

# Can youth be influenced into safer e-scooter behaviour through SoMe?

## An investigation of the potential of using SoMe and influencer collaboration for traffic safety communication

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- This report presents the results of the second and last survey carried out in the project "Ungspark"
- From November 2021 to June 2022, the proportion of youth that have used an electric scooter in the last month has increased from nine to 49 per cent.
- The average number of minutes on an electric scooter is more or less unchanged.
- Results indicate that mandatory helmets have led to a certain increase in helmet use among the youngest, but most still do not use helmets, and there is no improvement in other risk behaviour.
- We do not find any support that the "#Don't be a jerk" campaign has contributed to changes in behaviour (dual riding, mobile use, riding under the influence)

## Background

The e-scooter has quickly become a popular means of transport. For young people in particular, the e-scooter offers an extended geographical range and added opportunities to get around. At the same time, many accidents with electric scooters have been reported, and traffic safety has been a central concern. Surveys in Norway and other countries show, that the risk of getting into an accident with an electric scooter is higher than with a bicycle. As a result, efforts have been made to regulate e-scooter use in Norway, both through restrictions on the number of rental electric scooters, night closures, mandatory helmets, alcohol limit rules and other regulations. However, there are many indications that the risk of accidents is still high, especially among young people. It is therefore interesting to explore other measures to reduce accidents. Social media (SoMe) has been suggested as a particularly relevant platform for reaching youth with information about road safety.



## Aim

The current study had two main objectives. The first goal was to document the results of the second and final survey conducted in the UngSpark project, which was carried out in June 2022. We looked into how e-scooters affect young people's travel behavior and mobility patterns, and investigated whether there have been any changes since the first survey which was carried out in autumn 2021. A particular area of interest was to explore potential changes in behavior in areas where there has been stricter regulation since 2021 (helmet use, riding under the influence of alcohol). The second aim of the study was to investigate the potential of using influencer-collaboration and newer SoMe-platform for road safety campaigns aimed at young people. More specifically, we aimed to investigate the effects of the SoMe-campaign “Don’t be a jerk” (#ikkeværdust) on e-scooter behavior.

## The campaign «Don’t be a jerk»

The traffic safety organization Ung i Trafikken (Youth in traffic) launched the campaign “#Don't be a jerk" in May 2022. The purpose of the campaign was to promote awareness concerning risky behavior on e-scooters, and influence attitudes and behavior related to risky behavior on e-scooters.

The campaign consists of three short films with the Norwegian influencer Aleksander Sæterstøl. Each video is about a specific type of risk behaviour; dual riding on the same e-scooter, mobile phone use, and driving under the influence of alcohol. These are behaviors that we had identified in the project's first phase as frequently occurring, potentially dangerous and possibly influenceable through a campaign

The videos were short, with a humorous twist. Each video staged a scenario that young people can recognize (e.g. girlfriends riding two on a scooter), but in an exaggerated and caricatured way that highlights the unfavorable aspects of the behavior, without “pointing a strict finger”. The videos were promoted on TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram, and the campaign lasted for two and a half weeks.

A “guerrilla stunt” with 2,000 stickers on VOI e-scooters was also part of the campaign. Unfortunately this part was delayed, so that it was not possible to measure its effect with the survey.

## Method

A survey was conducted in two waves, with a sample that was partly overlapping. The first wave was in November 2021, the second wave in June 2022. This report is mainly focused on the second wave as well as a comparison between the waves.

The second survey included questions asked in the 2021 survey, in addition to new questions. The questionnaires were identical with regards to mobility patterns, e-scooter use and e-scooter accidents. The 2022 survey was expanded with questions about the campaign; such as questions about whether you have seen, and what you think of, the campaign. In order to map the effects of the campaign, the respondents were asked to think about their behavior in the period before the campaign and compare with how it was then. They were also asked about attitudes and intentions related to the behaviour, in line with the theory of planned behavior (TPB).



## Respondents

We have used two methods to recruit respondents to the survey:

- Targeted recruitment through social media
- Recruitment of respondents from the first survey

The target group for the survey was youth between the ages of 13 and 22 who live in the following municipalities: Kongsvinger, Lørenskog, Oslo, Asker, Bærum, Stavanger, Horten, Fredrikstad, and Drammen. 1,199 people responded. Of these, 40 per cent were recruited from the 2021-survey (i.e. 18 per cent of those who responded to the 2021 survey) and 60 per cent from social media.

The target group was the same for both surveys. The net sample differs slightly from the first survey, in that there are fewer under 15 (13 versus 19 per cent), and more girls than boys (62 per cent versus 57 per cent).

## Travel behavior and e-scooter use

There are slightly more people who used e-scooters and who were car passengers and fewer who used public transport, than what we measured in November 2021.

The first finding may be related to the fact that there are more people who have access to a private e-scooter (an increase from 41 per cent to 36 percent). Increase in car use may be linked to seasonal variations, but may also be linked to differences in the two samples (gender, age and geographical composition).

We have therefore looked at changes in travel behavior and use of e-scooters for the respondents (N=479) who took part in both surveys. The proportion who have used an e-scooter one or more times has increased from nine to 49 per cent. If we look at all journeys on a given day, we see that the number of minutes young people walked has increased from 26 to 34 on average, while the number of minutes driven by car has increased from 18 to 26. Ownership of an e-scooter has increased slightly, but average number of minutes riding an e-scooter is more or less unchanged.

## Risk behaviour

In June 2022, the use of a helmet on e-scooters for people under 15 years of age was made mandatory. In both surveys a clear majority (77 per cent) did not usually wear a helmet on e-scooters. If we only look at those under 15 years of age, the proportion who usually wear a helmet has increased from 29 to 38 per cent. An additional 14 per cent sometimes wear a helmet. However, about half of those required to wear a helmet, still never do.

About four percent more people say they have had one or more accidents with e-scooters in June 2022 than in November 2021. If we assume that those who answered more than four have had five accidents, there have been 43 accidents during this period, i.e. 0.09 accidents per person on average.

When it comes to other risky behaviour, we also see that fewer people report that they have ridden an e-scooter while under the influence of alcohol, compared to before, or while looking at their mobile phone.



## Effects of the campaign «Don't be a jerk»

A total of 40 percent of respondents have seen at least one of the campaign films. There were somewhat more girls than boys who had seen the campaign. A whopping 86 percent of those who have seen the campaign have seen "Drive alone". The other two films (drunk and two-on-one) were both seen by 42 percent. Most were exposed to the campaign through Snapchat (58 percent), followed by TikTok (43 percent) and Instagram (27 percent).

We have investigated whether there are differences in self-reported behaviour between those who have seen and those who have not seen the campaign regarding frequency of the behavior) and reported change in frequency since April 2022 (change). We found no support that the campaign has led to less risky behaviour. Moreover, we did not find any positive effects of the campaign on intentions or attitudes towards the three behaviors (dual riding, mobile use, riding under the influence).

For the behaviors "mobile phone use" and "dual riding", we actually found that those who have seen the campaign films both reported more positive attitudes towards, and stronger intentions to do these behaviors than those who have not seen the campaign films. It is difficult to say whether the campaign has worked against its purpose, or whether seasonal variations, differences in selection or other factors for which we have not controlled, can explain these group differences, or whether it is those who show the most risk-taking behavior, that to a greatest extent have noticed the campaign.