Research Talks of the Department of Communication

Changing Media Environments, Changing Democracies

10.10.2016
Jesper Strömberg
University of Gothenburg

Scholars have long recognized that one of the most important democratic functions of journalistic media is to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing. One key implication of this is that changes in media environments – including changes with respect to the media institutions, media organizations, media channels, media formats and the media coverage of politics and society, but also with respect to people's media use in general – inevitably will have democratic consequences. Against this background, this talk will discuss key changes in media environments across established democracies and how they challenge democracy.

Integrating Emotions into Political Communication Research

21.11.2016
Sophie Lecheler
University of Vienna

Every day, the news is full of expressions of emotion, telling us what we should worry, be angry or happy about. In theory, this should render emotions fundamental variables in political communication research. Yet, until relatively recently, they were largely ignored within this field. In this presentation, I discuss different strategies of integrating emotions into existing models and theories of political communication.

Assessing the Influence of Audience Interaction Mechanisms on Changes in Journalism Culture: Towards a More Consumer-Oriented Journalism?

Folker Hanusch
University of Vienna

Frequently, studies have argued that journalists, and journalism more broadly, are becoming too consumer-oriented, resulting in a dumbing down of news as journalists merely chase clicks and retweets. Rarely, however, have such studies engaged with journalists’ own views on these developments. Drawing on in-depth interviews and a survey with Australian news journalists, this talk will address these questions by examining journalists’ narratives about their use of these new technologies, as well as the link between such uses and their self-assessed changes in their role perceptions.

In Cooperation with the Department of Government:
Negative News, in Traditional vs Social Media

16.01.2017
Anne Bartsch
Ludwig-Maximilian-University of Munich

This talk reviews recent research on the tendency for traditional news to focus on negative information. It then questions whether the same should be true for a news stream that is filtered through social media. Analyses rely on large-scale automated content analyses to compare information on the economy in newspaper content, and in Twitter. Results point to some important differences between traditional and social-media-curated news.

Entertainment and Politics Revisited. How Non-Escapist Forms of Entertainment Can Stimulate Political Interest and Information Seeking

16.01.2017
Anne Bartsch
Ludwig-Maximilian-University of Munich

This talk revisits the controversial relationship of entertainment and political communication. A theoretical integration of entertainment theory with theories of motivated information processing suggests that entertainment consumption can either be driven by hedonic, escapist motivations that are associated with a superficial mode of information processing, or by eudemonic, truth-seeking motivations that prompt more elaborate forms of information processing. Experimental findings are presented to substantiate this dual process model of entertainment.