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Inclusion and exclusion in the digital age

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Universal design and emerging new digital technologies

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Inclusion and exclusion in the digital age

Digital technologies have today far-reaching effects on the society and have changed the way people communicate, work, study, shop, play, and so on. In one way, it appears as if these technologies have similar effects on the society as the introduction of the steam engine, electricity and internal combustion engine – what has been referred to the industrial revolution. It seems as if the society rapidly is going into a new age, namely the digital age. This age is something that I together with colleagues have define in previous researcher: “For us digital age denotes the widespread diffusion of digital technologies and the changes it leads to in technical, cultural, economic, ecological, ideological and societal spheres” (Schaefer et al 2018). With this term we don't want to rank different technological developments in history and we don't pre-evaluate the development as revolutionary.

In this abstract I want to go further with this perspective and argue that this steadily growing theoretical and empirically research field – manly in digital social science and digital humanities – are lacking in disability studies and vice versa today. In this abstract I will emerge studies on the digital age with a combination of the two research fields. To explain and understand how the digital technologies are changing the everyday life's for people, it is necessary to develop new insights about future challenges of inclusion and exclusion. It is central that disability research raise the question of what opportunities for inclusion the digital age can bring. How can people's everyday use of digital technologies be understood and theorized? The abstract highlights the practices of using digital technologies as computers, smartphones, digital devices and so forth, but also how the so called online world on internet emerges with the offline world. The abstract therefore tries to renewed theoretical concepts to understand the digital age from an inclusion and exclusion perspective. Disability research needs to bring together the two fields, when the society are going into the digital age.