

English Abstracts

Philip Baugut / Katharina Neumann: On the Ethics of Responsibility in Journalistic Reporting of Sexual Abuse. Examining the Perspective of Sexual Abuse Victims on Journalists and their Reporting (Journalistische Verantwortungsethik und sexueller Missbrauch. Eine Untersuchung der Perspektive von Betroffenen auf Journalist*innen und deren Berichterstattung), pp. 363-385

Sexual abuse is an issue often covered up and frequently kept private. However, it can evolve into a public problem when victims choose to address the media. Our study focuses on journalists' responsibility towards victims. We examine the so far largely neglected effects of media coverage on the victims involved. Drawing on Kepplinger's concept of reciprocal effects, we analyse data from 18 qualitative interviews with victims who have been the centre of reporting. The results show that victims were severely stressed if the journalists followed a media logic-oriented approach, ignoring the political concerns of the victims and primarily focusing on the structural causes of sexual abuse. Indeed, certain journalistic behaviour and reporting patterns perceived as disrespectful by the victims can have significant psychological impact for the people involved, if nothing else because they assumed relatively strong media effects on third parties. In general, the victims we interviewed expressed varied perceptions of the media and media coverage, ranging from gratitude for a long-awaited public hearing to accusations of 'voyeurism'.

Keywords: media effects; reciprocal effects; sexual abuse; ethics of responsibility

Hendrik Michael / Sophie Reitmeier / Miriam Czichon: Netflix and Kill? Disruptive Innovation in the Age of Digitalization (Netflix and kill? Disruptive Innovation im Zeitalter der Digitalisierung), pp. 386-405

This study contributes to the emerging research field of digital media history. It examines phenomena of media innovation and transformation by focusing on Netflix as an example. We draw on different theories of media change by Balbi and Stöber as well as the economic concepts of disruptive innovation and sociological fictionalism. Developing a heuristic model, we combine these theoretical perspectives to allow a systematic analysis of media change in the age of digitalization. Our model allows us to describe different phases of media innovation in relation to three categories, namely media system, media messages, and media reception. The study reveals how Netflix exemplifies the transformations, but also the continuities and disruptions of the digital age. Netflix is an initiator of change and supplies new ideas. Anticipating first the diffusion of DVD media and later video-on-demand technology, the initial niche provider exploited its disruptive potential and revolutionised home entertainment. Yet, with regard to content and company organization, Netflix also relies on well-tried structures and strategies that are not as revolutionary as they may seem.

Keywords: media innovation, media change, digital communication, video-on-demand, Netflix

Monika Taddicken / Anne Reif / Julia Brandhorst / Janina Schuster / Morten Diestelhorst / Lennart Hauk: Economic Benefits or Social Debate? A Quantitative Framing Analysis of Media Coverage on Autonomous Driving (Wirtschaftlicher Nutzen statt gesellschaftlicher Debatte? Eine quantitative Framing-Analyse der Medienberichterstattung zum autonomen Fahren), pp. 406-427

Autonomous driving is a technology of high social relevance. Particularly because of its diverse benefits and risks this technology can and must be viewed and discussed from different angles. This includes the necessity of ethical debates on future applications and designs, most notably since the first fatal accident of a self-driving car in 2016. For such complex issues, journalistic media play a vital role in picking up on or initiating social debate. Hence, this paper examines German media reporting by drawing on 540 newspaper and magazine articles on the subject published between 2014 and 2017. Based on Entman's (1993) framing approach in combination with the idea of operationalisation by Matthes and Kohring (2008), four frames can be identified: (1) technological progress, (2) the ambivalence frame, (3) regulation of technology and (4) economic benefits. The results of the study show that German media coverage mainly focuses on technological and economic advantages, while ethical concerns and security issues are discussed only rarely. Even in the year after the first fatal accident, this changed only marginally.

Keywords: technological communication, science communication, autonomous driving, artificial intelligence, framing, content analysis

Arista Beatrice Beseler / Hannah Schmid-Petri: Immunisation – Protection or Potential Risk? An Analysis of the Debate about Immunisation and Vaccines in German YouTube Videos (Schutz durch Impfungen versus potenzielle Risiken? Die Diskussion über das Thema „Impfen und Impfungen“ in deutschsprachigen YouTube-Videos), pp. 428-446

Immunisation and vaccines are well-proven protections from potentially life-threatening diseases, and major side effects occur only very rarely. Yet, a minority of the population keeps up an anti-vaccination sentiment. This anti-vaccination movement greatly relies on alternative communication platforms for their participation in the public discourse about immunisation and vaccines. We conducted a quantitative content analysis of 97 German YouTube videos from 2018. Our aim was to explore the German debate about vaccines by focussing on the communicators, the central positions towards vaccines, the reactions these videos generated, and the arguments used by the people who issued the videos. The results of the study show an almost equal amount of pro- and anti-vaccination content, even though the number of videos with an anti-vaccination sentiment was slightly higher. Mostly, the videos were created by laypeople. Anti-vaccination communicators mostly used emotional arguments to support their position, impugning the pro-vaccination majority opinion, inciting fear or reverting to conspiracy theories. At the same time, the amount of views, upvotes and downvotes indicate that the anti-vaccination videos were considerably less popular than pro-vaccination content.

Keywords: debate about vaccines and immunisation, vaccine hesitancy, anti-vaccination movement, participation, online communication, health communication, German YouTube videos, content analysis

Wiebke Rögener / Holger Wormer: Good Environmental Communication from a Citizen Point of View. A Citizen Science Approach in Recipient Research for the Development of Quality Criteria (Gute Umweltkommunikation aus Bürgersicht. Ein Citizen-Science-Ansatz in der Rezipierendenforschung zur Entwicklung von Qualitätskriterien), pp. 447-474

Taking environmental journalism as an example, we examine to what extent a citizen science approach can stimulate the development of new methodological procedures in quality and recipient research. In particular, we investigate in an explorative form what quality standards laypersons expect of certain forms of science communication. The participants were not just interviewed as media users in surveys, but took part – in the sense of a ‘collaborative project’ – in the development of instruments that are applied to assess the quality of media content and press releases on environmental topics from a layperson's perspective. The question of what constitutes quality in science journalism from the recipients’ point of view is of crucial importance to its audience reach. The field of environmental research is a suitable model discipline for science communication, since reporting on these topics make up a considerable part of journalistic science reporting and science public relations and because environmental issues affect many citizens. The approach seems promising in generating initial answers to quality questions from the recipient perspective and producing suggestions for future method development. For the practice of institutional science communication and journalism, also in the sense of a ‘public engagement with science’, approaches are discussed which show how a more intense participation of users in the quality assessment of media reporting covering science-related topics could be achieved.

Keywords: Science communication, quality in science journalism, environmental journalism, citizen science, methods of recipient research, participation