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A bi-national survey**

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Abstract:

This paper presents the key findings of the first comparative survey of online journalists in the Unites States and Germany. It is based on a sub sample of the latest American journalist study and the study 'Online Journalists in Germany'. The comparisons show some striking differences between the American and German online journalists – basic characteristics, professionalization levels and role perceptions are much more different than expected. This leads to the question whether studies in certain national contexts can be easily transferred to other countries, or whether we need more comparative studies to fully understand differences and similarities in the development of public communication worldwide.

1. Introduction

In most Western countries, online journalism was one of the biggest hopes (and hypes) in the last few years. A 'revolution' (Boldt 1996), 'the future of journalism' (Tonnemacher 1998) or 'a whole new journalism' (Quittner 1995) – these are some of the headlines referring to journalism on the World Wide Web. While the traditional media like newspapers and television were facing stagnation, the Internet promised a new market with a huge potential. The so-called 'new' economy flourished, and a lot of media organizations invested in online newsrooms and editorships. After the burst of the new economy bubble, quite a few media companies now show less interest in the Internet, with decreasing investments due to the lack of sufficient profits.

Nevertheless, online journalism is still one of the 'hot' (and important) topics in media companies and in communication studies alike. With rising user numbers which are well above 50 percent of the population in nearly all Western countries (according to NUA, Niel-

sen//NetRatings and others[1]) the Internet is becoming an every day information medium, and its relevance to public communication is obvious.

However, information on the people who provide us with news on the net is surprisingly scarce. There are no representative surveys on Internet journalists so far, just a few smaller studies that focus on special aspects of publishing on the net (see Neuberger 2002b). Moreover, comparative studies are barely conducted. Most studies focus on online journalism on a national level – which is strange given the fact that the internet is an inherently 'international' or 'global' communication platform

This is not only a disturbing omission, but also a very problematic one. Usually, studies from the United States or Europe are discussed in communication studies as if they were easily transferable between countries and societies. However, we know from comparative journalism surveys that the transfer of results and conjectures is critical: For ex-

ample, the views and attitudes of journalists in Western countries are quite often very different, although these countries share basic principles, have similar basic characteristics etc. (see Weaver 1998).

A transfer of empirical results is even more difficult in the field of online communication: It cannot be taken for granted that the implementation of a complex communication technology will yield the same results in different societies – even if the respective nations share basic principles and the structures are comparable.

This was the starting point of the present study: It does not only focus on communicators in one country, but it compares journalists from two countries – Germany and the United States. Both countries have enough in common (they are Western countries with a high industrialization level, an advanced education system and a large media market, to name just a few basic similarities), so the differences between the two journalist groups should be interpretable.[2]

It is the first comparative survey of American and German online journalists, based on a sub sample of the latest wave of the 'American journalist' study and data from the representative study 'Online Journalists in Germany'. Both sub studies were planned in close cooperation and, therefore, include a considerable number of comparable items.

In this paper, we would like to present some of the key findings of both studies, such as the basic characteristics of online journalists, their working conditions and the journalists' ideas about their professional role.

Before we go into detail of the studies' results, we will develop the objectives of the studies and explain the methodology (section 2).[3] Then, we will present some key findings on demographics (section 3), jobs and tasks

in online journalism (section 4), and the views and attitudes of the Internet journalists in the United States and Germany (section 5). Finally, we will discuss the overall tendency of the data in reference to the bi-national comparison of the two countries (section 6).

2. Objectives and methodology

2.1 Objectives

The primary objective of the survey was to draw a representative picture of American and German online journalists, their work and their attitudes related to their job and online journalism on the whole. Therefore, we put our focus (1) on several 'traditional' aspects stressed in many surveys of journalists around the globe and (2) on some important questions referring to the specific quality of online journalism.

This led to several points of interest: The first aim was to explore the basic characteristics of online journalists and to draw a first socio-demographic profile of the field for both countries. Besides, we paid attention to the organizational environment and occupational activities of online journalists. Another important goal was to find out how they differ from journalists working for 'traditional' media. Moreover, we aimed to explore the working conditions and the level of job satisfaction of online journalists, in particular if compared to their colleagues working for print and broadcasting media. Another objective was to examine how online journalists perceive their professional role in a pluralistic society.

Overall, these individual questions should allow for (1) comparisons between American and German online journalists and (2) comparisons between traditional and online journalists (in both countries). This paper is primarily aimed at the first type of comparisons,

but the traditional journalism has to be always kept in mind as a frame of reference for the two national data sets.

2.2 Methodology

The findings of this study are based on a sub sample of the third wave of the nationwide telephone survey of journalists in the United States ('The American Journalist'), including 100 respondents, and a nationwide and representative survey of 461 journalists working for online media in Germany ('Online Journalists in Germany').[4] Both studies took place at the end of 2002, therefore the data is quite recent and allows for a discussion of the current status quo in the respective field.

One of the most complicated issues was the definition of the term 'journalist' in relation to online publications. This is especially true for the German part of the study. While the American study could draw its sample from the membership lists of the Online Newspaper Association, there is no such professional association in Germany. Therefore, we had to investigate the names of the journalists ourselves.

This turned out to be a difficult task: For instance, the definition by editorial responsibilities makes it difficult to differentiate between journalists and people working in the field of public relations (PR). Quite often they simply do the same: A PR officer is likely to do similar jobs like writing and editing news stories. This problem of blurring borderlines is not specific to the Internet, but the integration of publications from diverse sources on one technological platform – the WWW – makes it much harder to draw a dividing line than in traditional journalism.

To avoid such confusion, we made use of a complex approach to identify journalism and journalists. The definition consists of three steps:

In a first step, journalism was distinguished from other areas of public communication such as PR (PR being defined as self-centered communication serving the presentation of the communicator itself), arts (fictional in character) as well as non-professional and non-periodic media.

In a second step, journalism was differentiated into organizations providing content for print, broadcasting and online media.

In a final step, we identified professional roles that are related to the 'core' of journalism. This traditional role concept of core journalism is defined by work patterns such as investigating, selecting, writing and editing of news.

The practical application of such a complicated approach poses some challenges to the researcher. We developed a stratified sampling procedure to overcome this problem:

In a first step, we compiled a complete list of all German news organizations possibly publishing online media. This compilation was based on various sources such as the media directories by Stamm, Zimpel and the IVW.[5] From this list (consisting of more than 10,000 items) we excluded organizations mainly promoting enterprises, associations, federations, clubs and public administration since those were defined as PR. We also removed non-professional websites such as college and school sites and personal homepages.

From the remaining items, we drew a sample consisting of 2000 media by using a random procedure. This sample was screened again for websites not primarily practicing online journalism by a content analysis procedure: Websites clearly indicating PR and non-

professional communication in their content were removed from the sample.

We selected the respondents within the news organizations by using an alphabetical criterion. In order to avoid over-sampling of journalists in small-sized organizations, we used a quota scheme developed through an independent pre-survey in 132 online organizations: The goal was to interview one journalist in small-sized organizations, two journalists in middle-sized organizations and five journalists in large-sized organizations. To make a projection from the sample to the population, the data was weighted according to the results from the independent pre-survey.

The telephone interviews of both sub-studies were supported by a CATI-system (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing). To some degree, the questionnaire followed the major surveys of journalists in the United States (Weaver and Wilhoit 1996) and in Germany (Weischenberg, Löffelholz and Scholl 1998), but included new or modified items that reflect the changes in journalism since the named studies took place.

3. Basic characteristics of American and German online journalists

In this section, we would like to give some answers to the question:

Who are the American and German online journalists?

This leads to some follow up questions as well: Do the two journalist groups have common basic characteristics (gender, personal/marital status, age, general and journalistic education), or are there notable differences between the two groups?

A first look at the basic characteristics reveals some obvious differences: The German aver-

age online journalist at the beginning of the 21st century is male, not married (yet), has a university degree and is 35 years old, while its American counterpart is a married male and four years older. Some of the demographic differences between American and German online journalists are striking: While the gender distribution is comparable, the marital status, the educational level, the age and the income differ considerably (see Table 1).

Table 1: Basic characteristics

	Germany (N=461)	United States (N=100)
Female	38.2%	34.0%
now married	29.1%	58.0%
University Degree	59.0%	83.0%
Age (median)	35 years	39 years
Average Income	$ 33,000 USD (net)	$ 64,000 USD (gross)

Some of these characteristics concur with what we know from other surveys on journalists working for traditional media (radio, TV, newspaper). The differences of the income levels seem to be huge, but they are related to the higher taxes in Germany and a higher spending power of the Euro so that the overall difference is not as big as the numbers indicate. In earlier comparisons between American and German journalists, researchers already noted differences in the income (see Weaver 1998).

Interestingly, American online journalists make a considerably higher total (gross) salary than U.S. journalists in general who work for traditional news media ($43,588). Only American news magazine journalists ($74,500) and major wire service journalists ($70,000) make a higher total salary than do

the online journalists. All the other median salaries (for daily and weekly newspapers, television, and radio) are considerably below the median for online journalists. This is also true for German online journalists, who earn $ 33,000 USD (net) a year, which is slightly more than the average salary of their colleagues working for traditional media. This comparison, however, needs to be interpreted carefully since the data for journalists in traditional media organizations have been obtained a decade ago.

The lower education level of the German journalists is something we expected: Overall, the journalists in Germany have a lower formal education than their American colleagues. This was confirmed by earlier studies already (see Weaver 1998). A closer look at the (under-) graduate education of the online journalists reveals that the differences are even more obvious when asking for the subject of the studies: Nearly three out of four German respondents said that they did not graduate from journalism and/or communication/media studies, while 57% of the American online journalists hold at least one university degree in one of the named fields (see Table 2).

One of the biggest surprises in the basic characteristics are the differences in the marital status. A considerably lower number of German journalists are married (29.1% vs. 58% in the United States; see Table 3). This reflects two things: Overall, there is a tendency in the German society that leads away from marriage and to other forms of relationships. Furthermore, the German online journalists are much younger, which partly explains this difference as well. Quite a few of them are new to journalism, and they have just started their career. Some are not married yet – although they are living together with a partner. The number of online journalists that are unmarried but living with a partner is much

Table 2: Education in journalism or (mass) communication

	Germany (N=461)	United States (N=100)
graduated from journalism	12.6%	53.0%
graduated from communication/ media studies	15.4%	8.0%
not graduated from journalism and/or communication/ media studies	74.0%	43.0%

Multiple responses possible

Table 3: Marital status

	Germany (N=461)	United States (N=100)
single, that is, never married	34.3%	25.0%
unmarried but living with a partner	30.7%	9.0%
separated	2.4%	1.0%
divorced	2.6%	5.0%
widowed	0.9%	2.0%
now married	29.1%	58.0%
total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4: Working in journalism (years)

	N	Mean
Germany	461	6.85
United States	100	16.07

higher in Germany (30.7% vs. 9% in the United States).

From the above demographics, we can conclude that online journalists in Germany are a younger group of journalists in an early stage of their career, while their American counterparts are older, usually married and more likely to hold a university degree. This descrip-

tion can be confirmed by the answers to the questions on the work experience of the journalists: The average German online journalist has less than seven years of work experience, while the American one has more than 16 (see Table 4).

One has to note that the age difference does not compensate for the difference in work experience: American online journalists are four years older, but they have worked in journalism for nine years longer than their German counterparts. This means that, on an average, the American online journalists entered journalism much earlier in their career, and that they are long time journalists that were probably journalists even before the Internet became an interesting topic for media companies. German online journalists, on the other hand, are much more likely to be 'newcomers' that do not have a comparable amount of journalistic experience.

4. Jobs and tasks in online journalism

In this section, we would like to answer the question:

What are the American and German online journalists doing?

Quite a few of journalism researchers believe that online journalists do not work in the traditional way (see Benker 2001). Some authors mention the label 'content manager' when talking about online journalists: They expect them to organize news by re-writing and re-packaging already existing material.

The findings support the assumptions to a certain extent, but give us a more complete picture. German online journalists spend the largest part of their average 45 hours work time a week on writing, online investigations, news selection and the editing of news material from agencies and public relations (see Table 5). This kind of work pattern is performed by more than 80% of online journalists.

Table 5: Tasks of German online journalists

Tasks	N*	Performing this task	average duration per workday (minutes)
Online Investigation	451	96.6%	73
Writing	454	91.2%	107
News Selection	449	84.7%	84
Editing News Material from Agencies and PR	446	81.4%	78
Copying/Transferring Text onto the Online Web Page	451	77.5%	62
Management	451	74.4%	55
Offline Investigation	453	76.9%	35
Editing Material from Colleagues	453	80.5%	54
User Contact	450	60.8%	21
Production	451	64.1%	32
Programming	446	21.8%	15

* Varying N is due to refused answers.

Table 6: Using computers in the work

Jobs and Tasks	Germany		United States	
	N	Saying 'daily'	N	Saying 'daily'
Find names or addresses of sources using the Web	460	35.6%	99	30.3%
Interview sources via e-mail		n.a.	99	5.1%
Get background information for stories from the Web or computer databases	461	63.9%	99	42.4%
Search for story ideas from the Web or from list-serves	460	37.4%	99	37.4%
Check facts in a story using the Web or computer databases	461	57.6%	99	33.3%
Keep up with the news by reading the Web sites of other news organizations	461	79.4%	100	88.0%
Search for or receive press releases via e-mail or the Web	460	67.2%	99	54.5%
Communicate via e-mail with readers, viewers or listeners	461	37.0%	100	58.0%
Download raw data from computer databases	461	16.0%	99	5.1%
Use spreadsheets or statistical programs to analyse data from government agencies or other sources		n.a.	98	4.1%

Some of the tasks performed by German online journalists seem to reflect the traditional 'role model' of the journalist (Weischenberg, Löffelholz and Scholl 1998: 239). However, there are some notable deviations from conventional ideas about journalism. First, we noticed a peak in online investigation, a tribute to the conditions of online media. Second, we found new tasks such as programming, and finally we have to point out the comparably high amount of time spent on management and the notably frequent user contacts.

The specific work patterns of online journalists point to the direction of more technologically induced tasks than in traditional journalism. We therefore asked the respondents for their use of computers at work since the computer is the central tool for journalistic work today, and this is especially true for online journalism. The results show some similar values, but also some deviations between the two groups of journalists (see Table 6).

The German online journalists are more likely to use the Internet as a research tool. 63.9% of them use it to get background information for stories (only 42.4% of the American respondents); 57.6% check facts via the net (only 33.3% of the Americans); and 67.2% send for or receive press releases via e-mail or the web (vs. 54.5% of the American online journalists).

On the other hand, American journalists use the Internet more often to keep up with the news by looking at the pages of news organizations and other competitors (88%). This is also the most prominent use of computers for German online journalists (79.4%). Obviously, checking competitors is a very important part of the work of online journalists, and this form of direct feedback can influence the work of the journalists. For example, they might react in response to a news story of a competitor by writing a similar story, or they might change some facts in their own stories as well (see Quandt 2003).

Table 7: Controversial practices of reporting

	Germany		United States	
	N	Saying 'may be justified'	N	Saying 'may be justified'
Paying people for confidential information	455	35.3%	98	23.5%
Using confidential government documents without authorization	450	51.0%	100	90.0%
Claiming to be somebody else	456	33.1%	100	20.0%
Agreeing to protect confidentiality and not doing so	457	2.0%	100	10.0%
Badgering unwilling informants to get a story	456	12.3%	100	55.0%
Making use of personal documents such as letters and photographs without permission	457	6.7%	100	50.0%
Getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information	455	52.5%	100	52.0%
Using hidden microphones or cameras	454	28.7%	100	62.0%

Feedback also plays a role when it comes to contact with readers, viewers or listeners. The Internet offers means of direct contact that were not possible for other media, and obviously, the American online journalists use them frequently. 58% of them say they communicate with their audience via e-mail or Internet on a daily basis, while only 37% of the Germans answered the respective question this way.

While the above tables give a good impression of the journalists' work profiles, the numbers do not indicate how the journalists work. Or to put it in other words: What kind of ethical values and ideas about journalism do influence the way they investigate, write, talk to their sources and so on? Therefore, we included questions on the justification of several reporting methods in our study (see Table 7).

The differences between the two national groups are obvious: The American journalists seem to be much more willing to use controversial pracices of reporting to get their stories: 90% of them would use confidential government documents without authoriza-

tion (only 51% of the Germans), more than 60% would use hidden microphones or cameras (not even 30% in Germany), 55% would badger unwilling informants to get a story (12.3% of the Germans), half of the respondents would use personal documents like letters and photographs without permission (6.7% of the Germans), and still 10% would promise to protect confidentiality and not do so (only 2% of the Germans). Overall, one could say that American online journalists tend to agree with more 'aggressive' methods of reporting, which are usually linked to investigative journalism. Only in two cases – 'paying people for confidential information' and 'claiming to be somebody else' – a notably higher percentage of German online journalists supports the respective reporting practice (35.3% vs. 23.5% for the first item, 33.1% vs. 20% for the second). Drawing from the preferred reporting methods, American online journalists seem to be more willing to use aggressive, investigative reporting techniques than do their German colleagues.

5. Views and perceptions of online journalists

The most prominent questions in journalism research refer to professional roles:

How do the journalists perceive themselves, how do they describe themselves and to what extent do their views support the political function of mass media visible in all larger journalism surveys in Western countries?

These are just some of the classical questions asked in the most important surveys on journalism (Patterson 1998; Weaver and Wilhoit 1996; Donsbach 1993).

Due to the complexity of self-descriptions and perceptions, usually several statements are needed in order to operationalize these concepts. From these items, one can build a 'profile' of online journalists' perceptions and their understanding of the professional work in journalism. For the comparisons, we chose some of the most important items of the role perception concepts used in the 'American Journalist' study (see Table 8).

Most of the journalists – from both the United States and Germany – approved of items describing their role as neutral disseminators of news, such as 'get information to the public quickly', and as interpreters, such as 'provide analysis and interpretation of complex issues'. A political and critical role of journalists is accepted in a much lower frequency – most of the online journalists do not agree with a statement saying that they 'would like to set the political agenda'. With the already discussed reporting methods in mind, this outcome is somewhat surprising: The American journalists – who approve of more aggressive and investigative reporting methods – have less inclination to set political agendas. That said, the differences are not very high.

However, there are some more obvious differences between the two national groups: The Germans show a higher acceptance of a mass compatible and entertaining journalism ('concentrate on news that's of interest to the widest possible audience', 'provide entertainment and relaxation'), while the Americans view themselves more often in the tradition of a public journalism that serves the people ('give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs').

Table 8: Role perception

	Germany* (N=461)	U.S.* (N=100)
Get information to the public quickly	.87	.83
Provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems	.83	.83
Provide entertainment and relaxation	.55	.40
Concentrate on news that's of interest to the widest possible audience	.62	.36
To set the political agenda	.27	.14
Give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs	.41	.58

Scales transformed to 0...1 (0=minimum; 1=maximum)

Table 9: Goals of the news organization

	Germany* (N=461)	U.S.* (N=100)
Earning high, above-average profits	2.68	2.91
Maintaining or securing high, above-average employee morale	n.a.	2.32
Keeping the size of your audience as large as possible	3.34	3.37
Producing journalism of high, above-average quality	3.16	3.25

Scales transformed to 1...4 (1=minimum; 4=maximum)

The different role perceptions do not go hand in hand with different perceptions of the respective organizations, though: Both German and American online journalists seem to view their companies in a similar light. When asked for the goals of their news organization, they give similar answers (see Table 9).

Most respondents agree with the statement that their company's goal is to 'keep the size of the audience as large as possible'. This does not necessarily mean that it is only profit that they are after. 'Earning high, above-average profits' is not supported as heavily by both groups (the Germans agree to an even lesser degree). Furthermore, the 'production of quality journalism' seems to be a more important goal – the respective statement gets more support than the profit-orientation.

Overall, the answers to the above items are a mixed bag. Both mass compatibility and quality are seen as being very important, while the generation of profit still gets some support from the respondents. One has to doubt that it is possible to fulfill all of these goals at once and in every case, so we suspect that these goals are sometimes (at least to some degree) 'wishful thinking', but not real life orientations. It is still surprising that quality journalism gets such a high support – at least when taking into account that online journalism is facing a stiff competition by traditional media and a difficult economic environment with very limited advertising spending (see Neuberger 2002a; Quandt 2003).

While the general trends in the role perceptions and the mentioned above views of the companies' goals are quite similar, the American and German online journalists differ considerably in one important aspect of their opinions and estimations, namely their job satisfaction (see Table 10).

The American online journalists seem to be more satisfied with their jobs than the Germans: Nearly 40% of the American online journalists are very satisfied with their job, while only some 15% of their German colleagues answer the respective question this way. That said, the German journalists aren't dissatisfied – most of them said they were fairly satisfied (75,5% vs. 48% of the American journalists). Just a minority of the journalists said they were fairly or very dissatisfied, and in this respect, both national groups are pretty much the same. German online journalists might appear less satisfied due to a more difficult job situation.

Table 10: Job satisfaction

	Germany (N=455)	United States (N=100)
Very satisfied	15.3%	39.0%
Fairly satisfied	75.5%	48.0%
Fairly dissatisfied	8.1%	10.0%
Very dissatisfied	1.2%	3.0%

What's more important than these differences is the overall positive view of the job situation in both countries. This comes with surprise if one takes the difficult overall situation into account. Online journalism is currently one of the areas where media companies try to save money by reducing staff, which results in a lot of insecurity and uncertainty for those working in this field. Nevertheless, the online journalists still seem to be fascinated by their job – probably, because it is an innovative field that still develops, and that still offers a lot of opportunities not available anywhere else.

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6. Discussion

The present paper gives an overview of online journalism in the United States and Germany based on the first bi-national survey of American and German online journalists. 561 journalists were interviewed in the two countries. The results offer some insight in the current state of affairs in this relatively new field of journalism, which already plays an important role for public communication. This bi-national study allows for some tight comparisons, because both national sub studies were planned in close cooperation, using similar items for the most important areas of interest.

The results reveal that the German online journalists are usually younger and in an early stage of their professional career. They are less experienced than their American colleagues, less likely to hold a university degree and less likely to be married.

Overall, they represent a different kind of journalist – and this is reflected by their work patterns and reporting techniques as well: While the American online journalists are more inclined to aggressive, investigative reporting, their German counterparts prefer a 'softer' approach. Furthermore, the German online journalists do rely on the Internet as a tool for research more often than their American colleagues.

While the two groups of journalists differ in this respect, they show quite a lot of similarities when it comes to their role perceptions and the view of their own news organizations. Both German and American online journalists do primarily perceive themselves as neutral news journalists. They do not see themselves in a political role, but as disseminators and interpreters of information.

Surprisingly, both groups still believe that the production of high quality journalism is a very important goal of their companies – more important than earning high, above-average profits. Obviously, the current economic problems of (online) journalism do not destroy the faith in the possibilities of journalism. This is underlined by the job satisfaction as well. Only a very small number of online journalists are dissatisfied with their jobs.

However, one cannot deny the fact that – despite the named similarities – the results of the American and the German studies often point to different directions. This leads us to the assumption that research results from one country cannot be easily transferred to another. The different economic, cultural and social environments of the journalists do influence the way they work and to some extent even their attitudes and views. Even more, the basic characteristics are not always comparable. Therefore, we need more multinational studies that offer insight into how different social systems lead to differences in journalism and journalists. Not only do such studies offer new information and insights about 'other' countries' journalism, but they also allow for a re-evaluation of the data from one's 'own' country.

This present study is a small step toward increasing our understanding of a special kind of journalist working in two Western industrialized countries. Much exciting and productive research remains to be done in many other countries to increase our understanding of these and other kinds of journalists. We look forward to more cross-national, comparative research on journalists and journalism in the future.

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[1] www.nua.ie/surveys/how_many_online/index.html; www.netratings.com

[2] Comparisons between journalists from different society systems usually lead to a huge number of differences, and they do not allow for the identification of clearly definable factors that are responsible for the differences. *The comparison of data from similar countries gives more hints on why the data might differ.*

[3] We did not include a chapter on comparative *journalism research in the United States and Germany since this has been discussed in much depth elsewhere (see Esser 2000; Donsbach 1995).*

[4] The American study was sponsored by the John S. and James L. *Knight Foundation, whereas the German study along with the infrastructure for the international cooperation was funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.*

[5] *Stamm and Zimpel are media directories compiled on a professional basis. They are used by the media themselves, by politicians and PR departments. The IVW is an institution offering the German standard in measuring online usage (PIs and visits).*

Project Description

The research project 'Online Journalism: Transnational Comparison between Online Journalists from Germany and the United States' is conducted by the Institute of Media and Communication Studies (IfMK) at the Technische Universität Ilmenau in cooperation with the School of Journalism at the Indiana University in Bloomington.

Professor Martin Löffelholz, head of the Media Studies Department of IfMK, is coordinating the German study. He and his team are supported by a grant from the German Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, which allocates significant funds to the survey through its 'TransCoop' program (transatlantic research cooperation). In Germany, the research was initiated in June 2002 and will come to an end in July 2004. The research project will be concluded with an international conference 'Journalism Research in an Era of Globalization' in Erfurt, July 2004.

The American study is headed by David H. Weaver, a widely noted senior researcher on journalism and currently Roy W. Howard Professor in Journalism and Mass Communication Research at the Indiana University. The research activities in the United States are funded by the Knight Foundation.

The conceptualization and execution of the German study was coordinated and synchronized with the third wave of the 'American Journalist' survey. Online journalists, however, were only a sub-sample in the American study, whereas the German study focused exclusively on online journalists. The parallelization of the applied survey method as well as wide parts of the questionnaire makes a direct comparison between German and American online journalists possible. On the other hand, the research design legitimates a comparison between – in particular American – online journalists with their colleagues working for 'traditional' media such as print media and broadcasting stations. Both surveys were executed in the second half of 2002.

Survey method:
CATI
(Computer Aided Telephone Interviews)

Data collecting:
from October to December 2002

Population:
all online journalists in Germany;
members of the Online Newspaper Association in the U.S.

Net sample:
461 journalists in Germany
100 journalists in the U.S.

Projektkurzbeschreibung

Das Forschungsprojekt „Online-Journalismus. Transnationale Vergleiche zwischen US-amerikanischen und deutschen Online-Journalisten" wird vom Institut für Medien- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (IfMK) an der Technischen Universität Ilmenau in Kooperation mit der School of Journalism an der Indiana University in Bloomington (USA) durchgeführt.

Auf deutscher Seite wird das Projekt von Prof. Martin Löffelholz, Leiter des Fachgebiets Medienwissenschaft am IfMK, geleitet. Die Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung fördert die Studie im Rahmen ihres TransCoop-Programmes (transatlantische Forschungs-kooperationen). Das Forschungsprojekt läuft von Juni 2002 bis Juli 2004 und schließt mit einer internationalen Konferenz („Journalism Research in an Era of Globalization") im Juli 2004 ab.

Auf US-amerikanischer Seite wird die Forschungstätigkeit von dem international renommierten Journalismusforscher Prof. David H. Weaver, Roy W. Howard Professor in Journalism and Mass Communication Research an der Indiana University, geleitet. Gefördert hat die US-amerikanische Studie die Knight Foundation.

Konzeptionell und inhaltlich wird die Forschungstätigkeit auf deutscher Seite mit der dritten Welle der „American Journalist"-Studie abgestimmt. Online-Journalisten bilden im Rahmen dieser Studie ein Teilsample. Damit ist einerseits eine direkte Vergleichbarkeit zu Journalisten möglich, die für traditionelle Medien (Printmedien, Rundfunk) tätig sind, aber auch der unmittelbare Vergleich zwischen deutschen und US-amerikanischen Online-Journalisten. Beide Datenerhebungen wurden in der zweiten Jahreshälfte 2003 durchgeführt.

Erhebungsmethode:
CATI
(Computer Aided Telephon Interviews)

Erhebungszeitraum:
Oktober – Dezember 2003

Grundgesamtheit:
alle Online-Journalisten in Deutschland/alle Mitglieder der Online News Association (ONA) in den USA

Netto-Stichprobe:
461 in Deutschland
100 in den USA

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