

## How to ensure democracy and free speech online - a new report by Schibsted

**Our democracies are vulnerable. The moment we start discussing whether an election result would have been different if voters had not been subjected to false campaigns and manipulation, we already have a democratic problem. The question is how to give social networks their share of responsibility for the content they distribute, and at the same time defend our freedom of expression. This is the question Schibsted tries to answer in this report.**

The discussion on how social networks should be able to operate has been frequently discussed over the past years and has gained attention in the US and on EU level. US Senator Elisabeth Warren and European Commissioner Margrethe Vestager are not the only politicians that have urged the need to investigate social networks. Regulation on EU level is coming and Schibsted, having the mission to “be a leading voice in our industry”, believes it is important to give our insights on how fair rules could look like. In the light of this, Schibsted is publishing a report with eight guiding principles on how regulation can be created to provide equal market conditions while providing citizens with freedom of speech, not only offline but online.

- Our democracies are challenged. The same social networks that have given the voiceless an opportunity to express themselves, and which give us all opportunities for contact and friendship, are also used by those who manipulate millions of people through false campaigns, and inciting hatred. We as publishers must engage in the discussion of how to balance necessary measures to protect democracy and an equally necessary protection of freedom of speech, said Kristin Skogen Lund, CEO Schibsted.

The Scandinavian countries are in the top of the league when it comes to freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Scibsted is hoping the report can be a way for us to make our voice heard internationally when these topics are on the agenda. But for this to happen, it is necessary for politicians and others with an interest in the management of societies to raise up and take part in the debate.