

Title: "The E-book Market for Children in Sweden: Possibilities and Concerns"

According to recent alarming reports, the reading skills among young readers in Sweden have shown to be in a steady pace of decline for the latest five years. This has helped to raise a political awareness about the importance of reading among all the institutions involved in producing and distributing children's literature in Sweden. In this context, the digital formats on the market are sometimes discussed as a possible means to reach the non-readers by new and different means to the traditional paper book, while the critics tend to see all digitized media as threats to the development of children's reading skills.

The debaters often express an ambivalence that specifically addresses the aspect of gaming, assumed as children's preferred use of digital tools. Some of the concerns are, for instance, that reading on a tablet will send the wrong message about what reading is or create distracted readers. Other concerns are that the professional skills of the publishing houses will be compromised in the process of leaving too much of the production conditions to companies outside of the business, such as technical engineers or internet operators. As with most issues where children are the target audience, these discussions tend to become more invested with moral dilemmas than when only adults are concerned.

Alongside this discussion, there is a debate on the Swedish book market about the possible futures for the e-book market. Statistics show that e-sales are still diminutive and publishers hesitate to invest large sums of money in products that may never become successful on the market. In this paper, some of the discernible attitudes towards e-formats for children's books will be discussed in the effort to map out the different concerns and possibilities connected with e-books from the viewpoint of the debate on children's reading skills.

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