

English Abstracts

Jutta Röser / Corinna Peil: Diffusion and Participation through Domestication. Changing Patterns of Access to the Internet 1997-2007 (Diffusion und Teilhabe durch Domestizierung. Zugänge zum Internet im Wandel 1997-2007), pp. 481-502

Drawing on the domestication approach, this paper explicates how the Internet in Germany has changed between 1997 and 2007. Representing an occupation-related medium in the beginning, it now resembles an everyday life medium used by a large number of people. Focusing on contexts within the home, we address the relevance of domestic everyday processes of diffusion of new media technologies. Paying particular attention to the category of gender, we ask what aspects can foster access to the Internet, and what aspects prevent the use of the medium. The issues discussed in this paper draw on both quantitative and qualitative material. A secondary analysis of representative, partly unpublished data from the ARD/ZDF online-surveys is complemented with ethnographic research in the households of 25 heterosexual couples of different age and educational levels. Thus, we show that what is evident on a macro level with regards to the changing structure of Internet users can also be observed on a micro level: in contrast to concerns raised in relation to digital divide theories, the Internet has exceeded social boundaries during the last decade. Consumers' domestic everyday life can be regarded as playing an ambivalent role in this process, for it stimulates Internet participation on the one hand, while reproducing inequalities on the other.

Keywords: internet, domestication approach, digital divide, diffusion theory, everyday life, media use, ethnography, gender studies, cultural studies

Frauke Zeller / Jens Wolling / Pablo Porten-Cheé: Framing 0/1: Media Framing of the Issue of 'Social Digitisation' (Framing 0/1. Wie die Medien über die „Digitalisierung der Gesellschaft“ berichten), pp. 503-524

This paper ties in with frequently recurring debates about the way the media report on technological issues and their potential risks. Drawing on an analysis of selected print media outlets' coverage of notions of digitisation and digital technologies, we argue that digital technologies are rarely criticised in media reporting. Indeed, the empirical results from two time periods reveal almost identical structures of reporting. Only few differences can be observed with regards to a subtle change towards a more negative image of digital technologies; however, the overall picture remains rather positive. Yet, this observation does not apply to all themes. If the reporting focuses on politics, law and security rather than entertainment, the stances appear more critical. Methodologically, the study demonstrates that a combination of holistic and reconstructive media frames represent a promising empirical approach.

Keywords: framing analysis, digitisation, technology reporting, content analysis, method comparison

Ines Engelmann: The Instrumentalisation of News Values in Journalism. The Significance of Issues, Sources and Statements to Professional Journalistic Processes of Decision-Making (Journalistische Instrumentalisierung von Nachrichtenfaktoren. Einflüsse journalistischer Einstellungen auf simulierte Issue-, Quellen- und Statement-Entscheidungen), pp. 525-543

Drawing on data from an online survey of journalists, this paper examines the functional model of news selection (rather than the causal model). Based on a version of rational choice theory, this concept re-considers the construction of news values as a decision theory. In addition, political attitudes of journalists are integrated in the model. It is assumed that their political attitudes do not only influence their decisions, but also indirectly impact on the political instrumentalisation of news values. The empirical findings confirm this hypothesis; demonstrating that political attitudes strongly impact on statement decisions (news bias hypothesis). Moreover, political attitudes have only little influence on the relation between perceived news factors and news decisions of statements and sources (instrumentalisation distortion hypothesis). The re-examined selection hypothesis of news value theory is significant to explanations of issue decisions.

Keywords: news value theory, news bias, theory of attitudes, rational choice theory, online survey

Maria Löblich: Towards Empirical Social Science. The Historic and Cognitive Identity of Communication Studies (Die empirisch-sozialwissenschaftliche Wende. Ein Beitrag zur historischen und kognitiven Identität der Kommunikationswissenschaft), pp. 544-562

In the course of the shift towards a social scientific discipline in the 1960s, a specific empirical social scientific identity of communication studies was gaining ground. In the years before, the discipline had considered itself as one of the humanities. This paper asks how the new orientation gained acceptance, and why the former self-conception disappeared. On the basis of evolutionary theory, scholarly debate and work within the university institutes of communication research are considered. Not only the mechanisms of academic dispute are investigated but also the way publications, lecturing and research were re-organized shall be examined. Moreover, the reactions of the supporters of the humanities camp will be analysed. The occurrence of an empirical social scientific shift can be explained by several changes in the media and academia, as well as the political environment of the discipline.

Keywords: history of communication studies, sociology of science, evolutionary theory, 20th century

Stefanie Averbeck-Lietz / Matthias Künzler / Marijana Tomin: Thomas Luckmann – a Classic in Communication Sociology and its Significance to Communication Studies (Thomas Luckmann – ein Klassiker der Kommunikationssoziologie für die Kommunikationswissenschaft), pp. 563–580

Aside from the book ‘The Social Construction of Reality’ written by Berger and Luckmann in 1966, and its numerous editions, Luckmann is commonly not reflected on much in communication research. This is rather surprising given that the ‘communicative turn’ in the sociology of knowledge can be attributed to his work in large parts, and to his adaptation of central concepts of Alfred Schütz. The authors of this article interpret Luckmann from three perspectives: 1) from the point of view of social constructivism; 2) from the point of view of communication theory; and 3) from the point of view of methodology. Each perspective is central to many questions raised by communication scholars, particularly with regards to the dynamic processes of institutionalization of communicative acts.

Keywords: sociology of knowledge, communication sociology, social and communicative construction of reality, communicative acts, institutionalization, communicative genres, neo-institutionalism