

Crisis? What Crisis? Polis in Sweden

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It is sunny in Sweden

Throughout my career I always avoided the liberal journalism cliché of going to Sweden to show a British audience how something should be done. 'Here in Stockholm...' was a phrase that never crossed my lips. Sweden and Scandinavia in general is a wealthy, culturally distinct exception to most rules.

So it's not surprising that Swedish media is not experiencing the existentialist angst and real economic pain running through most of the Anglo-Saxon journalism industry.

The Swedish media association's boss told me that 2008 was a record year for income. Sales and advertising have only dipped as the Global Crash hit, but not catastrophically. Commercial TV revenues are being diluted but that's because the number of operators is increasing. So why worry if you are in the land of pickled herring?

Well the Swedes do recognise that the world is changing which is why their papers have gone online early and with some quality. It's why media groups have sought to diversify their online offerings into areas like family and shopping .

But overall I do feel like someone running out of a burning straw house shouting 'Fire!' to a crowd of people who can smell the smoke but feel safely tucked away in a rather stylishly-designed brick apartment.



On the rack

People here worry far more about ethics and quality than they do about their jobs. But they are planning for a different future. Take their subscription model which gives the papers such a stable and predictable income.

The evidence is that young Swedes are waiting longer in their lives to sign up for newspaper subscriptions. This is partly because they are delaying settling down to have families. So a whole generation of Internet-savvy Swedes have put off committing themselves to the dead-wood press. The risk is that many of them never will.

That's perhaps why they appear prepared to listen to the hysterical ravings of someone like me who has staggered out of the slow-motion [car crash](#) that is current British media economics.

More from the [40th anniversary conference of the Swedish Journalism Fund](#) later.

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