

Sweden in figures

Sara Brinkberg, Statistics Sweden

1. Statistics Sweden has produced the Statistical Yearbook of Sweden for one hundred years. In 1914 the first yearbook was printed, and the final edition of the yearbook was released last year in 2014. During these hundred years, the Statistical Yearbook of Sweden changed little. It grew in number of pages, shrunk again, came with added colours, graphs, photographs and maps. But it was still a printed book of about the same size and content.
2. In recent years the Statistical yearbook of Sweden has been harder to distribute and sell, due to a lower demand for the book. In 2013, only 700 copies were sold, half the number sold just three years before. Since 2005, sales have decreased by 70 percent.
3. With that in mind, and after celebrating the hundredth birthday of the yearbook, the Director General decided that it was time to come up with a new way to make statistics easy to understand and use for a broader audience. The Communication Department was assigned the task to create a new concept to present a yearly picture of Sweden in figures to the public. This gave us the opportunity and resources to rethink many of our communication strategies.
4. Information technologies have driven changes in the ways users want to consume statistics. With the increasing flow of information, users need to get information quickly before digging deeper into reports and databases. Information needs to be simple to find, fast to interpret, and easy to dig deeper into.
5. These expectations are especially present among the younger audience, having grown up in the new media landscape. Most people aged 15-19 have never heard about Statistics Sweden. This problem is especially severe because we also encounter difficulties trying to collect data from that same audience. Therefore, we need to find ways to communicate why it is important to contribute to official statistics, and how these young people can benefit from using our data.
6. The Statistical Yearbook of Sweden aimed to present a yearly picture of Sweden to the public, but also to make the statistical information easily accessible for a broader audience. The Yearbook no longer fulfills these purposes, and we need to find new strategies to make the statistical content easier to find, use and understand for a broader audience.
7. In September 2014 the new concept for Sweden in figures was approved by the Director General. The base of the concept is a digitally presented selection of statistics. The concept also includes a yearly release of a publication with the same

name, accompanied by communication activities aiming to compel the public to discover Sweden in figures on the web.

8. To be able to reach a younger audience, an important target group for the project is teachers. Sweden in figures aims to present our statistics so that a 15 year-old will understand them. The basis for the selection of statistics in Sweden in figures is the social studies curriculum for 10 to 15- year olds, which coincides with the most frequently asked questions from the public to our customer service. Sweden in figures is thus both directed towards a younger audience and an unaccustomed user (non-expert user) of statistics.
9. Sweden in figures includes:
 - New material on the web: a selection of statistics based on the social science curriculum for 10-15 year olds, presented in a simple graphical, interactive and interesting way.
 - Close cooperation with teachers and their classes throughout the project, writing a teacher's guide that explains how to use the material in class.
 - A new concept for study visits to Statistics Sweden.
 - Strategically planned communication in channels such as social media, and a yearly release of a publication called Sweden in figures, highlighting parts of the material on the web.
10. The team working with Sweden in figures is based in the Communication Department and started working together in the beginning of 2015. The work is in close cooperation with IT and the departments for statistics production, for example using "lab-days" where we develop content together.
11. In October the first version of Sweden in figures will be launched at scb.se, and in November the first issue of the publication with the same name will be released. In 2016, we will continue to build Sweden in figures on the web, and will also plan four digital releases of statistics during the year, summing up to the publication Sweden in figures at the end of the year.
12. The effects we want to see is that Sweden in figures helps us extend our democratic duty and make the statistical information we produce and publish accessible for as many people as possible. We hope that it will help the public to use statistics as a tool to better analyse and understand the world, build argumentation, critically examine statements and crush myths.