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**You've got mail. Is that all there is?**

**- Use of the Internet for literary studies in Swedish university education and research<sup>1</sup>**

**by Erik Peurell**

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*In February 2000 a survey was conducted among scholars teaching literature at universities and university colleges in Sweden. The survey consisted of 23 questions dealing with the scholars' use of the Internet in their teaching and research. The questions were answered by 105 of the 176 scholars to whom they were distributed. The survey shows that the respondents seem to be comfortable with using the Internet for communication, whereas they very rarely use it for information retrieval or dissemination of research results. The results of the survey are discussed in terms of research traditions within the field of the humanities.*

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The digital mediation of literary texts seems to change the very premises of interpretation, which has led some scholars to view the new medium with skepticism. In her introduction to an anthology on digital publishing, Kathryn Sutherland summed up the protective attitude of some actors in the literary field: "It is as if the unfixing of text from its printed fixity destroys its traditionally valued capacity to enter and transform (unfix) the reader."<sup>2</sup>

There has been a great deal of research on literature made with computers, especially using large databases and with computers serving as tools for statistical operations. Since this kind of positivistic research was developed during the time when post-structural theory made its breakthrough, computer-aided literary research was not regarded as very interesting. This was long before the Internet became a household word and the World Wide Web was opened to the public, putting a powerful tool for retrieving and publishing information into the hands of Everyman. Now the computer as a research tool has become especially interesting to literary scholars. From the very early days of what would become the Internet, the medium has been used for full text publication of previously printed works of art of historical significance. The number of Web sites with information about particular writers and full text digital versions of their poetry or novels has increased since the introduction of the WWW. Not at the same continuous, exponential rate as Web sites in general, but rather step by step; certain limited projects have begun and ended, while the growth of other unlimited projects has stagnated as the charm of novelty wore off. Even though such projects may become dormant, they do not disappear from the Web. Today there are several Swedish writers

presented on Web sites along with their novels, short stories and poems. The question is to what extent do scholars of Swedish literature use these resources?

Even though the first use of the Internet in Sweden was academic – through SUNET (the Swedish University Network) – it was not until the introduction of the WWW that online publishing came into general use by scholars in all fields. Before that, the Internet was a workshop used almost exclusively by teachers and students in computer science departments at a few universities. That has changed. A law was enacted in 1997 that requires all Swedish universities to, at minimum, inform the public about their current research via the Internet, where you will now find several online databanks containing abstracts and full texts from all research branches at a certain university, or containing material from a specific area, such as economics, collected from researchers all over Sweden. A second question is to what extent do scholars of Swedish literature avail themselves of the opportunity to disseminate their research results over the Web?

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## 1. Previous research in the area

It is difficult to find earlier research on use of the Internet in Swedish academic environments. There are current statistics on general Internet use in Sweden, although detailed case studies are as yet scarce. The articles are mainly oriented towards questions about how things are changing. The discussion about the periodicals crisis (university libraries having severe difficulties bearing the cost of subscriptions to scholarly journals) is beginning to reach beyond the inner circles of scholars and librarians. Recently there have been introductory articles published in various specialist journals, for example by Ingegerd Rabow, who describes how publication and access to medical research could be mainly digital and online in the future to stem the rising tide of costs for institutional libraries,<sup>3</sup> and by Pernilla Flyg and Gun Larsson, who write about how printed archaeological reports are made accessible on the Internet by publication of the catalogue of the Library of the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, including hyperlinks to digitally published items.<sup>4</sup> Ingemar Bohlin thoroughly discusses the arguments for and against electronic scholarly publishing from the point of view of scientific theory in an article where he penetrates primarily Anglo-American literature about the process of change in the academic publishing system. Bohlin says that even though the potential consequences are significant, the shift from traditional printed publishing to an essentially digital publishing system is not generally understood by scholars.<sup>5</sup> As Susan Hockey puts it: "We are only beginning to understand the full potential of this new medium, but we can build on the experience gained in the use of electronic texts for specific projects to identify some issues that need to be considered in achieving the vision of the global electronic library that will serve the needs of humanities scholarship in the next century."<sup>6</sup>

To this end we must have some concrete investigations of the impact of electronically published materials, how scholars are actually using the medium, and to what extent scholars use online published texts or publish online themselves, but these are not easy to find. Most of the papers and articles that have been written focus on the author's view of the existing possibilities and the problems that must be resolved.

Internationally, primarily in the USA, you will find interesting studies of early use of Internet resources in the academic world, especially in information and documentation studies, although focus has been on the use of scientific journals, online databases, and catalogues. When it comes to full text publishing on the Web of individual works or the complete works of particular writers, essays and articles mainly deal with various aspects of quality and how certain problems could be solved, or with presentations of planned or recently begun hypertext edition projects.<sup>7</sup> There is another problem in addition to that of finding relevant studies of Internet use, which is that most existing references are already somewhat dated. It is not easy to find articles on these issues written in the last few years, when the impact of online publishing would be possible to trace. One of many conference and workshop

proceedings published in the area is *The Impact of Electronic Publishing on the Academic Community* (1998), which includes articles by the founder of the open physics archive at Los Alamos, Paul Ginsparg, and by psychologist and electronic publishing missionary Steve Harnad, co-authored by Matt Hemus.<sup>8</sup> The economic aspects of electronic journals versus printed journals are often discussed by Andrew M. Odlyzko, for example in the anthology *Technology and Scholarly Communication* (1999).<sup>9</sup> Two sections of that volume are dedicated to empirical studies. One deals only with the economics of electronic publishing, while the other contains a couple of interesting articles, including a presentation of the results of a questionnaire sent to history and economics faculty at five private liberal arts colleges and one public research university about their use of a certain online journal archive published in spring 1996.<sup>10</sup> The study revealed that historians use e-mail and the World Wide Web less than economists do.<sup>11</sup> Also very interesting is an article presenting early findings on the use of online books and other online resources at Columbia University, and on attitudes toward online books (in this instance, online books are digitally republished full text versions of previously printed books).<sup>12</sup> Especially interesting is that the authors were able to follow usage over an extended period, from 1994 to 1997. They report that use of online reference books has declined over time and suggest that this has to do with the development of better Web graphics with better performance and more user-friendly formats than the text-based versions offered at Columbia.<sup>13</sup> However, during a period of 75 days from mid-March to the end of May 1997, online scholarly monographs were used nearly three times as often as the printed versions of the same titles were used during the entire 1997 spring semester.<sup>14</sup>

Other important articles by Hamad and Odlyzko are published in the ASIS volume *Scholarly Publishing: The Electronic Frontier* (1996).<sup>15</sup> It includes a version of Odlyzko's proposal for a combined electronic journal preprint and referee system. Another important anthology containing many very interesting articles on for example "Using Computer Networks for Research" and "Moving Academic Disciplines Online" as well as "Using Computer Networks to Disseminate Knowledge" is *Computer Networking and Scholarly Communication in the Twenty-First-Century University* (1996).<sup>16</sup> Several of the most interesting articles have been published in *JASIS* (*Journal of the American Society for Information Studies*), where a couple of surveys have been presented that indicate that scholars still prefer to publish their research results in peer reviewed print journals, because it is more rewarding from a strictly academic career point of view.<sup>17</sup> The surveys also show once again that scholars in the sciences and technologies are more accustomed to using computers as tools in their work than are scholars in the humanities and the social sciences.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the difficulty of finding relevant material to which I can compare my findings, the articles and book chapters that I do find are often witnesses to another problem specific to the studies of the Internet or any other study of a developing phenomenon: that which is true about the Web one day is not necessarily true the next. One might think that an article published in a scientific journal in 1996 would be considered very current – that is at least usually the case in the discipline of literature. But when the subject is the use of the Internet, an article from 1996 was obsolete by 1998, if not before. Since the publishing process is very slow when it comes to scientific journals, it seems almost impossible to find an up to date printed learned article on Internet usage habits. As an example, let us take a closer look at the article "The Modern Language Association. Electronic and Paper Surveys of Computer-Based Tool Use" by Debora Shaw & Charles H. Davis in *Journal of American Society for Information Science* 47 (1996:12). A note at the bottom of the first page of the article informs the reader that it was first submitted to the journal in March 1995, then revised and sent in a new version in July 1995, when it was accepted for publication in September 1995. But it was not actually published until December 1996, 21 months after it was first submitted and more than two years after the survey of MLA members in the fall of 1994. There was enormous development of the Internet and the WWW in the space of those two years, which means that the figures presented in the article were by 1996 largely of only historical interest.

In sum, earlier research on scholarly use of the Internet is rare and that which does exist often paints an outdated picture. Studies show that scholars in the humanities use the Internet and other computer based tools less than scholars in other academic disciplines. Another example of the slow process of printed academic papers is the article you are reading at this moment, which contains at least 18 months old news.

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## 2. Circumstances

To obtain answers to the questions I mentioned earlier ("To what extent do scholars of Swedish literature use these resources?" and "To what extent do scholars of Swedish literature avail themselves of the opportunity to disseminate their research results over the Web?"), I wrote a questionnaire and sent it to all teaching staff in departments of literature at Swedish universities and university colleges that offer studies in literature to at least the master's degree level.<sup>19</sup> I chose names from staff lists for 15 departments published on Web sites where I could easily identify most of the teaching staff. In some cases, I had to call the department to be completely sure about who was a teacher and who was exclusively a researcher. The final result was a list of 176 people who teach literature at 15 universities or university colleges. I sent them a questionnaire in February 2000 and received 105 responses (59.7%) within six weeks. I did not send any reminder letters.

The survey was anonymous. Respondents were asked to state their age, gender and academic degree, but that information is not used to describe any single respondent in this paper. However, the question sheets were marked in order to identify at which department the respondent was teaching. The number of surveys sent and the number of responses received are set out in the following table.

University College of Dalarna, Department of Culture and Learning:	8 sent – 2 responses
University College of Gävle/Sandviken, Department of Humanities:	6 sent – 4 responses
University of Göteborg, Department of Literature:	14 sent – 9 responses
University College of Karlskrona/Ronneby, Department of Humanities:	2 sent – 1 response
University of Karlstad, Department of Culture and Communication:	14 sent – 7 responses
University of Linköping, Department of Thematic Studies:	8 sent – 6 responses
University of Lund, Department of Literature:	31 sent – 13 responses
Mid Sweden University College, Department of Culture and Humanities:	7 sent – 4 responses
Mälardalen University College, Department of Humanities:	7 sent – 5 responses
University of Stockholm, Department of Literature:	26 sent – 17 responses
Södertörn Högskola University College, (no department structure):	7 sent – 4 responses
University of Umeå, Department of Literature:	17 sent – 11 responses

University of Uppsala, Department of Literature:	21 sent – 15 responses
Växjö University, Department of Humanities:	8 sent – 6 responses
Örebro University, Department of Humanities:	3 sent – 1 response

A few respondents did not answer all the questions, but I chose not to completely disqualify any responses, since all the answers given are important. Consequently, internal decline was 0% overall, but 8–10% for some questions and 24% for one specific question. Some respondents commented that they were not teaching at that point in the semester and so did not complete the section of the survey dealing with use of the Internet in education. In this and similar cases, I have accounted for the number of missing responses to each question in the detailed statistics given below. I also chose to send the survey to the two members of the teaching staff at Uppsala University who are involved in the project within which this study was carried out. Their responses are included in the results.

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### 3. Comments on the questions

The survey was divided into three sections, with a total of 23 questions. The first part (11 questions) is about the respondent's computer use and Internet habits. The second part (9 questions) is about the respondent's use of material published on the Web in teaching and the third part (3 questions) is about personal circumstances.

While working with the responses, it became clear that some of the questions caused misunderstanding and that other questions could have been asked to get a more reliable picture of the respondents' Internet habits. I decided to introduce the term "Internet" first in the survey and ask about different aspects of Internet use later. Consequently, several respondents revealed that they do not differentiate between the Internet and the Web, which of course is a very common misunderstanding. Combined with the lack of a question directly asking about the respondents' Web habits, this unfortunately means that this survey does not provide any detailed information about their use of the Web as literary scholars and teachers, but only about their use of the Internet in general. The survey did contain questions about the use of e-mail, but it would have been interesting to ask in more detail about whether the respondents subscribe to mailing lists and, if so, to how many and for what purpose, and whether they took active part in discussions on the list. The same type of detailed questions could also have been asked about use of Usenet newsgroups.

In question A8, I asked how often the respondents have used three specific Web services. It seems that not all of the respondents were aware of the services: as many as 24% did not select any given alternative for how often they use one of the services. Accordingly, the three Web services are worthy of mention here.

*LIBRIS Websök ("LIBRIS Web Search") <http://www.libris.kb.se>*

"LIBRIS WebSearch is the collective name for several bibliographic services offered by the LIBRIS Department at the Royal Library (Sweden). Access to the service is free. The most important service is the LIBRIS Database with more than four million titles representing the holdings of about 200 Swedish libraries, mainly research libraries. WebSearch also contains a separate articles database as well as a number of subject-specialized databases."<sup>20</sup> This is for all practical purposes an online version of the Swedish National Bibliography, supplemented with the holdings of foreign titles.

*BTJ ArtikelSök ("BTJ Article Search") <http://www.btj.se/asok/>*

BTJ is a Swedish commercial library service company, which supplies a great deal of the Swedish public libraries with catalogue systems for

computers and with printed as well as digital media. BTJ ArtikelSök is a database for references to articles from more than 500 Swedish current periodicals and journals and 30 Swedish newspapers. The database contains more than 1 million references and is growing by 60,000 new references every year. The online database is free to people who access it from computers connected to university networks. My translation of BTJ ArtikelSök should not be confused with the service originally named "ArticleSearch" in English, which is a database that indexes articles from more than 10,000 international journals, produced by BTJ in co-operation with The British Library.

*Mediearkivet ("The Media Archive") <http://www.mediearkivet.se>*

The Media Archive is a commercial Web service owned by three major Swedish newspapers. At the time of the study, it contained articles from 13 Swedish national and regional newspapers and periodicals, from the major Swedish news agency and from the Swedish National Radio's afternoon news program. As of September 2000, it contained more than 3,100,000 items, the oldest from 1987 and the most recent from yesterday. The archive is accessed by a password and searches are free, but the general public must pay a fee to read either a specific number of articles or an unlimited number during a specific period of time (a one-year subscription). Access to the archive is free to schools and universities.

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#### 4. Results

I received 105 responses (60%; the respondents represent the selected population with respect to age and gender distribution and the various university departments). A wide majority of the respondents are 40 or older (81%). Seven of the 19 individuals under 40 hold Ph.D.s, five hold BAs, and seven hold MAs and are presumably working on their doctorates. I sent the survey to 68 women and 108 men (39%–61%). The responses hold almost exactly the same proportions (39%–59%). The majority of the respondents are Ph.D.s, with men slightly overrepresented: 66% of the responding Ph.D.s were men (compared to 59% men of all respondents).

*The respondents overwhelmingly have access to computers and the Internet both at home and at their university departments.* Almost all respondents have a PC at home (96%) and nearly four out of five (79%) have Internet access at home. This should be compared to a survey of MLA members carried out in 1994, where 92% of the respondents reported home computers and 65% said they had Internet access from home.<sup>21</sup> There is no significant characterization of the four individuals who answered no: two are women and two are men and they range in age from their thirties to their sixties. Two teach at university colleges and two work at one of the most prestigious universities in Sweden. Almost everyone has access to a PC at the office and most have a PC of their own (81%). Only three respondents answered that they do not have a PC at the office: one woman (age 30–39) and two men (age 30–39 and 40–49 respectively); all are associated with one of the four leading Swedish universities.

The answers concerning Internet access at the office are almost the same as concerning access to a PC at the office. In the American survey from 1994 the number of respondents with computers at work was considerably lower: only 66% of the MLA members who responded in the survey had a personal computer at work and only 61% had access to the Internet from work.<sup>22</sup> Two respondents had a PC at the office but no Internet connection. The number of negative answers increased by one because one respondent did not answer the question. In addition to the three individuals who answered question 2 by stating that they do not have access to a computer at the office, there was also a man (50–59 years old) associated with one of the four major universities who does not have access to the Internet. The respondent who did not answer the question had the same characteristics.

*The respondents use the Internet mainly for e-mail and for searching for information on the World Wide Web. Very few mention using newsgroups or mailing lists.* The question was about use of the Internet, but many respondents seemed not to differentiate between the Internet and the World Wide Web. No fewer than 35 individuals answered question 5 saying that they use e-mail more often than they say they use the Internet in question 4, which may be interpreted to mean that they believe the Internet and the World Wide Web are the same thing. Nine more respondents changed their first response to question 4. In all cases, the second answer indicated more frequent use. All told, as many as 44 of the 105 respondents can be held to have answered not how often they use the Internet, but how often they use the World Wide Web. Consequently, I cannot make any reliable statements about either the respondents' use of the Internet or their use of the World Wide Web. An approximate estimation gleaned from the answers to questions 4 and 5 is that about 50% of the respondents use the World Wide Web daily. The low frequency users (a few times a month, a few times a semester, never) are somewhat overrepresented among respondents holding doctorates and licentiate of philosophy (Ph.Lic.) degrees at the universities of Uppsala, Stockholm and Göteborg. Eleven of 20 low frequency users (55%) are from these three universities, compared to 41 of 105 (39%) in the total population; 18 of 20 (90%) hold a Ph.D. or Ph.Lic. (Ph.Lic.: an academic degree between MA and Ph.D.), compared to 81 of 105 (77%).

The respondents use e-mail frequently; 70% check their e-mail daily and only three individuals check e-mail less than a few times a week. This can be compared to MLA members' use of e-mail in fall 1994 when 78% of respondents in a survey reported at least weekly use,<sup>23</sup> and to humanities and social science faculty at the University of North Texas, where in another survey also carried out in fall 1994, 71% of the respondents reported using e-mail.<sup>24</sup> Five years later in Sweden the same proportion applies to daily use. E-mail has made a definitive breakthrough as a means of communication (see question B7). Use of the Web is also widespread among the respondents: 92% have used the WWW in the past year. However, use of other features of the Internet is not common at all: 82% use the WWW but none of the other alternatives given. The low use of newsgroups is easily explained by the fact that there were no groups for scholarly or research-related questions on Swedish literature at the time of the survey. Unfortunately, this survey did not ask whether the respondents belong to any mailing lists, which would have been interesting in light of the respondents' frequent use of e-mail.

Most respondents use the Internet for their research, but use of the Internet for teaching or private purposes was also common. One third of the respondents (33%) use the Internet for all the given purposes. A very interesting connection was found between using the Internet for teaching and publishing on the World Wide Web. Among the 62 respondents who said that they had used the Internet for teaching purposes, 27 (44%) had published something on the Web (see question 11), but among the 43 respondents who had used the Internet for purposes other than teaching, only 4 (9%) had published something on the Web. From this connection one can assume that the greater familiarity with the Web that being published on the Web implies leads to a more liberal standpoint regarding the use of the Internet for teaching purposes.

*Use of Swedish online search services (library catalogues and newspaper article databases) and of online published Swedish fiction is infrequent.* Utilization of some of the search tools and databases available for literary scholars varied widely. LIBRIS Websök (LIBRIS WebSearch – an online catalogue primarily for Swedish research libraries) is used at least a few times a month by 70% of the respondents. Compare this to the members of MLA, of whom 81% reported monthly use of "online catalogues" in 1994, while 54% reported at least monthly use of *MLA International Bibliography* on CD-ROM or online.<sup>25</sup> The numbers would probably have been higher in my survey if I had asked about all kinds of online catalogues; 10% answered that they have never used LIBRIS Websök, which could mean that they use only their own university library to look for literature. This could be confirmed by the fact that 14 out of 16 who answered that they had never used LIBRIS Websök or did not answer the

question are affiliated with the four most prestigious universities in the country.

Of all respondents, 31% use BTJ ArtikelSök at least a few times a month, but 26% have never used it. If those who did not answer the question are included, the figure for non-users is 41%. It is possible that the high rate of non-usage and no answers is due to respondents being unfamiliar with this online service. If that is so, Mediearkivet (The Media Archive) is even more obscure. This service may not be as useful to literary scholars as the other two mentioned in the question. Only 18% of the respondents answered that they use Mediearkivet at least a few times a month. As many as 45% had never used it (69% including those who did not answer the question).

Interest in Web-published literature seems moderate at best among Swedish teaching scholars of literature. Only 2 out of 5 (38%) respondents had visited any of the sites in question. The most frequently visited site, that of Carl Jonas Love Almqvist's Collected Works, which 21% of the respondents had visited, is the only one of the five chosen sites that contains scholarly editions of the writer's works. Among the 29 complementary answers one finds 4 mentions of William Shakespeare, as well as of the Swedish Web site Projekt Runeberg, a collection of free full texts, a close relative to Project Gutenberg. Others that garnered more than one mention are August Strindberg (3), Bob Dylan (2) and Edith Södergran (2). The answers to this question may be compared to the answers to five other questionnaires where visitors to five Swedish literary Web sites were asked which other literary Web sites they had visited. The number of visits varied among the different populations (visitors to amateur writer's sites as well as visitors to the Karin Boye site and Selma Lagerlöf site), but the Almqvist site was, overall, less frequently visited by these populations; only 3–10% had visited the Carl Jonas Love Almqvist site, while 22–29% had visited the Selma Lagerlöf site and 18–33% had visited the Karin Boye site. Not surprisingly, scholars are more interested in a scholarly site than are more differentiated populations. Notable also is that respondents who had visited LIBRIS Websök, BTJ ArtikelSök and Mediearkivet were overrepresented among those who had visited literary Web sites compared to the population as a whole. In the survey of MLA members' use of computer based tools, 32% of respondents reported that they were using electronic texts back in 1994,<sup>26</sup> which is very nearly the level at which Swedish literary scholars are today, more than five years later.

*Hyperfiction or hypertext fiction were not very familiar to the respondents.* Every fifth respondent (21%) claimed to have come into contact with hyperfiction. Four of them mentioned Michael Joyce or his *Afternoon, a story*. The hypertext scholars Espen Aarseth (Norway) and Anna Gunder (Sweden) were mentioned by two respondents each, as was the Almqvist Web site. One respondent mentioned another hypertext scholar, George Landow (USA), and one mentioned Jane Austen. The others provided less specific answers referring to articles and Web sites. One respondent also referred to printed dissertations, scholarly editions and encyclopedias.

*Very few have published anything on the Web.* The scholars teaching literature at Swedish universities and university colleges are not very actively engaged in publishing on the Web. Seven out of ten respondents (70%) had never published anything on the Web. Only about every sixth respondent (17%) had published something in a Web publication and only every seventh respondent had published something on the Web site of his or her own department. Noteworthy is that nearly 50% (8 out of 17) of the respondents from Lund University said that they have published on the Web. Those eight individuals comprise one fourth (8 of 31) of all respondents who said that they have published on the Web. Lund University has offered distance learning courses in literature for some time and many of the faculty have their own pages on the department's Web site.

*Internet access for students in Swedish literature departments seems to be rather poor.* Less than one third (32%) of respondents said that their students have Internet access in their departments. Every seventh respondent (14%) said that he or she does not know whether the students have Internet access or not. Oddly, respondents from the same department gave conflicting answers – some said yes, others no. Either they



teach different groups of students with different access to the Internet, or they simply do not know the true situation. In none of the departments did the respondents all give the same answer. Respondents from three departments mainly answered yes: Växjö University, Södertörn University College and Mälardalen University College. The Big Four mainly answered no, except at Uppsala, where most of the respondents did not know.

*Very few teachers are using Web-published material in their classes.* Some of the examples given with the positive answers indicate that the respondents are sometimes not really sure what "Web-published" means. Only one specific work of literature is mentioned (C. J. L. Almqvist's *The Queen's Diadem*), which is published in the archives of Projekt Runeberg, but in an incomplete version with imperfect typographic conversion. The title is not yet available at Svenska Vitterhetssamfundet's C. J. L. Almqvist's Collected Works online project. Notable among other answers is that four refer to Web sites featuring facts about movies.

The majority answered yes to the question about whether the teachers advise their students to search for complementary material on the Web. Surprisingly, this was especially true among older teachers. There were 53 answers to the open question about whether the teachers were giving their students any particular advice about how they should handle Web-published material. Respondents referred to two main problems: critical evaluation of the source and specific rules for citing the sources. Twenty individuals explicitly mentioned critical evaluation. Another 14 answers mentioned that they require citation of any Web pages used, including the date the information was downloaded, the URL, and, in two cases, that the author should be identified if possible. Five answers mentioned that students should print any material they use from the Web; one said that students should print a copy of the material and one that source material should be saved on a diskette.

As many as every seventh or eighth teacher (13–14%) believed that students might have cheated when writing papers by copying Web-published material. Teachers who have published on the Web are more likely to suspect cheating (22%) than are those who have not published on the Web (9%).

A majority of respondents said their educational material is not suitable for Web publishing. Only one third of respondents (34%) seem to think that Web publishing is a good idea. There are no differences in the answers according to academic degree, although there is a weak tendency for younger respondents to be slightly more positive. There was a strong negative majority in Stockholm, Karlstad and Växjö and a weak negative majority in Uppsala, Dalarna and Mälardalen. There was a weak positive majority in Göteborg. Notably, respondents who are accustomed to using the Web and e-mail are more positive towards Web publishing than those who seldom use the Web and use e-mail less than daily. Those who have published on the Web are more positive towards Web publishing than those who have not published on the Web. There was a recurring opinion found in the comments provided by respondents positive towards Web publishing that older printed texts are not adequately accessible. Either the work they are looking for is not available in bookstores or only in unsatisfactory editions and anthologies that provide only condensed versions or excerpts. The material in demand is older texts that are difficult to find in print and are in the public domain.

*The respondents mainly use the Internet as a medium of communication in the form of e-mail.* Students submit papers by e-mail and, in some cases, teachers advise graduate students via e-mail. Almost all respondents who answered yes to the question of whether they use the Web or e-mail in any way in their teaching (72%), said that they handle some graduate tutoring and accept tests and papers via e-mail and that some information is distributed that way. Five respondents said they use the Internet for distance teaching; two of them use FirstClass as a discussion tool.

Answers varied widely among the one third of respondents who have found useful material on the Web. The writers and works mentioned included Salman Rushdie, Jane Austen and August Strindberg, *Voluspa*, *The Edda* and *Moby Dick*. Some

respondents also refer to unspecified contemporary writers. Items they have searched for but not found included the poetry of Hjalmar Gullberg and Bertil Malmberg, Kleist and Navarra, texts on modern literary theory, and scholarly editions.

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## 5. Analysis and discussion

The respondents seem to be comfortable using the Internet for communication, but do not use it to any great extent for information retrieval and even less to disseminate their own findings. Rather than being a question of old versus new media, I suggest that there is a conflict between traditional and new methods of scholarly work, between habits of thinking in terms of qualifying and making career moves on the one hand and a wish to communicate and get responses to research findings on the other, between individual success and collective progress. We have a tradition in the humanities of publishing our results in extensive monographs that may take years to finish. A part of it, a chapter or two, may be published in advance in a learned journal, but most researchers in the humanities keep their results to themselves until they are double-checked, proofread and ready to print as an entity. The researcher will be accorded very little credit for his or her work until it is printed in paper format. However, Swedish literary scholars have few opportunities to publish, since our research is mainly concentrated on Swedish material, which is rarely part of the international scholarly community.

Other disciplines have other traditions. Research results are disseminated through papers that are published during the process of research. In medicine, for example, the publishing rate is much higher than in Swedish literature because the field is international. Electronic publishing has made it possible to publish research results very quickly and has had a much wider impact in various branches of science and technology, but also in some areas of the social sciences where there is an established tradition of communicating in shorter papers within an international research field.

University teachers of literature need to be informed about what online search services are available and what they actually offer, for several reasons. Since many teachers permit their students to use Web-published material and are at the same time aware that the quality of Web-published material is uneven, it would be very useful for teachers to have reliable evaluative information about online databases and Web-published full texts. Secondly, since many teachers do not believe there is any valuable material published on the Web, it would be of great help (at least to their students) if they had some introductory information about Web-published full texts and secondary material to which they could refer. There are several Web catalogues that provide assorted links to Web-published material related to literature, but no one has yet taken on the responsibility of making an inventory that claims to cover the entire field of Swedish literature along with an evaluated and annotated link catalogue. This would be a far from gargantuan task for a subject as narrow as Swedish literature, and should be awarded high priority for educational purposes.<sup>27</sup>

It would also be interesting to encourage literary scholars to publish more of their research papers on the Web. To this end, it would be useful to create a Web site, or expand an existing one, offering scholars the opportunity to publish seminar and conference papers and others the opportunity to respond in the form of an open review system, a kind of bulletin board where all interested parties are invited to comment on the papers published.

This may not be the place to propose how the information campaign and Web site should be implemented, but I believe my survey provides sufficient material upon which to base a discussion.

### About the Author

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## Appendix. Questionnaire and answers [population 105]

### A. Questions about your computer use and Internet habits

1. Do you have a personal computer with Internet access at home?

Yes, I have a personal computer with Internet access	83	79%
Yes, I have a personal computer, but no Internet access	18	17%
No	4	4%

2. Do you have access to a PC at your department office?

Yes, I have a PC of my own	85	81%
Yes, I share a PC with one or more of my colleagues	17	16%
No	3	3%

3. Do you have access to the Internet at the office?

Yes, I have access to the Internet from my individual PC	87	83%
Yes, I have access to the Internet from a shared PC	13	12%
No	4	4%
No answer	1	1%

4. How often have you used the Internet in the last 12 months? Please include use at home as well as the office.

Daily	57	54%
A few times a week	28	27%
A few times a month	13	12%
A few times a semester	6	6%
Never	1	1%

5. How often did you check your e-mail in the last 12 months?

Daily	74	70%
A few times a week	28	27%
A few times a month	2	2%
A few times a semester	1	1%
Never	0	

6. What other Internet applications have you used in the last 12 months? (Option to choose more than one alternative)

World Wide Web	97	92%
Newsgroups	6	6%
Chat	1	1%
Other*	5	5%
No answer	8	8%

\* = ("library search," "chat," "file transfers," "e-mail," unspecified)

7. For what purposes have you used these applications? (Option to choose multiple alternatives; cumulative answers)

Research	85	81%
Teaching	62	59%
Private	67	64%
No answer	7	7%

Research + Teaching + Private	35	33%
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Research + Private	22	21%
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Research + Teaching	19	18%
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Research	9	9%
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Teaching + Private	5	5%
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Private	5	5%
Teaching	3	3%

8. Did you use any of the following Web services in the last 12 months? If yes, how often?

	LIBRIS Websök		BTJ ArtikelSök		Mediearkivet	
Daily	9	9%	0		0	
A few times a week	40	38%	9	9%	4	4%
A few times a month	24	23%	24	23%	15	14%
A few times a semester	16	15%	29	28%	14	13%
Never	10	10%	27	26%	47	45%
No answer	6	6%	16	15%	25	24%

9. Have you visited any of the Web sites where the works of the following writers are published? (Option to choose multiple alternatives)

Georg Stiernhielm	10	10%
Carl Michael Bellman	15	14%
Carl Jonas Love Almqvist	22	21%
Selma Lagerlöf	19	18%
Karin Boye	17	16%
Other writer	29	28%

10. Have you come into contact with hyperfiction or hypertext fiction?

Yes (specify)	22	21%
No	68	65%
Do not know	12	11%
No answer	3	3%

11. Have you ever published anything on the Web?

Yes, on my own Web site	5	5%
Yes, on the department Web site	15	14%
Yes, in a Web publication	18	17%
No	73	70%
No answer	1	1%

## **B. Questions about your use of Web-published material in teaching**

1. Do your students have access to computers connected to the Internet at the department?

Yes	34	32%
No	54	51%
Don't know	15	14%
No answer	2	2%

2. Does the course you teach include any Web-published literature? If yes, please specify.

Yes, some fiction	8	8%
Yes, some non-fiction	9	9%
No	85	81%
No answer	4	4%
Other answer	1	1%

3. Do you advise your students to search for complementary material on the Web?

Yes	54	51%
No	43	41%
No answer	8	8%

4. If your students are using Web-published material, do you advise them how to handle the material? Please comment. (Open question)

5. Have you ever suspected that a student has used Web-published material to cheat, e.g., by submitting a paper that he or she did not write, but instead copied from the Internet?

Yes	14	13%
-----	----	-----

No	86 82%
No answer	4 4%
[Maybe]	1 1%
<b>6. Is there any material you use in your ordinary classes that you think could be suitable for Web publication?</b>	
Yes, for example...	36 34%
No	54 51%
No answer	11 10%
Don't know	4 4%
<b>7. Do you use the Web or e-mail in any way in your teaching, for example for distributing and receiving assignments to and from your students?</b>	
Yes (specify)	76 72%
No	25 24%
No answer	4 4%
<b>8. Have you found material on the Web that you used for teaching that you could not find anywhere else? If so, please give examples:</b>	
Yes (specify)	35 33%
No	64 61%
No answer	6 6%
<b>9. Have you searched for material on the Web unsuccessfully? If so, please give examples:</b>	
Yes (specify)	21 20%
No	74 70%
No answer	10 10%

### **C. Personal information**

#### **1. Age**

20–29	2 2%
30–39	17 16%
40–49	35 33%
50–59	34 32%
60–69	16 15%
No answer	1 1%

#### **2. Gender**

Female	41 39%
Male	62 59%
No answer	2 2%

#### **3. Academic degree**

BA	13 12%
MA	10 10%
Ph. Lic.	5 5%
Ph.D.	76 72%
No answer	1 1%

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### **Notes**

1. This essay has been produced within the research project "IT, Narrative Fiction, and the Literary System," financed by the Johnson Foundation and run by The Section for the Sociology of Literature at Uppsala University with professor Johan Svedjedal as project leader. (<http://www.litvet.uu.se/litvet/itlit>). The text was edited by Rosemary Nordström. [Return to the text]

2. Kathryn Sutherland, Introduction. In: Kathryn Sutherland, ed. *Electronic Text: Investigations in Method and Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, pp. 1–18; quote p. 1 f. [Return to the text]

3. Ingegerd Rabow, Elektronisk publicering både problem och möjligheter. Forskarvärldens ansvar att driva utvecklingen åt rätt håll. *Läkartidningen* no. 17, vol. 97, 2000, pp. 2091–2092, 2094–2095. [Return to the text]

4. Pernilla Flyg & Gun Larsson, Arkeologiska rapporter på digitala vägar. *Kulturmiljövård* no. 1, 1999, pp. 52–59. [*Kulturmiljövård* is published by Riksantikvarieämbetet (The Swedish National Heritage Board).] [Return to the text]

5. Ingemar Bohlin, Elektronisk publicering av forskningsresultat: Tre axlar i litteraturen om en omstridd teknik. *Vest – Tidskrift för vetenskaps- och teknikstudier* no. 1-2, vol. 12, 1999, pp. 11–48; original quote: "Trots att de potentiella effekterna är betydande är skiftet inte allmänt känt bland akademiker [...]." p. 13. [Return to the text]
6. Susan Hockey, Computer Networking and Textual Sources in the Humanities. In: Teresa M. Harrison & Timothy Stephen, eds. *Computer Networking and Scholarly Communication in the Twenty-First-Century University*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1996, pp. 83–93; quote p. 84. [Return to the text]
7. See e.g., Jerome J. McGann, The Rationale of Hypertext. In: Sutherland, ed. 1997, pp. 19–46; The Rosetti Archive and Image-Based Electronic Editing. In: Richard J. Finneran, ed. *The Literary Text in the Digital Age*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, pp. 145–184. [Return to the text]
8. Steve Harnad & Matt Hemus, All or None: No Stable Hybrid or Half-Way Solutions for Launching the Learned Periodical Literature into the PostGutenberg Galaxy. In: I. Butterworth, ed. *The Impact of Electronic Publishing on the Academic Community. An international workshop organized by the Academia Europaea and the Wenner-Gren Foundation, [Stockholm on 17-20 April 1997]*. (Wenner-Gren International Series ; 73). London & Miami: Portland Press, 1998, pp. 18–27; and Paul Ginsparg, Electronic Research Archives for Physics. In: Butterworth, ed. 1998, pp. 32–43. [Return to the text]
9. Andrew M. Odlyzko, The Economics of Electronic Journals. In: Richard Ekman & Richard E. Quandt, eds. *Technology and Scholarly Communication*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 380–393. [Return to the text]
10. Thomas A. Finholt & JoAnn Brooks, Analysis of JSTOR: The Impact on Scholarly Practice of Access to Online Journal Archives. In: Ekman & Quandt, eds. 1999, pp. 177–194. [Return to the text]
11. Op. cit. note 4, p. 187; tab. 11.8, p. 188; p. 191. [Return to the text]
12. Mary Summerfield & Carol A. Mandel, Online Books at Columbia: Early Findings on Use, Satisfaction, and Effect. In: Ekman & Quandt, eds. 1999, pp. 282–308. [Return to the text]
13. Op. cit. note 6, p. 287; fig. 17.2, p. 288. [Return to the text]
14. Op. cit. note 6, p. 289; tab. 17.3, pp. 290 f. The method is of course open to discussion; now here in the article is the notion of "use" explained. [Return to the text]
15. Andrew M. Odlyzko, Tragic loss or good riddance? The Impending Demise of Traditional Scholarly Journals. In: Robin P. Peek & Gregory B. Newby, eds. *Scholarly Publishing: The Electronic Frontier*. Cambridge, Mass. & London: The MIT Press, 1996, pp. 91–101; and Steve Harnad, Implementing Peer Review on the Net: Scientific Quality Control in Scholarly Electronic Journals. In: Peek & Newby, eds. 1996, pp. 103–118. [Return to the text]
16. Harrison & Stephen, eds. 1996. [Return to the text]
17. This specific conclusion is made by John M. Budd & Lynn Silipigni Connaway in University Faculty and Networked Information: Results of a Survey. *JASIS* nr 9, vol. 48, 1997, pp. 843–852: "The reward structure, as it exists on most campuses, is not as open to alternative means of communication as it is to traditional means, which hinders adoption of the innovation." (p. 849); Debora Shaw & Charles H. Davis, The Modern Language Association. Electronic and Paper Surveys of Computer-Based Tool Use. *JASIS* no. 12, vol. 47, 1996, pp. 932–940. [Return to the text]
18. Amanda Spink, David Robins & Linda Schamber, Use of Scholarly Book Reviews. Implications for Electronic Publishing and Scholarly Communication. *JASIS* no. 4, vol. 49, 1998, pp. 364–374; see especially table 7, p. 369. [Return to the text]
19. These departments were selected from the Swedish university education database "ASKen" (Automatic Education Catalogue) maintained by Höskoleverket (the National Agency for Higher Education). Fifteen departments of literature fit my limitations: University College of Dalarna, University College of Gävle/Sandviken, Göteborg University, University College of Karlskrona/Ronneby, Karlstad University, Linköping University, Lund University, Mid Sweden University College, Mälardalen University College, Stockholm University, Södertörn Högskola University College, Umeå University, Uppsala University, Växjö University, Örebro University. [Return to the text]
20. LIBRIS/Kungl. biblioteket, LIBRIS – the union catalogue of Swedish libraries, 1999. URL: <http://www.libris.kb.se/english/home.html> [2001-10-08] [Return to the text]
21. Shaw & Davis 1996, p. 935; table 5, p. 936. [Return to the text]
22. Op. cit. [Return to the text]
23. Op. cit., p. 935; table 6, p. 936. [Return to the text]

24. Spink, Robins & Schamber 1998, table 7, p. 369. [Return to the text]

25. Shaw & Davis 1996, p. 935; table 7, p. 936; table 8, p. 937. [Return to the text]

26. Op. cit., p. 935; table 10, p. 937. [Return to the text]

27. Groundwork has already been commenced by Erik Peurell, *Users and Producers On Line: Producing, Marketing and Reading Swedish Literature Using Digital Technology*. (Acta Bibliothecae regiae Stockholmiensis ; 64). Stockholm: Kungl. biblioteket, 2000, and Johan Svedjedal, *The Literary Web: Literature and Publishing in the Age of Digital Production. A Study in the Sociology of Literature*. (Acta Bibliothecae regiae Stockholmiensis ; 62). Stockholm: Kungl. biblioteket, 2000. [Return to the text]

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