

International Conference on Media Accountability at the University of Lugano

27./28. January 2012, Lugano, Switzerland

Media Accountability – Possibilities and Pitfalls in the Era of Web 2.0

Call for Papers

Digitization of media and the resulting convergence of print, broadcasting and telecommunications have altered the media landscape significantly in recent years. The traditional mass media is thus confronted with a variety of new online competitors like social media sites or others produced by users themselves (blogs, for instance). This new competition puts traditional and established accountability models such as press councils, ombudsmen or ethic codes in question. However, new digital opportunities allow the recipients to actively participate in the debate on how the media are to be held accountable – even though, at the moment, the number of people who actively participate in the debate remains rather low.

Thus, we encourage submissions focusing on media accountability, in particular with regard to new online technologies such as social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.) and innovative Web-based accountability processes.

Topics may include

- Are traditional instruments of media accountability like press councils or ombudsmen up to the ethical issues of an increasingly participative Web-community? How do traditional media accountability systems progress and adapt to changes in the media landscape compared with those within media organizations? Can new forms of Web-based accountability processes complement traditional instruments of media self-regulation and compensate for their deficits?
- How are media organizations in particular reacting to the changing online environment? Do they adapt their structures and formalize the process of information release in order to keep pace with fast and interactive social media? Do these new instruments of (social) media accountability have tangible consequences for the everyday work of journalists?
- Do media organizations express clear strategic objectives with regard to online accountability and publish them online in order to allow the Web community to hold them to their own standards? Do media organizations make decision-making processes, e.g. within the newsrooms, more transparent?
- Do media organizations create special teams supporting social media activities based on accountability, trained to be aware of recurring issues and able to support journalists and production staff?
- Is today's media accountability audience-driven – allowing the Web community to hold media organizations to account? Can the involvement of civil society be facilitated by the adoption of new technical platforms?
- Do journalists or blog authors respond to popular comment threads where new points or questions are being raised? Are newsrooms actively promoting user integration or not?
- Are these participatory technologies not only favorable for holding media organizations to account but, moreover, also in the struggle for increased democracy?

- Are there substantial transnational differences concerning the emergence of new instruments and Web-based accountability processes?
- Which theories or methodological approaches are best for evaluating the value of social media accountability?

These are just a few questions intended to reflect on the actual debate about the various possibilities and pitfalls of online media accountability instruments.

Papers, both theoretical and empirical, addressing the aforementioned topics are welcome. We particularly encourage interdisciplinary approaches.

Criteria for submissions:

- We accept only original full-paper texts (not published elsewhere)
- Papers should range between 3500 and 5000 words
- Papers can be submitted in English, German, Italian or French language (the presentation at the conference must be in English)
- Submissions must contain an abstract in English of approximately 150 words, with up to 4 keywords
- For formal criteria and citation guidelines please take a look at http://www.scoms.ch/note_for_contributors.asp.
- **After the conference the best papers will be published in the scientific journal *Studies in Communication Sciences*, the journal of the Swiss Association of Communication and Media Research. Authors will be notified about the decision after the conference.**

Deadline for submissions: October 31, 2011.

Please send submissions to

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