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Editor's Introduction

Communication studies is at a critical junction in facing novel challenges resulting from the dynamics of the media landscape. New technologies keep on changing how information is produced, shared, and consumed, while simultaneously creating challenges and obstacles for researchers and practitioners. Considering these developments in digital transformation, it is necessary to indicate that the existing political and economic settings constitute an additional layer of the multifaceted context of mass communication processes. The 2024 Spring Issue of the Central European Journal of Communication covers these complex issues, and in various ways presents differing aspects of how factors influence modern media characteristics and communication processes and practices.

The Spring Issue consolidates five thought-provoking articles that cover an extensive spectrum of interests, from the historical period in media studies to modern problems of digital communication. All the submissions present several useful observations on challenges that media, society, and information-sharing face in the modern world.

Our first article, "Broadcasting a Nuclear Accident: Chernobyl on Hungarian Radio" by Dalma Kékesdi-Boldog, presents a historical viewpoint on the performance of crisis communication. This article focuses on the case of how Hungarian radio reported one of the biggest nuclear incidents in history, which has implications for the current world where information dissemination is instantaneous. The article looks at how a country aligned to the Soviet bloc managed crisis communication during a major sporting event. It explains how a variety of reporters, acting as both propagandists, and seekers of the truth, reported under the Soviet system and how the news coverage evolved.

Moving to contemporary issues, Ioanna Archontaki, Achilleas Karadimitriou, Iliana Giannouli, and Stylianos Papathanassopoulos in their paper, "Environmental politics: Could social media in Greece foster the ground for an alternative environmental agenda?" seek to understand how climate-related news is disseminated and received on social media platforms particularly Facebook and Twitter in Greece between January and March, 2021. The study shows that information about the environment is still mainly provided by traditional mass media. Although the Greek population tends to have minimal confidence in traditional media and governmental organizations, they are not skeptical of climate change or EU environmental measures either. This work demonstrates that social media in Greece has not developed a counter-discursive frame concerning climate matters but rather perpetuates institutional discourses. This research is particularly relevant

at this time, as we see the immediacy of the problem of the environment and the power of social media in organizing collective sentiment.

In “Digital, Hybrid and Traditional Media Consumption and Religious Reflection”, Damian Guzek provides a hint of how patterns of media interaction may affect religious reflection in the emerging multimedia age. This paper seeks to understand levels of critical reflexivity dependent on media usage among Catholic media users in Poland with emotional attachments to pre- and post-Vatican II Catholicism. The imageries were collected from 30 participants through the digital media diary technique along with conducting in-depth interviews. Guzek identifies six types of media consumption patterns and media diets were identified as diverse as including social media, websites, and traditional media, and as restricted to social media only.

The research paper by Virgo Siil, “Less is more. Study on slow journalism outlets’ authors” explores a novel approach to creating news content in our world full of rush. This research provides crucial insights as to how slow journalism may be useful and what may be its drawbacks as we are experiencing a world overloaded with information. Siil explores the experiences and practices of authors in slow journalism, focusing on two Estonian outlets: *Edasi* and *Levila*. From the interviews with 22 authors and the observations of the editorial meetings, the study explores the authors’ incentives and how the slow journalism elements influence them.

In a section on Methods and Concepts, given the post-truth as the governing paradigm of the twenty-first century, “Fact-checkers as a professional community of experts. Research project – from idea to implementation” is an article by Karina Stasiuk-Krajewska, which offers an important analysis of the shifting position of fact-checkers. By focusing on Polish fact-checking organizations, this study contributes to the understanding of the developmental and operational aspects of fact-checking. Stasiuk-Krajewska proposes a methodological framework for studying professional communities, with a reference to fact-checkers in Poland. The author interviewed 20 fact-checkers from organizations across Poland.

In this year’s Spring Issue, we present the nominees for the Karol Jakubowicz’s Award of 2024 and publish an interview with Prof. Dr. Susanne Fengler and Dipl. Journalist Marcus Kreutler from the Erich-Brost-Institut for International Journalism, TU Dortmund University. The interview, conducted by Jacek Mikucki, focuses on media self-regulation throughout Europe. The interview discusses the current status shared by highly developed media systems in Northern Europe and their poorly developed counterparts in the Southern and Eastern regions. The interview explores the effects of digitalization, the importance of international standards, and how journalist associations and media companies can enhance accountability. Fengler and Kreutler also explain

how the European Media Freedom Act and international cooperation could enhance media responsibility.

This issue includes two book reviews. One on “Public media and democracy: theory and practice. Public media in Central and Eastern Europe” by Katarzyna Konarska and the other “Through the Camera Lens. Characters of clergymen and nuns in Polish feature films” by Anita Zawisza.

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