Abstracts

Tim Schatto-Eckrodt/ Svenja Boberg/Florian Wintterlin/ Lena Frischlich/Thorsten Quandt: Deliberation Under Threat. Information Warfare and Disinformation as a Threat to the Digital Public

The virtually ubiquitous presence of the (mobile) Internet goes hand in hand with a great democratic potential: according to Habermas' theory of deliberative democracy, citizens can freely inform themselves with regard to relevant topics and enter into a discourse that ultimately leads to a common consensus. On the dark side of the digital public sphere, misinformation, propaganda, and hatred are present on a massive scale. This article deals with the strategic dissemination of disinformation in digital public spheres, also known as information warfare. In addition to an overview concerning the current state of research, this article illustrates what such a campaign can look like and how it can be handled successfully.

Wolf J. Schünemann: Reason for Panic? An Empirical Look at the Worries Surrounding the Democratic Controversy in the Digital Age

Social media are facing ever more criticism. They would appear to drive the fragmentation of the public sphere, to help spread fake news and to damage democratic discourse through hate speech and agitation. In short: Democracy seems to be endangered. These allegations are severe and are about to alter the prevalent reluctance of political and legal actors to date towards online-content-regulation. The article undertakes a critical-empirical assessment of the most frequent crisis diagnoses (social bots, echo chambers and hate speech) by referring to a major study of party-political Facebook communication in the run-up to the German federal elections in 2017. It concludes with a plea for greater equinamity and employment of a civil-society approach towards addressing the current challenges facing democracy through digital media.

Martina Skrubbeltrang Mahnke: What Characterizes Algorithmic Personalization Processes. Towards Participative Use of Algorithmically Personalized Media

The following article discusses algorithmic personalization processes in digital media based on their actual practical operation mode. In particular, a theoretical-conceptual framework is developed, which understands algorithmic personalization as a mutual communication process between algorithm and user. Based on an interview study with programmers, users and journalists, the article then examines empirically the general dimensions which shape algorithm-user communication. The article ends with a number of concluding remarks in support of the participatory use of algorithmically personalized media and how these could look.

Klaus-Dieter Altmeppen/Alexander Filipović: Corporate Digital Responsibility. On the Responsibility of Media Corporations in Digital Times

The article describes and discusses the new concept of Corporate Digital Responsibility (CDR) and pursues the goal of making it fruitful from a media ethical viewpoint. The concept of Corporate Digital Responsibility for the media sector orients itself on the ethics of digitalization (algorithms, data, "artificial intelligence"), the ethics of a medially imparted public communication (journalism, PR/advertising, entertainment) and on corporate and business ethics in alignment with media ethics. The initial reflections and available descriptions related to CDR are followed by a discussion of the concept, in order to thereafter specify the concept for the field of media.

Sonja Nowack/Klaus Meier: Authorization of Interviews. A Qualitative Study Concerning a Widespread Problem

The authorization of interviews is a common but controversial practice of German journalism. Editorial offices repeatedly resist, insofar as absurd authorization processes are thematized: only the questions themselves, blacked-out answers or blank pages are published in cases where texts are re-written or replies have been withdrawn by interview partners. However, empirically backed knowledge regarding the practices and problems related to authorization hardly exists. How do authorization processes occur in the course of journalistic interviews and what changes are made to the original texts? This research question was pursued during the course of an explorative study, consisting of guideline discussions with journalists and public relations experts as well as content analysis comparisons of interviews before and after authorization had taken place. Based on the results recommendations for action are made, in order to avoid conflicts and benefit from the advantages of professional authorization processes.

Julia Hünniger: When Lovesick: Help Via the Net? Internet Self-Help Forums as a Social Support Resource

The article describes the quality of social support in Internet forums addressing, in particular, those forums dealing with lovesickness, on the basis of a forum analysis, an online survey and problem-centered interviews. Social support in Internet forums possesses a different quality than that found in classic settings such as conversations with friends or as part of a self-help group, which is primarily due to the structural characteristics of computer-based communications. Within a forum new forms of communication and patterns of relationships develop because the contact between the users reaches a high level of intensity on the one hand and are limited to a specific phase of life – such as after the separation from a partner – on the other.

Marco Kühnlein: Sign of a New Start? The "Youth Synod" in the Mirror of the Dialog of Young People With and In the Catholic Church

The Catholic Church has moved away from the lifestyles of most adolescents and young adults in recent decades – not only in Germany. The preparation and implementation of the so-called "Youth Synod" in October 2018 therefore involved young people in various forms, worldwide and regardless of their beliefs. Although participation in the synodal process on a structural level could not be fully achieved, the contributions of young people had a noticeable influence on the results of the synod. The form of dialogue as well as the recognition of young people as actors in and with the church opens up the potential to redefine the relationship to one another.

Annika Franzetti: From Restrained to Disappointed. The Press Commentaries on the Youth Synod 2018

In October 2018 the Bishops met in Rome for a Synod in order to discuss "Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment". As already undertaken concerning the Family Synod of 2014/2015 *Communicatio Socialis* reviews the press coverage surrounding the Assembly of Bishops in Rome in 2018. Thereby, a fully representative or even complete picture cannot be conveyed, but rather an overview of the overall mood conveyed by the German language press is conveyed.