Digital and Media Preparedness

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Södertörns högskola

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Preface by the Editors

Fredrik Stiernstedt & Anne Kaun

In recent years, Europe has seen unprecedented securitisation. Motivated by the large-scale invasion of Ukraine and the withdrawal of US international security alliances and missions, European countries have returned to building their own military defence systems and are investing increasing portions of their budgets into the military. A component of these mobilisation efforts is the preparation of society for potential wars. Under the banner of civil defence efforts, states, including Sweden, have begun initiatives to increase the preparedness of all corners of society. These civil preparedness efforts also include the fortification of digital infrastructures and media systems that have been identified as foundational to national security, following Ukraine as an example of how and why these systems are important. In Sweden, public service media have been labelled as critical infrastructure and are tasked with specific preparedness efforts. These forms of incorporating digital infrastructures and media systems into security and military efforts are addressed in the literature as digital preparedness and media preparedness.

This report provides a preliminary overview of the existing research addressing digital preparedness and media preparedness. It presents the results of a systematic literature review of research on digital and media preparedness, with a focus on civic mobilisation and the preparation responsibilities that are assigned to citizens as part of national security.

The report shows that the discussions on digital and media preparedness are far from new, but interest in this topic has intensified in recent years. While research is catching up with the general developments in public discourse, this report indicates a

number of gaps that future research should address, including everyday life and civic preparedness, long-term conditions versus short-term strategies, and comparative perspectives.

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Digital and Media Preparedness

Miriana Cascone

While current debates on preparedness often emphasise its topicality and urgency, it is not a new concept or a recent empirical phenomenon, being the subject of a significant and impactful portion of the literature that is the scope of this review. Before presenting the findings of this literature review, a definition of preparedness in relation to neighbouring concepts is necessary.

Preparedness is a very broad and deeply rooted term that has long garnered societal debate and research engagement. Philosophers of ancient Greece discussed it through the concept of *prokoptôn*, which is understood as a mental and ethical practice aimed at making progress and developing resilience in the face of adversity and change. Today, this aspect of resilience in the face of adversity remains, but it has taken on a much more practical tone. It is no longer simply a matter of mental preparation for facing the unknown but of concrete, physical actions.

There is much discussion on this topic, and research interests have shifted towards understanding organisational resilience as a concrete expression of preparedness (Boin et al., 2013; Duit, 2016; Williams et al., 2017). This kind of resilience is defined as an organisation's capacity to deal with unforeseen events by anticipating and preparing for them (Bojen & van Eeten, 2013; Duchek, 2020; Mamouni Limnios et al., 2014; Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016).

Preparedness is defined by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) as the "knowledge and capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organisations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, res-

pond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current disasters" (UNDRR, 2017). Preparedness, therefore, can be regarded both as a practical activity and as a cultural response to the uncertainties of the modern world, based on the assumption that human beings possess an innate capacity for adaptation but also a tendency to overestimate their own level of preparedness or, alternatively, to underestimate the level of risk (Donahue et al., 2024).

The available literature on preparedness is extensive and varied, covering diverse contexts, including natural disasters, wars, and pandemics, as well as specific risks. Notably, preparedness in relation to pandemics has gained heightened significance since the rise of Covid-19. There are also articles that report on specific national contexts, societies, and social groups that are affected by preparedness efforts (Kohn et al., 2012).

Preparedness has also gained traction as a policy focus. In 2025, the European Union, facing a range of threats from war and conflicts to cyberattacks and information manipulation, launched a Union Preparedness Strategy[1] designed to prevent and prepare to respond to these threats, emphasising that preparedness is a collective responsibility. The strategy includes three approaches: an integrated all-hazards approach, which treats risks in a holistic manner; a whole-of-society approach, which involves every sector, organisation, and individual; and a whole-of-government approach, wherein various government agencies and departments work together to achieve the necessary level of preparedness.

The academic, practical question is, how do people prepare, or fail to prepare, and what might motivate them to want to prepare more? Risk, by definition, is not a certainty. On the contrary, it is linked to uncertainty (Parkkinen, 2021) and is oriented towards future events that may or may not occur but whose risk could be reduced if we prepare for them. According to the relevant literature, this uncertainty is precisely what determines the level of preparedness not only of individuals but also of society as a whole.

[1] https://commission.europa.eu/topics/preparedness_en

People tend to prepare for events that are already anticipated, predicted, or forecasted, or those that they have experienced before and so realise how important it is to be prepared (Kuang et al., 2020; Marchau et al., 2019; Ommer et al., 2025).

The aim of this report is to focus on a specific subarea of preparedness, namely the needs for preparedness that have emerged with the increasing and all-encompassing digitalisation and mediatisation of society. We begin with the knowledge that digital infrastructures and media are intertwined with processes on all societal levels and hence constitute both specific challenges to preparedness and integral aspects of the fostering of preparedness.

In this context, digital preparedness refers to the capacity of individuals, organisations, governments, and societies to be prepared to operate, work, and be immersed in digital environments while being under the potential threat of a crisis (Mansoor et al., 2020; Pingali et al., 2023); media preparedness, by contrast, focuses on the specific roles of editorial media and, in particular, public service media. Research initially focused on digital preparedness as the capacity to adopt digital technologies; now it has turned to the question of securing digital infrastructure as critical societal infrastructure as well as the role of digital technology in preparedness strategies.

In the literature, preparedness is increasingly understood as a socio-technical phenomenon (Albulayhi & Alkhalifah, 2026), highlighting three dimensions that can be identified in relation to digital preparedness: technical, human (in the individual sense), and institutional. The technical dimension is a matter of recognising, for example, that there are certain risks involved in such a highly digitalised world, dangers that had not previously been anticipated or encountered, such as shutdowns of public agencies or municipalities by hackers. Consequently, there is a vast body of research on cybersecurity preparedness aimed at pre-empting and mitigating the full range of cyber threats (Berlilana et al., 2021; Hasan et al., 2021; Sandstig et al., 2026; Tsen et al., 2022). Most of these studies recognise that preparedness depends not only on

technical infrastructure but also on governance systems, institutional coordination, organisational culture, environmental factors, and human competencies (Chapman & Reithel, 2021; Nillasithanukroh et al., 2025).

As society becomes increasingly digitalised, cybersecurity emerges as a major preparedness concern. Similarly, public service media that have been tasked to provide reliable information, education, and entertainment are drawn into the discussion. In May 2025, the Swedish government proposed a new Public Service Act[2] and updated guidelines for the operation of Sweden's public media companies: Sveriges Television, Sveriges Radio, and Sveriges Utbildningsradio. The government stressed the importance of ensuring a high level of security when public service media organisations begin their technological preparedness processes. In June 2025, Sveriges Television fell victim to the most serious cyberattack in its history[3].

While a growing number of reports and assessment frameworks address digital readiness and digital maturity, few explicitly attend to digital preparedness, particularly at the level of governments and organisations (Chounta et al., 2024; UNDP, 2024; World Bank, 2020). While these frameworks address important dimensions such as digital infrastructure, governance, skills, cybersecurity, resilience, and institutional capacity, they primarily approach digital preparedness as a question of digital transformation and capacity. Less attention has been paid to the relationship between digital preparedness and media systems and to the role that media organisations play in societal preparedness. The report at hand brings these two areas together, considering them to be deeply intertwined. Based on the identified themes, the report outlines a research agenda for digital and media preparedness.

[2] Prop. 2024/25:166 available at: https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/202425166

[3] SVT, June 2025. https://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/svt-har-tekniska-problem-sv0se2

Research Strategy

The core questions underpinning this report are as follows:

- How is digital preparedness defined and operationalised in previous research?
- How is media preparedness defined and operationalised in previous research?

To examine the literature on digital and media preparedness, we conducted a search of the Web of Science (WoS) database for scientific articles without time restrictions and using the search terms "digital preparedness" and "media preparedness". The search identified 113 articles under the term digital preparedness and 5 under the term media preparedness.

All identified articles underwent an initial screening, followed by an in-depth analysis limited exclusively to those deemed relevant. Relevance was determined based on whether the terms "digital preparedness" and/or "media preparedness" appeared in the abstract or title of the article, bringing the total number of articles analysed to 118.

This figure suggests that although interest in digital preparedness is growing, it remains a relatively niche topic, particularly when compared with the 99,741 articles that appear when the word "preparedness" is used in the same search context, but also with the 1,362 articles that appear when the term "digital readiness" is used. Furthermore, as highlighted in the previous section, although much of the literature refers to both the concepts of readiness and preparedness, the two terms are not used interchangeably based on an initial evaluation. This is why the literature review included only those articles that used the term "digital preparedness". It is also worth noting the significant difference between the number of articles found and analysed under "digital preparedness" and "media preparedness". Only five articles using "media preparedness" were identified; however, alongside these, articles were found that dealt with media preparedness in a more specific sense, such as "communication preparedness"

or "journalism preparedness". In the literature on media preparedness, the subject is addressed almost exclusively in relation to disasters, crises, or sudden events and the preparedness of media organisations to respond to these while continuing to provide their services. The topic of media preparedness is also addressed in a series of policy documents and reports that focus more on the ability of media organisations to adapt to digitalisation that are not considered here.

The articles selected from WoS generally address digital or media preparedness as an isolated topic or as a factor of preparedness among several. The articles cover a range of different fields and areas of research. Figure 1 shows the top 10 research areas as defined by WoS.

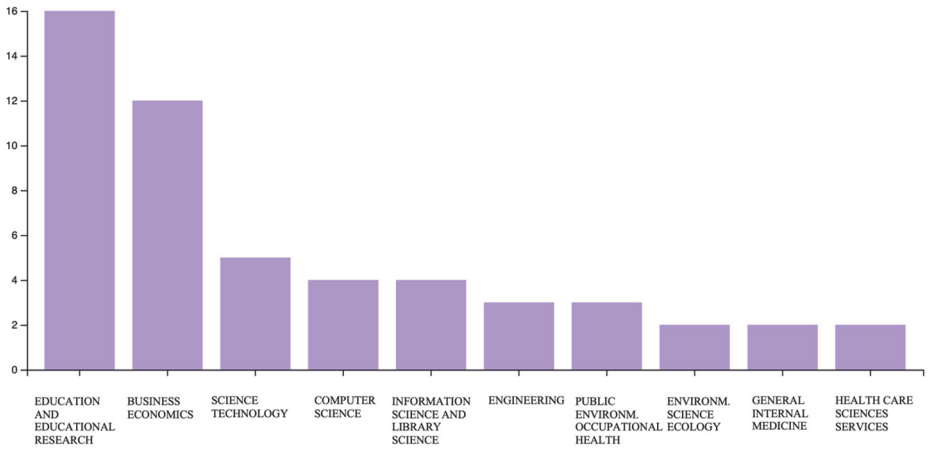

Figure 1. Research areas

To identify additional relevant literature, we reviewed recent research projects on preparedness conducted in Sweden by searching the Swedish Research Database (SweCris), which stores data on all publicly funded research projects, including those

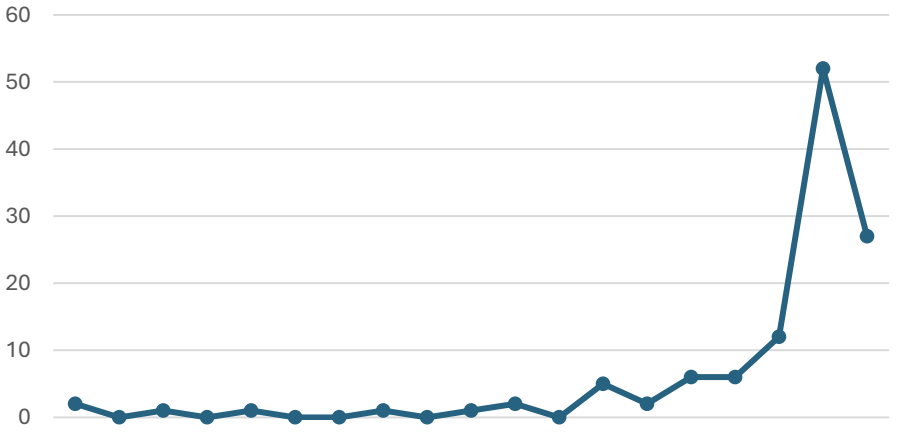

Figure 2. Timeline of published articles from 2008 to June 2026 taken from the Web of Science database.

funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, one of the largest supporting foundations in Sweden. This search initially yielded 85 research projects, of which 13 were included in the analysis. Here too, a screening was carried out, with relevance determined by the presence of "preparedness" alongside words such as "digital", "media", "communication", and "technology" within the project's introductory section. From these projects, those for which related articles had already been published were selected.

Themes

The collected material was analysed using qualitative content analysis to highlight patterns and tensions in the research on digital and media preparedness. The articles, projects, and reports analysed were first grouped according to their respective research areas. Subsequently, across the categories, a number of themes and contexts emerged in which digital preparedness was most frequently discussed. Note that these are not rigid, fixed divisions; much of the analysed literature represents multiple themes. An example of this is the literature that discusses digital preparedness

in schools and educational settings in general, but which does so from the perspective of both the education system and the teaching profession. The same applies to the digital divide, as it manifests in various forms and contexts. Another example is the theme of Covid-19; although Covid-19 features prominently in the literature, it is always interwoven with other themes. In fact, it is a theme, a context, or a factor in much of the literature published since 2020, such that the articles could be divided into pre- and post-Covid periods. The dominant themes in the literature are education, healthcare, and the digital divide and are discussed in the following sections.

Educational system

Articles in this theme focused on digital preparedness in schools and higher education institutions, considering both teachers and students within the overall educational system. Digital preparedness is discussed primarily as a factor that enhances the quality of teaching, as a necessity for preparing students for future employment, and finally as a sudden but necessary change brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, which largely caught the education system off guard; the system must now be prepared for similar situations.

Work environment

This refers to the level of digital preparedness in the workplace. The main discussions here centre on workers' dissatisfaction with the gap between the level of digital skills required and training provided in the workplace. Much of the literature also highlights how digital preparedness should be understood not only at the individual level but also, and above all, at the organisational level.

Healthcare

Articles in this theme focus on the digital preparedness of healthcare systems in areas where digital innovations have indeed brought about significant changes and improvements but which require training for workers. Much of the literature within this

theme focuses on the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting how the introduction of digital technology helped keep the situation under control, indicating the importance of good digital preparedness in healthcare.

Digital Divide

Articles in this theme focus on the relationship between digital preparedness and the digital divide across society or countries. Digital preparedness leads to significant differences not only between countries but also within one society, producing new inequalities and expanding existing ones.

Digital Preparedness

The interest in digital preparedness has evolved over the years to such an extent that, in the relevant literature, there is a clear distinction between studies conducted in the last five years and those carried out prior, primarily in terms of volume – in this review, 70 of the 113 academic articles related to "digital preparedness" were published in the last three years – but also in terms of areas of interest and topics covered.

One factor behind this increased academic interest in digital preparedness is undoubtedly the Covid-19 pandemic, which necessitated a sudden and radical shift to digital processes despite the lack of prior preparation in many contexts. This led several scholars to ask how these shifts unfolded and what their legacy would be. Thus, the pandemic acted as a catalyst not only for greater interest in the issue but also for the critical re-examination of it. The pandemic has, in fact, highlighted society's lack of digital preparedness (Hathaway et al., 2024), and, consequently, the need for policies to increase digital preparedness to limit the damage that an unforeseen event, such as a pandemic, could cause (Bayrakdar & Guveli, 2023). For example, Heinrichs et al. (2022) studied the possible association between countries' digital preparedness levels and Covid-19 cases and deaths.

Many of the earlier articles were empirically driven. One outlier here is the digital divide research, which was initially primarily

conceptually driven but increasingly turned towards empirical work, including specific and concrete case studies in which digital literacy plays a fundamental role due both to its absence and, conversely, its presence in certain sectors (Gunnoo et al., 2026; Kohli et al., 2026).

Education

In the literature on digital preparedness, schools and workplaces are the settings most frequently cited and studied, which highlights commonalities of education and work. Like universities, schools are not only educational environments but also working environments. Teachers are professionals in their workplaces, in which they are expected to be prepared to embrace the digitalisation of their profession. Schools are also places that prepare future workers for the broader world. In this sense, digital preparedness acts as a common thread between these two contexts. Therefore, much of the literature produced to date on this subject highlights this persistent tension between educational and workplace contexts with regard to digital literacy.

The literature identifies three dimensions of digital preparedness in education: the infrastructural dimension, access to technological resources; the pedagogical dimension, teachers' competences and preparedness; and the economic and contextual dimension (Cambeses-Franco & Cambeses-Franco, 2026). While emphasising institutional and environmental influences such as school climate, Liu et al. (2018) conceptualised digital preparedness as teachers' capability to integrate digital technologies effectively into educational settings. Kelder et al. (2025) connected digital preparedness to broader notions of digital capability and productivity in higher education environments, which have positive effects on teaching and learning processes by fostering student engagement. Digital preparedness can also serve as a tool for measuring the ability and preparedness to tackle the wider digital transformation in society (Trivedi et al., 2024) as well as the need to promote digital skills among teaching students (Holik et al., 2023). Teachers' experiences with digitalisation and their level of

preparedness are analysed during their academic studies, before they begin teaching (Zainuddin et al., 2026), and once they are established in the profession in order to understand their preparedness and to identify a strategy for an integrated use of digital technology (Musasa, 2023).

Marhani et al. (2025) demonstrated that teachers encounter technical problems and express uncertainty about their own digital preparedness, highlighting the lack of professional training, which has an impact on the students themselves. Mishra et al. (2017) highlighted how there is often a gap in the workplace between employers' expectations and the digital skills of young job applicants, many of them fresh out of school. This is also acknowledged by the students themselves, especially by women, who, while feeling confident in using technology, harbour doubts about their ability to apply it in a professional context. Digital preparedness is also examined from a gender perspective, with women being found to be less prepared or to perceive themselves as less prepared in both the educational context and, to a greater extent, in the workplace (Kohli et al., 2026; Mudiyanselage & Mudiyanselage, 2025; Shehadeh, 2024). However, in the literature, there are no differences in terms of age. The investment in technology and the increasing level of digitalisation across various sectors of society should be accompanied by government initiatives aimed at promoting digital preparedness in various environments among all members of society and by infrastructure capable of supporting such technological developments (Phan Thi Hang & Balsalobre-Lorente, 2026). A study by Keya et al. (2025) examined the role of digital technologies in improving the management of emergencies and incidents; the authors argued that these should be incorporated into university curricula alongside other accessible digital preparedness tools.

Digital preparedness just like digital development is seen as a necessary condition for optimising the performance of small- and medium-sized enterprises (Almahameed et al., 2026; Yang et al., 2026). For example, Preet and Khurana (2026) linked factors such as digital readiness and quality governance to efficiency and re-

silience. In this regard, digital preparedness is an organisational factor (Varoodhini et al., 2025) that relies on a company having the capacity to lead digital transformation (Acharya et al., 2022). Organisational preparedness also depends on the actions of managers and employees charged with implementing digital transformation, and their perceptions of preparedness are often not aligned with those of senior executives (A. Kumar et al., 2024). Similarly, albeit in different contexts, Casey and Souvignet (2020) frame digital preparedness as a proactive risk-management capability, emphasising its effectiveness when all environments are digitalised.

Studies have shown that organisations with proactive digital preparedness and strong internal communication networks navigate digital transitions more effectively (Sadiq et al., 2026). The same goes for educational contexts such as universities in which the level of preparedness among the academic staff is understood as a key factor in a successful digital transformation (Zhukabayeva et al., 2025). What is less explored, however, are the effects and implications that these transitions have on individuals (Haq et al., 2026), especially in emerging economies in which digital preparedness is limited. Indeed, several studies have shown that for technological innovation to have a positive influence on performance, it must be accompanied by digital preparedness practices (V. Kumar et al., 2024; Nanduri & Rincón, 2026). Likewise, digital preparedness has been examined as a key factor in job satisfaction (Gunnoo et al., 2026) and in relation to the assessed standard of education received (Kohli et al., 2025). Digital professional development are directly and positively correlated with schools' digital preparedness and the integration of digital technology into teaching (Amemasor et al., 2025).

Healthcare

Similar issues are encountered in healthcare settings, which, like schools, are also workplaces. Di Mattei et al. (2025) showed how healthcare workers, aware of the rapid digital transformation taking place in the sector, do not feel confident in their ability and

preparedness to use digital tools effectively in their daily clinical practice. Several studies have examined how prepared various systems are for digital care implementation in specific healthcare facilities and among healthcare professionals (Bingham et al., 2022; Bober et al., 2024; Getachew et al., 2022; Lennon et al., 2017). Levai et al. (2026), in this regard, highlight how artificial intelligence are integrated into medicine but note that the success of this integration depends not only on the perceived utility but especially on the digital preparedness of the context.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought attention to the lack of digital preparedness in healthcare contexts, as a wide range of digital tools were introduced during that time (Lokmic-Tomkins et al., 2025). Based on the literature, preparedness includes robust public health technological infrastructure (Bartoletti et al., 2024), indicating the need to enhance digital preparedness for future global public health emergencies (Roberts et al., 2026; Tan et al., 2024), building on the innovations brought by the pandemic such as the application of digital health to early detection, surveillance, and data management (Ezenwaji et al., 2024). As Laher et al. (2026) indicated, institutional strategies should extend beyond emergency power provision to include digital preparedness.

The Digital Divide

In the literature, digital preparedness is seen as a source of significant disparities between countries (Valaskova et al., 2025) and sections of society (Kalenyuk et al., 2025; Ouakil et al., 2026). The digital divide in the context of preparedness spans various levels, including access, skills, and outcomes, with the disparity in digital preparedness between urban and non-urban areas (Miller & Pedersen, 2024). For example, Vergara et al. (2026) demonstrated that, in the field of education, there is a disparity between the level of digital preparedness of professors from private universities and those at non-private universities. In a multi-country study, Dewasiri et al. (2026) found digital preparedness to be a major factor in successfully building smart circular economies, noting that levels of preparedness varied significantly; for example, digi-

tal preparedness was relatively high in India's manufacturing sector but low in Sri Lanka's agricultural sector, where there is a lack of digital infrastructure. The relationship between preparedness and the digital divide was also analysed by James (2008), who examined the various components of digital preparedness, such as income, skills, and infrastructure, to understand how they might help bridge the gap. Thus, the literature suggests a strong relationship between digital inclusion, the digital divide, and preparedness.

Media Preparedness

The WoS search identified only five articles that explicitly use the term "media preparedness" in their title or abstract. These approach the concept from diverse perspectives, including ethical and organisational preparedness, the capacity of news organisations to anticipate and respond to disruptive events, and the role of media and communication in broader systems of societal resilience and civil defence (Farbøl et al., 2024; Kaur & Chauhan, 2024; Takahashi et al., 2020). It is to be assumed that a substantially larger body of research addressing dimensions of media preparedness without employing the term itself. For example crisis communication, journalism under crisis conditions, communication infrastructure, technological resilience, and media's contribution to community preparedness are areas that address relevant discussions without explicitly framing them as media preparedness. This suggests that media preparedness is better understood as an emerging and dispersed field of research than as an established and consistently defined concept.

The five articles from the WoS use the notion of media preparedness to refer to both internal organisation and an outward-facing capacity to continue providing services even in extreme and disruptive circumstances (Hansen, 2019). Overall, media preparedness refers to the ability of media institutions, media organisations, journalists, communication systems, and information infrastructures to prepare for, respond to, and recover effectively from crises, disasters, and emergencies. The concept also encom-

passes operational readiness, ethical communication practices, technological resilience, institutional coordination, the ability to instil confidence in the public in situations of uncertainty, and the capacity to respond and adapt to the digitalisation of the profession.

One example of media preparedness discussed in the identified articles is the general warning system Important Message to the Public/*Viktigt meddelande till allmänheten* in Sweden, which uses audio signals to warn the public of an imminent threat to life or health, instructing them to take immediate shelter indoors and tune in to Sveriges Radio for further information (Stjernholm, 2025). The articles highlight the role of digital technologies in the dissemination of information and identify digital communication as essential for ensuring preparedness for future crises (Penka et al., 2024).

While the Covid-19 pandemic once again acted as a watershed moment, interest in the issue of media preparedness as it relates to health emergencies predates the pandemic, highlighting, for example, the public's expectation that hospital communicators and the media will provide all necessary information during an emergency (Liu et al., 2018). A study conducted by Savoia et al. (2013) revealed a strong correlation between a population's socioeconomic factors and communication regarding preparedness for public health emergencies, as well as between these factors and the outcomes of such preparedness. Similarly, other studies have focused on community preparedness as linked to effective emergency communication that helps citizens develop the skills needed to be prepared (Johnston et al., 2020). The Model Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan for Media Institutions[4] is designed to empower every media institution, large or small, public or private, to develop or improve its own disaster preparedness and response plan. Developed with the aid of international experts, this is the first comprehensive action plan of its kind, helping the

[4] Model Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan for Media Institutions available at: https://www.unesco.org/en/media-crisis/model-plan

media to prepare at an institutional level to deal with emergencies and to contribute more effectively to building community resilience through their work. Several studies have focused specifically on preparedness through information and communication technology (ICT) (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Eriksson et al., 2021; Lundälv et al., 2022; Magnusson & Öberg, 2015), including those aimed at groups such as people with disabilities (Lundälv et al., 2021; Nilsson et al., 2022).

The research also draws on past events such as the Cold War, explored in the study by Farbøl et al. (2024). They examined how social resilience became the focus of state intervention in Denmark during that period, and how psychological defence was replaced by a more practical approach that included media preparedness. In the same vein, Bennesved and Sylvest (2022) analysed the role of cinema and television in shaping the socio-technical narratives of civil defence and how preparedness for such situations is conveyed through the media not only as a governmental responsibility but also as an individual civic duty. They also highlight how preparedness is both symbolic and material (Farbøl, 2022).

The literature has also examined the representational strategies adopted by the media in relation to catastrophic events (Parida et al., 2021) and the role journalists and news organisations play in handling crisis situations (Houston et al., 2019). In these studies, communication is understood as an essential aspect of disaster mitigation, preparedness, and response (Houston, 2015). Taking disruptive events as a starting point, the literature also explores changes in journalistic practices related to, for example, organisational preparedness and disaster coverage plans, following demonstrations of the inability to act and of inadequate preparation (Takahashi et al., 2020; Takahashi & Zhang, 2025) and, more generally, changes in preparedness measures for similar future events (Coombs, 2014). Media preparedness is also linked to ethical considerations (Sand, 2026), highlighting how the media sector and those working within it often lack adequate training and preparedness in dealing with, for example, news of

traumatic events (Amend et al., 2012; Anderson & Bourke, 2020). Some studies have found a lack of preparedness to report on terrorist attacks and disasters to be linked to insufficient expertise in science and medicine (Covello et al., 2001; Robinson & Newstetter, 2003). This lack of preparedness also stems from limitations of technology itself depending on the specific context (Englund et al., 2023; Nieves-Pizarro et al., 2019).

Digital Preparedness Beyond Published Work

Literature reviews are, by their nature, based on published work; hence, they often lag behind more current research efforts. Furthermore database searches exclude research results published beyond journal articles and academic conference. To get a broader picture of the Swedish research landscape we also conducted a search of SweCris, which houses data on publicly funded research projects. The search with the keyword preparedness for the years 2008-2028 returned 85 projects, of which 13 were included in the analysis based on their explicit focus on digital and media preparedness. In some cases, the focus of these investigations is digital and media preparedness itself, while in others, digital and technological preparedness is analysed and described as a digital and technological means of responding to crises or disruptive events. These projects address a broad range of societal and digital preparedness challenges, including crisis management, distance education, emerging vulnerabilities with artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, information resilience, climate adaptation, and municipal preparedness.

As in the literature reviewed in the previous section, education and training emerge in these projects as central mechanisms for strengthening preparedness. The project Innovative Test Milieu for Future Remote Teaching in Lapplands Gymnasium (2015-02339_Vinnova) focused on developing sustainable distance-learning environments and increasing teachers' readiness to operate in digitally mediated educational settings. Several projects explored how digital technologies can strengthen preparedness, training, and decision-making: Virtual Studio for Crisis Training

(2013-04203_Vinnova) investigated how ICT-supported training environments could improve crisis preparedness through digital simulation and learning, and the project Dual Purpose Virtual Reality (VR) Team Training for Civilian and Military Medics (2024-03316_Vinnova) demonstrated a more advanced application of immersive technologies using virtual reality to support realistic medical team training in both military and civilian contexts. Likewise, the Strängnäs municipality project on the AI language model ADA (2020-04054_Vinnova) explored how natural language processing can support social services by identifying signals of violence and conflict in child welfare reports. It also highlighted the need for national coordination in digital preparedness efforts.

The projects challenge the traditional top-down approaches to preparedness by emphasising citizen engagement and inclusion and recognise that preparedness is shaped by diverse life situations, social conditions, and access to information, as indicated in the projects Co-designing Methods for Exploring Gender Norms, Communication and Security Concerns in Crisis Situations (2019-01979_Vinnova) and Norm-Creative Crisis Preparedness (2020-00677_Vinnova). Similarly, Citizen Sensing – Urban Climate Resilience through Participatory Risk Management Systems (2017-01719_Formas) developed a participatory risk management system that helps citizens by addressing their knowledge demands so they are better prepared to take appropriate actions during potentially harmful events.

These projects also show that the topic of digital safety and cybersecurity is highly connected to digital preparedness. The project Cybersecurity in Local Government – A Comparative Study (2021-06310_VR) investigated how municipalities understand, organise, and manage cybersecurity risks. Findings in this area of study are particularly relevant given municipalities' responsibility for essential public services and their varying levels of organisational preparedness and resources. Likewise, Safer Together? A Critical Study of Inter-Municipal Collaboration on Societal Preparedness and Security (2025-03949_VR) and Main-

streaming Preparedness? Planning for Preparedness in Policy and Practice (2025-05162_VR) investigated how municipalities respond to increasing preparedness demands amid competing policy priorities.

Finally, the project Negotiations of Professional Authority and Truth in News Media, Museums and Higher Education (2018-01339_VR) examined how established knowledge institutions are prepared to respond to fake news, misinformation, and fact resistance. Similarly, Media Knowledge and Cold War Preparedness (2019-02664_VR) explored historical perspectives on psychological defence and strategic communication.

Taken together, the projects demonstrate a gradual shift from technology-focused innovation to more integrated approaches that combine technological solutions with organisational capacity, governance, and citizen and societal engagement.

However comprehensive the coverage of critical knowledge in the field of digital preparedness may be, there is certainly scope for further work. For example, future studies could present even more concrete and specific case studies, analyse preparedness from an economic perspective, or examine the efforts required at the individual, societal, and business levels.

Conclusion

This literature review, in combination with the analysis of current projects on digital and media preparedness, identified three central themes that are addressed by the research: education, health, and the digital divide in relation to preparedness. The marked difference between research on digital preparedness and that on media preparedness is not only the sheer number of articles published but also the analytical approach. While digital preparedness research has focused on questions of how ready societies, organisations, and individuals are for the adoption of digital technologies, studies of media preparedness have focused on the role that media play in preparing societies for crises and natural disasters and in times of war. In studies on media preparedness, the roles of journalists and specific media formats, as well as content such

as news, are highlighted. In particular, public service media are highlighted as critical societal infrastructures with a responsibility to contribute to the preparedness of society.

Thus, this review identifies a lack of studies that:

- highlight comparative perspectives and longitudinal approaches.
- combine digital and media preparedness, and
- focus on the perspectives of the people implicated in preparedness efforts.

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The role of the media in societal preparedness and their importance for civil defence have received increasing attention in recent years. This report from K-pub addresses these issues through a review of research on digital preparedness and media preparedness, conducted by Miriana Cascone at Södertörn University. The review highlights the need for further research on everyday life and civic preparedness, longitudinal studies and comparative perspectives.

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