

The Power of Writing – and the Bottlenecks

Speaker: Eva Lindgren

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This talk highlights the dynamic interplay between writing, technology, and societal shifts, emphasizing the need to adapt and address emerging challenges.

In the digital age, writing wields immense power, shaping discourse, fostering critical thinking, and influencing democratic processes. Within educational contexts, writing plays a pivotal role, cultivating literacy, analytical skills, and empathy. However, the landscape is evolving rapidly. Writing, historically linked to technologies like pens, typewriters, and computers, now embraces digital tools that offer advanced affordances for both literacy and oral communication. This transformation impacts education and extends beyond its boundaries.

Notably, a significant shift has occurred: young people in Sweden (and possibly elsewhere) increasingly prefer listening to news over reading them. Simultaneously, AI language tools facilitate writing, feedback, and assessment. Yet, bottlenecks persist, hindering participation through literacy. These challenges raise questions about equality and democracy. In my discussion, I will explore the current and future literacy landscape, focusing on young people, education, and active engagement.

Bio

Eva Lindgren is Professor of Language Teaching and Learning at Umeå University (Sweden), where she leads the projects (W)rights! and Will writing ever be the same? Together with her colleagues, she seeks to reconceptualise the role of writing and writing education for democratic participation in compulsory school. She is specifically interested in the relation between language, literacy and democracy in various contexts, including indigenous education, and has also been involved in keystroke logging research.