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## Editors' Introduction

One of the main challenges for communication scholars is the dynamic change in the media environment. The rapid development of media technology affects the media content suppliers and consumers. At the same time, political and economic contexts provide opportunities and threats to mass communication. The content of the 2023 Fall Issue of the Central European Journal of Communication discusses the diversity of factors that impact media performance.

We are still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and communication scholars are now making sense of the role media played in those unusual circumstances. More recently, another crisis, namely the war in Ukraine, harmed the relations between countries and cultures. The Russian invasion of Ukraine led to significant political and social turmoil, which is particularly acute in Europe. These shocks revealed the extent and harmful impact of disinformation and propaganda in the media, however we still lack nuanced reflection on the issues of mass communication malpractices.

Nevertheless, the academic community has captured the significance of digitalization. Despite some pessimistic prognoses, newspapers and magazines remain important segments of the media markets. By adapting social media to attract attention to their content and bond with the audience, many of the traditional media outlets reinvent themselves and reach new groups of readers. Changes in technology and their consequences require the adaptation of legal frameworks at both domestic and international level.

The 2023 Fall Issue of “The Central European Journal of Communication” (CEJC) collects and presents studies on all the aforementioned disputes. Written by scholars representing a broad scope of perspectives – from political communication to media market research and analyses of the legal aspect of the media – papers published in this Issue provide an overview of methods used in the field of communication.

In the first paper, Jaroslava Kaňková and Hajo Boomgaarden discuss the surge in vaccine opposition (anti-vaxxers) during the COVID-19 pandemic that has impeded the establishment of herd (group) immunity. Given the significant role of social media in fostering anti-vaccination communities, it is crucial to vigilantly track the discussions on these platforms to effectively counter anti-vaxxer sentiments and promote vaccination. This research utilizes computational content analysis, specifically employing topic modeling and time series analysis, to observe

anti-vaccination communities related to COVID-19 on Facebook in Czechia. In total, 18 topics were identified, with politics, governance, and international affairs emerging as the most prevalent subjects, while only 5 topics directly addressed COVID-19 issues. Conversations primarily centered around information and its credibility, with community members heavily relying on social media content and conspiracy websites, effectively sidelining scientific sources. The study underscores the necessity for continuous monitoring of anti-vaccination communities on social media and the development of impactful communication strategies to bolster vaccination efforts.

This Issue offers another COVID-19 related article that sought to discern the distinctive attributes of the infodemic phenomenon, using the tsunami of information that accompanied the 2020 COVID-19 epidemic as an illustrative example. Anna Miotk initiates the exploration by referencing the definition formulated by the World Health Organization in 2018, and additionally investigates the earliest scientific studies elucidating this phenomenon. Subsequently, by synthesizing findings from a query encompassing studies and expert opinions pertaining to the COVID-19 infodemic, the author delineates the primary features of the infodemic and their corresponding indicators. As a result of this inquiry, the author opts to introduce four supplementary features to the initial characteristics of the infodemic. This represents a novel approach to the subject, as the existing scientific literature on the matter lacks such comprehensive attributes of the infodemic, primarily concentrating on specific characteristics associated with the phenomenon.

Shifting our attention to the dissemination of (dis)information, the third article, by Davit Kutidze, discusses the ways, in which Russian propaganda exploits notions of freedom of information to disseminate disinformation, aiming to create confusion through the propagation of conspiracy theories and preventing societal consensus on any single issue. This tactic is a well-established method that can be applied in diverse countries and contexts. An examination of statements from Georgian authorities suggests a hypothesis that Russian propaganda methods have infiltrated the rhetoric of Georgia's ruling party, the Georgian Dream. Consequently, this paper focuses on scrutinizing the features of the government of Georgia's public communication through the lens of propaganda and endeavours to determine if its rhetoric mirrors the toolkit employed by Russian propaganda. The study reveals conspicuous parallels between the two aforementioned phenomena. The Georgian government's rhetoric involves vehement accusations against those critical of the authorities, instilling baseless fears among the populace, and shaping a negative agenda.

Zooming out of the political context, the Issue presents an article that maps out the iconography of the Women's press. The authors (Olga Dąbrowska-Cendrowska, Weronika Sałek, and Natalia Walkowiak) have conducted a study on Instagram

profiles belonging to women's magazines published in Poland, France, and the United Kingdom: *Twój Styl*, *Vogue PL*, *Marie Claire*, *Vogue FR*, *Vogue GB*, and *The Stylist*. A total of 464 posts published on these Instagram profiles in April 2022 underwent analysis. The research aims to highlight both similarities and differences in the modes of communication through Instagram profiles. This paper employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative content analysis methodologies, focusing on post types, their functions, and audience reactions to the content posted. The findings revealed that similarities exist among the profiles of magazines operating within specific media markets, with content and communication tailored to the respective countries in which the magazines are active. This study contributes to the academic literature on the integration of traditional media with new media as a response to media convergence.

The last article, by Agnieszka Grzesiok-Horosz, deals with the specificities of the contemporary audiovisual market. The rapid convergence that led to the decision to regulate the content of video-sharing platforms (VSPs) within the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) was prompted by the recognition that such platforms compete for the same viewers and revenue as other audiovisual media services. The need for coordination in legislation at the European level necessitated amendments to Polish law. This article primarily aims to present specific provisions of the AVMSD and Poland's Broadcasting Act regarding VSPs—an area of media policy that had previously remained beyond the scope of institutional intervention and regulatory constraints in the traditional media market. The central inquiry the author seeks to address is whether the measures applied to VSP providers are legitimate, necessary, and proportional. The study delves into the definition of video delivery services, a crucial aspect for imposing obligations on these service types.

This year's Spring Issue presented the nominees for the Karol Jakubowicz's Award of 2023—now in this Fall Issue we introduce the winner, Slavko Splichal. In this Issue we not only report on the Award Ceremony that took place on May 15, 2023, but we also publish an interview with Professor Slavko Splichal and a review of his awarded book titled "Datafication of Public Opinion and the Public Sphere: How Extraction Replaced Expression of Opinion". The publication discusses the contemporary issues of public opinion and publicness. During the interview with Professor Splichal, conducted by Gabriella Szabó, the contemporary dilemma of publicness, social media, opinion mining, and artificial intelligence is discussed.

At the end of the current Issue, we publish three more book reviews. The Issue also reports on three more events. First, Kristýna Kopřivová summarizes the "15 years of DTA" (Discourse Theoretical Analysis) online event which reflected the development and current status quo of Discourse Theory. Then, we report on the CEECOM Conference "The Threats, Challenges and Opportunities in the

Changing Central and Eastern European Media Environments” (Brno, Czechia, June 29–30, 2023) and the ECREA’s Political Communication Section Interim Conference “Navigating The Noise: Effective Communication For Solving Political Problems” (Berlin August 31 – September 1, 2023).

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