svenska Dagbladet, a Swedish daily newspaper [24]. Like Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior also strives to present news and current events to children in an easy-to-understand way. According to a survey on children’s internet habits in Sweden, Swedish kids rarely read daily newspapers on the internet. In detail, six percent of the 11 to 19-year-old boys and girls read daily newspapers online every day [25]. Projects like SvD Junior are trying to change that [26].

One of the most notable features of SvD Junior is its use of vivid and colorful visuals. The newspaper’s pages are filled with eye-catching illustrations and photos that are sure to capture the attention of young readers. The magazine also features crossword puzzles, quizzes, easy-to-cook recipes, and an “ask the experts” section where children can ask questions on various topics. SvD Junior is bold in its coverage of politics, with popular Swedish officials, such as the Prime Minister, often serving as experts on the subject. See Figure 2.



Figure 2 – An example of an SvD Junior edition

SvD Junior provides access to experts who can answer children’s questions about various topics, from emotions to science. The magazine aims to encourage reading and provide a basis for discussion among children, their families, and their peers. The digital version of SvD Junior is also noteworthy. The newspaper’s website features interactive content that engages readers in a more dynamic way.

In terms of digital diversity, SvD Junior is also available as a podcast. The podcast features narrated versions of articles from the newspaper, making it accessible to children who prefer to listen rather than read. Additionally, the podcast includes interviews with experts and celebrities, providing a more diverse range of content.

SvD Junior has launched SvD Junior School, a service that provides 8-page weekly magazines and digital tools to help teachers and schools use the newspaper as a teaching tool for students in grades 3–6 [27]. The service also aims to provide equal access to quality journalism for all children, regardless of background, and is available for free trial during the fall semester. Each issue contains articles on current events, accompanied by a workbook with tasks linked to the curriculum [28]. There's also a news quiz to help kids improve their general knowledge. The service is available as an e-newspaper through a web browser, and it's free to try for a limited time. To try Junior School, interested parties can enter their contact details on the website to receive a link to the product.

In addition, SvD Junior features a “Reader Reporter” section where young readers can submit their own articles, drawings, and photographs to be published in the newspaper. This not only encourages children to engage with current events and develop their writing and artistic skills but also gives them a sense of ownership and belonging in the publication.

Visual content plays a crucial role in engaging the readers of SvD Junior. The publication uses a variety of visual elements to supplement its articles and make the reading experience more dynamic and interactive. For example, they use videos and audio links that allow readers to watch and listen to stories, as well as view images and graphics that visually represent the content. In addition to traditional images and photographs, SvD Junior also uses illustrations and small comic strips to convey information and add a touch of humor to the content. The publication also uses list articles (listicles) that break down stories into smaller, more easily digestible pieces, which are accompanied by visuals that further enhance the reading experience. All of these visual elements work together to make the publication more engaging and accessible to its target audience of younger readers.

With media literacy skills, children can evaluate and analyze the information they receive, understand the influence of media on society and culture, and make informed decisions about their media use. Media literacy also helps children identify and avoid misinformation, propaganda, and harmful content, empowering them to become responsible and active members of a global community [29]. In addition to providing news and current events to young readers, SvD Junior is also committed to developing media literacy skills and educating children about the importance of responsible journalism. The publication actively covers issues such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine and provides explanations and guidance on how to identify and combat fake news. SvD Junior also strives to promote social responsibility and activism among young readers by highlighting the struggles of their peers in other countries. By addressing complex political and social issues in an age-appropriate way, SvD Junior is helping to cultivate a more informed and engaged generation. See Figures 3, 4.

*Postimees Juunior* is an Estonian newspaper for children, which has been published since 2019. The paper is produced by the leading Estonian daily, Postimees. Postimees Juunior has a clear mission – to promote the development of an independent and democratic society through high-quality journalism for children. The publication focuses on various topics, including culture, history, science, environment, and social issues.

One of the unique features of Postimees Juunior is that the paper includes a “Fact Check” section, which aims to promote media literacy among children. In this section, the paper examines stories from different angles and sources to help children understand the importance of verifying information before accepting it as true. This is particularly important in today's world, where children are increasingly exposed to digital media and need to be equipped with the skills to navigate it safely and effectively [30].

In addition to the printed newspaper, Postimees Juunior has an online presence with an extensive archive of articles, videos, and interactive features. The paper's website is also



Figure 3 – Example of materials for the fight against Russian fakes in connection with the Russian invasion of Ukraine (1)

mobile-friendly, allowing children to read the news on-the-go. In addition to the visual and content diversity, Postimees Juunior also offers a variety of digital features to enhance the reading experience for children. This makes the learning experience more engaging and entertaining, and encourages children to read more.

The digital version includes all the articles from the print edition, as well as interactive features like videos, photo galleries, and clickable links. This allows children to read the newspaper on their own devices, at their own pace, and with the ability to explore the content more deeply through multimedia elements. It is important to note that media literacy also includes the ability to critically evaluate and navigate digital content, such as news websites and social media. Postimees Juunior's success in providing an easy-to-navigate and varied digital platform for children is a great example of how media literacy can be supported and encouraged in younger audiences. By providing a positive and engaging digital experience, children can learn how to effectively and safely interact with digital media.

In general, Postimees Juunior covers a diverse range of topics, from advice to aspiring writers to the procedure of archaeological excavations [31; 32]. Postimees Juunior appears to have a diverse range of topics that cover a variety



Figure 4 – Example of materials for the fight against Russian fakes in connection with the Russian invasion of Ukraine (2)

of interests and curiosities for its young readers. In addition to providing news and current events, the publication also includes topics related to science, art, history, culture, and lifestyle, offering a rich and educational experience for its readers.

When comparing *Aftenposten Junior*, *SvD Junior*, and *Postimees Juunior*, it's clear that all three publications share a common goal: to provide engaging, informative, and age-appropriate content for children. However, each publication has its own unique style and approach to achieving this goal.

In terms of visual diversity, all three publications make use of colorful illustrations and infographics to help convey complex topics in a more accessible manner. In terms of content diversity, all three publications cover a wide range of topics, including news, culture, and science. *Aftenposten Junior* tends to focus more on Norwegian news and culture, while *SvD Junior* and *Postimees Juunior* have a more international scope. *SvD Junior* often includes articles on world events and global issues, while *Postimees Juunior* has a particular focus on the Baltic region and the Nordic countries.

Digital diversity is another area where these publications differ. *Aftenposten Junior* has a strong digital presence, with an interactive website and an e-paper version of the newspaper. *SvD Junior* also has a digital version of the newspaper, which includes extra features such as audio recordings and videos. *Postimees Juunior* has a website that is primarily used for publishing additional content that doesn't fit in the print version of the newspaper.

Overall, while these publications all have a common goal, each one approaches it in its own unique way. The visual, content, and digital diversity of *Aftenposten Junior*, *SvD Junior*, and *Postimees Juunior* all contribute to making them engaging and informative sources of news and information for children.

A comparative analysis of the digital diversity of *Aftenposten Junior*, *SvD Junior*, and *Postimees Juunior* shows that all three publications have embraced digital platforms to reach their young audiences.

*Aftenposten Junior* offers a dedicated digital version for schools, which teachers can use to share content with their students. The digital version includes interactive elements like quizzes, videos, and animations to engage young readers. The publication has also opened up free access to its website during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide reliable information to children. *SvD Junior* also offers a digital version, which includes a wide range of multimedia content, such as videos, animations, and interactive quizzes. The publication has developed its own app, which includes features like daily news updates, quizzes, and a section for children to submit their own news stories. *Postimees Juunior* offers a digital version that is available to subscribers of the print edition. The digital version includes multimedia content, such as videos and interactive quizzes.

Overall, the digital diversity of these publications reflects a commitment to engaging young readers through interactive and engaging content, and demonstrates the potential for digital platforms to enhance the experience of reading the news for children.

**Conclusions and discussions.** There are several reasons why our study is relevant to media studies. Firstly, these newspapers for children are important platforms that provide age-appropriate news and information to young readers, helping them understand complex events in their own language. Secondly, the study is relevant because it compares the visual, content, and digital diversity of newspapers for children across different countries and cultural contexts. This comparison provides insight into the ways in which newspapers for children adapt to the specific needs of their readers and how they incorporate digital technologies to reach a wider audience.

Our study contributes to the growing body of literature on media and information literacy, which is becoming increasingly important in a world where young people are exposed to a vast amount of information from various sources. By analyzing the three newspapers' visual and content diversity, the study helps understand how to present information in

ways that engage and inform children, while also promoting critical thinking and media literacy.

Finally, the study also highlights the importance of creating digital versions of newspapers for children, given the growing use of digital technologies among young people. With the increasing use of smartphones and tablets among young readers, there is a growing need for innovative and engaging digital content that is both informative and entertaining.

Through a comparative analysis of *Aftenposten Junior*, *SvD Junior*, and *Postimees Juunior*, we have seen how these publications have successfully utilized visual and content diversity to create engaging and informative news stories for young readers. Another important aspect of digital diversity is the use of multimedia elements to enhance the reading experience. By incorporating infographics, photos, videos, and interactive elements, these newspapers have been able to create an immersive and engaging reading experience that appeals to children.

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## КОНТЕНТНЕ РОЗМАЇТТЯ У ВИДАННЯХ ДЛЯ ДІТЕЙ: ДОСВІД СКАНДИНАВІЇ

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**Вступ.** Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior та Postimees Juunior – три газети, що з'явилися в Норвегії, Швеції та Естонії відповідно. Предметом дослідження є газети для дітей – Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior та Postimees Juunior. Об'єктом дослідження є різноманітність візуального контенту та цифрових функцій цих газет, а також те, як вони сприяють підвищенню медіаграмотності та громадянської активності серед юних читачів.

**Актуальність.** Хоча існують дослідження газет для дітей загалом, вивчення схожості та відмінностей між газетами з різних країн і регіонів обмаль. Досліджуючи підходи Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior та Postimees Juunior, ми отримуємо уявлення, як газети для дітей можуть бути адаптовані до потреб та інтересів різних аудиторій.

**Методологія.** Для проведення порівняльного аналізу видань Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior та Postimees Junior ми спочатку визначили критерії оцінки візуального, текстового та цифрового різноманіття. Потім систематично переглянули та проаналізували публікації, зосередившись на обраних критеріях. Для візуального різноманіття ми оцінювали ви-

користання зображень у публікаціях. Для текстового різноманіття розглядали тематику та висвітлені питання, а також представлення різних точок зору. Щодо цифрового розмаїття, ми оцінювали ступінь цифрової інтерактивності та залучення, які пропонує кожне видання. Після завершення аналізу порівняли результати трьох видань, виокремивши подібності та відмінності в їхньому візуальному, текстовому та цифровому розмаїтті.

**Результати.** Завдяки порівняльному аналізу *Aftenposten Junior*, *SvD Junior* та *Postimees Juunior* ми виявили, як ці видання успішно використовують візуальне та текстове розмаїття для створення цікавих та інформативних новин для юних читачів. Іншим важливим аспектом цифрового різноманіття є впровадження мультимедійних елементів для покращення читацького досвіду.

**Висновки.** Дослідження проливає світло на виклики та можливості дизайну газет для дітей, беручи до уваги необхідність візуального та текстового розмаїття для утримання уваги юних читачів.

**Ключові слова:** *візуальне різноманіття, контентне різноманіття, цифрове різноманіття, дитячі газети, Aftenposten Junior, SvD Junior, Postimees Juunior.*

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