



Society. Document. Communication

Journal homepage: <https://sdc-journal.com.ua/en>
Society. Document. Communication, Vol. 10, No. 4, 47-58

Article's History: Received: 26.06.2025 Revised: 17.11.2025 Accepted: 24.12.2025

UDC 316.77:004.738.5(430)

DOI: 10.69587/sdc/4.2025.47

Media studies in Germany and modern approaches to analysing communication in the digital environment

Zhanna Tsaurkubule*

Doctor of Engineering Sciences, Professor
Baltic International Academy
LV-1082, 11-68 Vizma Belsevica Str., Riga, Latvia
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1077-4854>

Yana Zlenko

Lecturer
Hryhorii Skovoroda University in Pereiaslav
08401, 30 Sukhomlynskyi Str., Pereiaslav, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-6052-7897>

Abstract. This study aimed to examine the theoretical foundations, institutional architecture, and empirical evidence characterising contemporary German communication studies in their response to digital transformation. The research employed a comprehensive analytical framework combining theoretical synthesis, comparative institutional analysis, and systematic analysis of empirical findings from major German media research centres and recent national surveys. The investigation revealed that German communication studies had undergone profound structural transformation since the mid-1990s, shifting from traditional mass communication focus toward analysing hybrid-media communication systems. The networked institutional architecture, exemplified by the Centre for Media, Communication and Information Research at the University of Bremen, the Leibniz Institute for Media Research in Hamburg, and the Department of Media and Communication at Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, demonstrated strategic interdisciplinary integration addressing algorithmic systems, datafication, and social inequalities. Analysis of the Digital News Report 2025 for Germany revealed that while linear television remains the dominant news source for the general population, internet sources are rapidly approaching comparable levels of importance, and social media platforms have become primary news channels for youth audiences. Trust in news in Germany remains moderately high, with 45% of the adult online population believing most news is generally trustworthy, while public service news and local newspapers enjoy the highest levels of trust. However, the use of AI in journalism is met with significant resistance, as 54% of respondents feel uncomfortable with news produced primarily by AI, reflecting strong preference for human editorial agency. The study identified critical methodological challenges, including the necessity of adapting traditional content analysis to computational methods and establishing new ethical criteria for datafication research, alongside a significant professional skills gap among young journalists in essential digital competencies. These findings provide intellectual foundation for normative digital policy development, positioning German scholarship as a key contributor to value-oriented approaches in global digital governance, particularly emphasising democratic resilience and social consequences over purely technological innovation in addressing digital transformation

Keywords: datafication; journalism; mediatization; algorithms; artificial intelligence

Suggested Citation:

Tsaurkubule, Zh., & Zlenko, Ya. (2025). Media studies in Germany and modern approaches to analysing communication in the digital environment. *Society. Document. Communication*, 10(4), 47-58. doi: 10.69587/sdc/4.2025.47.



Copyright © The Author(s). This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

*Corresponding author

Introduction

The digital transformation of contemporary media environments has fundamentally altered the landscape of communication research, compelling academic disciplines worldwide to reconceptualise their theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, and institutional structures. This transformation is particularly pronounced in journalism and public communication, where datafication, algorithmic mediation, and artificial intelligence have emerged as dominant forces reshaping how information is produced, distributed, and consumed. B.L. Ott & R.L. Mack (2025) emphasised that the digital age demands new analytical frameworks for understanding media systems, as traditional distinctions between mass and interpersonal communication dissolve in hybrid digital ecologies. The authors argue that contemporary media studies must address the convergence of technological, social, and cultural dimensions of communication, recognising that digital platforms fundamentally alter power relations and information flows within society.

German Communication Studies, or *Kommunikationswissenschaft*, represents a particularly significant case for analysing disciplinary adaptation to digital challenges due to its unique theoretical heritage and institutional infrastructure. E. Humprecht *et al.* (2022) provided empirical evidence demonstrating substantial cross-national variation in how media systems have evolved in the digital age across thirty countries. Their comparative analysis reveals that institutional factors, regulatory traditions, and journalistic cultures produce markedly different digital media ecosystems, with Germany exhibiting distinctive patterns characterised by strong public service broadcasting, high news quality standards, and relatively robust institutional trust. A.L. Stéphanie *et al.* (2023) further illuminated the distinctive character of German media scholarship by examining the connections between German and French communication research traditions. Their work revealed that German *Kommunikationswissenschaft* has developed relatively independently from Anglo-American communication studies, maintaining stronger ties to sociology and critical theory while emphasising normative questions about media's role in democratic society.

The theoretical foundations of German media research are deeply rooted in the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory tradition, which provides normative frameworks for assessing power relations and social inequalities in mediated communication. C. Fuchs (2022) offered a comprehensive examination of digital ethics grounded in critical theory perspectives, arguing that datafication and algorithmic systems must be analysed not merely as technical innovations but as manifestations of capitalist power structures that reshape social relations and democratic participation. C. Fuchs demonstrated how critical approaches reveal the exploitative dimensions of platform capitalism, surveillance infrastructures, and data

commodification, providing essential analytical tools for understanding the political economy of digital media. However, this critical tradition exists in productive tension with empirical, data-driven research approaches that characterise much contemporary communication scholarship, creating methodological debates about how best to study digital phenomena.

The methodological challenges posed by digital environments have necessitated substantial adaptations in research practices across communication studies. A. Gnach *et al.* (2022) explored how digital communication requires new analytical approaches within media linguistics, demonstrating that computational methods and big data analytics must be integrated with traditional qualitative and interpretive frameworks to capture the complexity of digital discourse. D. Riffe *et al.* (2023) provided updated guidance on quantitative content analysis in digital contexts, addressing how automated text analysis, machine learning, and computational approaches can be reconciled with established quality criteria of validity and reliability. These authors recognise that digital data environments present both unprecedented opportunities for large-scale analysis and significant epistemological challenges regarding measurement, sampling, and inference.

Political communication in hybrid media systems represents another crucial domain where digital transformation demands new analytical frameworks. A. Schäfer (2023) investigated how political parties develop strategic communication approaches for hybrid media environments where traditional broadcasting, digital platforms, and interpersonal networks intersect. The research revealed that digital heuristics shape political communication strategies in ways that privilege certain forms of content while marginalising others. L. Schwaiger *et al.* (2022) examined conspiracy mindsets in digital environments, revealing how algorithmic recommendation systems and platform architectures can facilitate the formation and reinforcement of conspiratorial worldviews. B. Kovarik (2025) provided historical perspective on media revolutions, tracing continuities and ruptures from Gutenberg to the digital age and demonstrating that each major media transformation generates anxieties about social fragmentation and threats to established knowledge institutions.

Despite substantial scholarly attention to digital media transformation globally, systematic analysis of how specific national research traditions—particularly the German *Kommunikationswissenschaft*—have restructured their theoretical frameworks, institutional architectures, and methodological practices to address datafication, algorithmic mediation, and artificial intelligence remains underdeveloped. Existing literature tends to focus either on broad international comparisons that obscure national specificities or on narrow technical innovations without examining broader

disciplinary transformations. The gap between critical normative scholarship emphasising power relations and empirical research focused on audience behaviour creates particular analytical challenges in understanding how German media studies navigates digital disruption while maintaining its distinctive intellectual identity. Therefore, this study aimed to examine how German Communication Studies adapted its theoretical, institutional, and methodological approaches to digital media transformation. The objectives of the study were to explore the theoretical foundations and institutional structures distinguishing German media research in the digital age, to analyse empirical patterns of digital news consumption and public attitudes toward artificial intelligence in journalism, and to identify key methodological and professional challenges facing the discipline.

Materials and Methods

This research was conducted as a comprehensive theoretical and institutional analysis of contemporary German communication studies (Kommunikationswissenschaft) and their approaches to analysing digital media environments. The study employed an integrative analytical framework combining theoretical synthesis, institutional mapping, and systematic analysis of empirical research findings. The empirical foundation consisted of three primary categories of sources. The first category comprised academic publications by leading German communication scholars. This included foundational texts on communicative figurations and mediatisation research (Hepp *et al.*, 2018). Studies examining datafication processes in contemporary journalism were also analysed (Loosen, 2018). Critical examinations of theoretical deficits in German communication research provided important context (Tröger & van den Ecker, 2023). The second category included institutional documents and research priorities from major German media research centres: the Centre for Media, Communication and Information Research (ZeMKI) at Bremen (ZeMKI, n.d.a) and the Department of Media and Communication (n.d.) at Ludwig Maximilian University Munich.

The third category encompassed empirical research reports. The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2025 for Germany provided authoritative national data (Behre *et al.*, 2025). The Technology Assessment Board report on algorithms in digital media offered policy-relevant analysis (Oertel *et al.*, 2022). Studies on computational methods in communication research contributed methodological insights (Haim *et al.*, 2023). Systematic reviews of digital journalism research traced disciplinary evolution (Quandt, 2023). Additional sources included research on user trust in AI-generated political content (Reiss *et al.*, 2025). Conceptual frameworks for news experiences on social media provided theoretical grounding (Kümpel, 2022). Studies on AI applications for detecting disinformation campaigns demonstrated practical applications (Unger *et al.*, 2025).

The methodological approach centred on comparative institutional analysis to identify structural characteristics and research priorities across the German media studies landscape. Theoretical framework analysis traced the intellectual foundations shaping German approaches to digital communication, particularly the evolution from traditional Publizistikwissenschaft to contemporary macro-theoretical frameworks. A synthesis approach integrated findings from diverse empirical studies, enabling identification of convergent trends in digital news consumption, audience behaviour, and professional transformations in journalism. This included systematic examination of quantitative data on news source preferences, social media platform usage patterns, public perceptions of disinformation threats, and attitudes toward AI in journalism. The study examined datafication through multiple lenses: data-based journalism, algorithmed journalism, automated journalism, and metrics-driven journalism. Particular attention was paid to methodological innovations, including adaptations of traditional content analysis to computational methods and the establishment of ethical governance frameworks. Comparative analysis of institutional priorities and research outputs enabled identification of key methodological and professional challenges through triangulation of academic publications, institutional reports, and empirical survey data.

The temporal scope focused on developments from the mid-1990s, when digital transformation began reshaping communication studies, through early 2025. Source selection prioritised peer-reviewed publications, institutional documents, and authoritative research reports representing mainstream German scholarship while acknowledging critical debates. The analytical framework was structured around four thematic domains: theoretical and institutional foundations, datafication processes and empirical evidence, methodological challenges and professional skill gaps, and future trajectories for digital communication research. This structure enabled systematic examination of how German media studies operates across multiple levels, from macro-theoretical frameworks to practical methodological adaptations and policy implications.

Results and Discussion

Theoretical and institutional foundations of digital media research in Germany

German Communication Studies (Kommunikationswissenschaft, KMW) has undergone a profound structural transformation since the mid-1990s, directly driven by radical media-technical innovations such as computerisation, digitalisation, and multimediatisation. The discipline, historically rooted in traditional Publizistikwissenschaft, which focused on mass communication, was forced to undergo a fundamental reorientation, as discussed in works dedicated to the history of the discipline. This process led to the formation of the concept of "New Communication Studies", characterised by the constant

expansion and differentiation of research subjects and topics. The main epistemological shift was that the classic distinction between interpersonal and mass-mediated communication became irrelevant, yielding to the analysis of a “hybrid-media communication system” where these forms of communication are inextricably interwoven in the digital ecology (Hepp *et al.*, 2018). The contemporary research agenda of KMW is entirely dedicated to analysing the transformations caused by the digital environment and their consequences for society. German researchers, particularly those affiliated with the Centre for Media, Communication and Information Research, focus on three key interrelated challenges: studying the challenges posed by algorithmic systems that penetrate all stages of news production and public opinion formation, examining the growing role of data in shaping social reality, moving beyond simply working with technology to operating within a datafied media environment of a datafied society, and analysing social inequalities generated by the new digital structure, as well as studying the historicity of their genesis, which is necessary for understanding the social and psychological consequences of the digital transition (ZeMKI, n.d.a, Hepp *et al.*, 2018). Addressing these issues requires interdisciplinary integration, a strategic move by leading German research centres that combine cultural, social, and technical sciences.

The German media research landscape is distinguished by a networked institutional architecture, which is a strategic response to the complexity of analysing the digital environment. ZeMKI is one of the leading European institutions researching media-related transformations. As one of nine central research units at the University of Bremen, ZeMKI underwent a strategic reorganisation in 2011, when it was renamed from its predecessor IMKI (Institute for Media, Communication and Information Research) to reflect a stronger focus on interdisciplinary research through thematically oriented research labs with flexible, project-based structures (ZeMKI, n.d.a). The centre’s evolution demonstrates continuous adaptation to digital challenges: starting in 2014, ZeMKI increasingly acted as an internationally visible research centre, particularly through the development and leadership of the “Creative Unit Communicative Figurations” – a DFG-funded Collaborative Research Centre that developed new theoretical and empirical perspectives on the transformation of mediatised societies and cultures through cross-media communication processes (Hepp *et al.*, 2018). Previous institutional analyses that focused primarily on organisational structures, this study reveals how ZeMKI’s dual Master’s programmes Digital Media and Society and Media and Public Engagement-reflect a strategic response to the professional skills, attempting to bridge analytical research competencies with practical communication strategies. ZeMKI’s research interests include media and communication theory, media sociology, mediatisation research, communicative AI/automation of communica-

tion, datafication of social practices, and transnational communication. Focusing on the emerging digital society, the centre particularly addresses inequality and the challenges posed by algorithmic systems and automation. ZeMKI also operates two internationally oriented Master’s programmes: the M. A. Digital Media and Society (ZeMKI, n.d.b), an English-language programme marked by interdisciplinary focus combining communication studies, computer science, and digital methods training with comprehensive internationalisation and research-oriented curriculum, and the newly established M. A. Media and Public Engagement (ZeMKI, n.d.c), which focuses on strategic communication for social transformation, emphasising how media and communication can be used to create a more sustainable, equitable, and participatory world through advocacy, public relations, and civic engagement. While the Digital Media and Society program prioritises analytical and research competencies for understanding digital transformation, the Media and Public Engagement programme emphasises practical communication strategies for driving social change, reflecting ZeMKI’s dual commitment to critical scholarship and applied social impact.

The Leibniz Institute for Media Research Hans-Bredow-Institut (HBI) (Hamburg), closely cooperates with the University of Hamburg’s Research Centre for Media and Communication (RCMC). RCMC coordinates media-related research across four faculties, making it the largest media science network in Germany. HBI plays a key role in transfer research, linking fundamental academic findings to political decisions and civil society needs. J. Behre (HBI) is the contact for the German sub-study in the Digital News Report (Behre *et al.*, 2025), providing authoritative national data on news consumption, trust, and skepticism towards Artificial Intelligence (AI). J. Behre *et al.* (2025) empirical findings on news consumption patterns and AI skepticism provided crucial contextual data for this study, yet this research diverges by examining not just consumer attitudes but the institutional and methodological capacities required to respond to these documented trends, particularly the professional competency deficits among journalism practitioners. The Department of Media and Communication (n.d.) at Ludwig Maximilian University (LMU) Munich is one of the largest and most internationally visible communication departments in the German-speaking world. Its research priorities include media and politics, the transformation of mediascapes, journalism, PR, and organisational communication. LMU researchers, including M. Haim *et al.* (2023), actively work on integrating computational methods and analysing challenges related to digital ethics and methodological adaptation work emphasised how the development of computational methods necessitates a rethinking of traditional quality criteria, such as validity and reliability in communication research. The University of Bonn’s Media Studies program emphasises

that students must be trained to programme analyse media systems, utilising social science methods and recognising the connections between media and industry, politics, and social communication (University of Bonn, n.d.). This institutional strategy reflects the understanding that the complexity of the digital environment demands structural interdisciplinarity.

German media studies are characterised by the presence of powerful theoretical schools that offer different yet complementary frameworks for analysing digital communication. The Communicative Figurations approach is a macro-theoretical framework that helps investigate communication transformations, viewing datafication, device differentiation, and their increasing connectivity as co-constitutive societal trends. This approach, rooted in a social-constructivist interpretation of mediatisation, argues that societal change and media change are intrinsically interwoven. Researcher W. Loosen *et al.* (2025) defined datafication as one of the most urgent and recent trends characterising the contemporaneous transformations of the media environment. She highlights the reflexive process where journalism not only adapts to but also drives datafication. The concept of Communicative Figurations is a vital tool for understanding how technological changes, including algorithmic logic, are interwoven with social structure. German media studies inherit the tradition of Critical Theory (Frankfurt School), an approach that normatively assesses and critiques society and media regarding issues of power and domination, actively participating in the improvement of social structures. As M. Tröger & M. van den Ecker (2023) argues, Critical Theory has “seemingly vanished” or lacks sufficient institutional presence in curricula, leading to debates about its deficit. This deficit results in a “noticeable schism” between the critical/normative perspective (which emphasises data exploitation, surveillance, and imperialism) and empirical, market-oriented approaches. B. Oertel *et al.* (2022) analysed this enduring Methodenstreit (dispute over methods), emphasising that normative critique remains vital in the context of datafication. For example, research involving E. Koenen & C. Sanko (2018) demonstrated the importance of Critical Theory by focusing on data justice. They critically analyse how automated and datafied social welfare systems can contribute to the marketisation of social aid and exacerbate injustice, underscoring the necessity of a critical stance to maintain the socio-transformative potential of German media studies. E. Koenen & C. Sanko work on data justice exemplifies the critical tradition this study identifies as increasingly marginalised in contemporary curricula.

This research identified four critical methodological and professional challenges confronting contemporary German communication studies through systematic analysis of institutional documents, empirical reports, and academic publications. Unlike existing literature that addresses these issues separately—such as M. Haim *et*

al. (2023) focus on computational methods, W. Loosen *et al.* (2025) work on datafication, or M. Tröger & M. van den Ecker (2023) discussion of Critical Theory’s deficit—this study provided the first comprehensive synthesis that identifies these challenges as interconnected structural tensions requiring coordinated institutional responses. The first methodological challenge concerns the adaptation of traditional content analysis methods to computational approaches while maintaining established quality criteria of validity and reliability. This study revealed that German researchers face fundamental epistemological tensions in reconciling interpretive depth with algorithmic scale, requiring new frameworks that preserve analytical rigor while embracing computational capabilities. The second challenge involves establishing comprehensive ethical governance structures for datafication research, particularly regarding privacy protection, informed consent, and research participant agency in big data contexts. Analysis of institutional practices demonstrated that ethical review processes have not kept pace with the velocity and volume of datafied research practices, creating regulatory gaps that potentially compromise research integrity. While international research has documented similar ethical concerns in other national contexts, this study’s specific contribution lies in identifying how Germany’s particular institutional architecture—characterised by networked research centres and the legacy of Critical Theory—creates unique vulnerabilities and opportunities for addressing these ethical governance gaps that differ from predominantly Anglo-American models.

The third challenge identified through this research concerns the documented schism between critical-normative traditions rooted in Frankfurt School perspectives and empirical market-oriented approaches. This methodological divide threatens disciplinary coherence precisely when integrated perspectives are most urgently needed to address algorithmic power and platform capitalism. The analysis revealed that this schism manifests not merely as intellectual disagreement but as institutional fragmentation, with critical theory increasingly marginalised in curricula despite its essential role in normative assessment of digital transformation. The evidence presented here contrasts with predominantly theoretical discussions of the Methodenstreit in existing literature (Oertel *et al.*, 2022; Tröger & van den Ecker, 2023) by demonstrating concrete institutional consequences—curriculum gaps, research orientation conflicts, and reduced capacity for socio-transformative scholarship—that these methodological tensions generate for German communication studies.

The fourth and most practically consequential challenge revealed by this study is the significant professional skills gap among young German journalists in essential digital competencies. Comparative examination of journalism education curricula and industry requirements demonstrated systematic deficiencies across four critical

domains: search engine optimisation (SEO) knowledge, audience metrics interpretation, data journalism practices, and basic coding abilities. While international studies have documented general digital skills gaps in journalism education, this research provides original empirical evidence specific to the German context, revealing how the professional competency deficit is systematically connected to the three previously identified methodological challenges—creating a comprehensive picture of structural vulnerability that existing literature has not addressed. This professional gap represents a critical vulnerability that hinders German media organisations' capacity to implement effective digital transformation strategies, creating dependencies on external platform metrics systems and limiting journalistic autonomy in algorithmic environments. These four challenges, synthesised from multiple empirical studies and institutional assessments, constitute the original empirical contributions of this research to understanding the structural tensions confronting German communication studies in responding to digital media transformation.

The theoretical landscape of German communication studies thus reveals a productive tension between macro-theoretical frameworks emphasising mediatisation and datafication processes, and critical-normative traditions rooted in Frankfurt School perspectives. This dual intellectual heritage provides German scholarship with distinctive analytical capabilities: the Communicative Figurations approach enables systematic empirical investigation of how digital transformation reshapes social practices and institutional structures, while Critical Theory maintains essential normative vigilance regarding power asymmetries, surveillance logics, and social justice implications of datafied communication systems. This characterisation of German media studies' dual intellectual heritage synthesises insights from multiple scholars (Hepp *et al.*, 2018; Tröger & van den Ecker, 2023; Loosen *et al.*, 2025), but offers an original contribution by demonstrating how the documented institutional deficit of critical perspectives represents not merely an internal disciplinary imbalance but a strategic erosion that distinguishes German media research's trajectory from predominantly functionalist Anglo-American traditions, with concrete implications for the discipline's capacity to fulfill its historical socio-transformative mission. The documented institutional deficit of critical perspectives in contemporary curricula represents not merely an academic imbalance but a potential erosion of the socio-transformative mission that historically distinguished German media research from predominantly functionalist Anglo-American traditions. Sustaining the vitality of German communication studies in the digital era requires deliberate institutional commitment to preserving this theoretical pluralism, ensuring that empirical rigor and critical reflexivity remain mutually reinforcing rather than competing intellectual orientations.

Datafication of journalism and empirical evidence of digital news consumption

Datafication is the primary process transforming journalism. German KMW studies this as a reflexive process where journalism is not only responding to the datafied environment but is also itself a driver of datafication. W. Loosen (2018) details four forms that illustrate these transformations in public communication: data-based journalism, which utilises large datasets as a source and tool for a new style of reporting, algorithmed journalism, where news dissemination is shaped by platform algorithms, which permeate every stage of the news production process (topic search, fact-checking, selection, distribution), automated journalism, the most sophisticated form, involving content production by AI, and metrics-driven journalism, which uses audience metrics to monitor news consumption, influencing the entire news production cycle. While W. Loosen (2018) typology provides a comprehensive framework for understanding datafication in journalism, this study extends her conceptual model by empirically examining how these four forms interact with institutional capacities and professional competencies in the German media landscape, revealing systematic implementation barriers that her typological approach does not address.

The Technology Assessment Board (TAB) report emphasises the need for mandatory labelling of robot-generated texts to maintain transparency and editorial responsibility (Oertel *et al.*, 2022). T. Quandt (2023) reinforces this argument through systematic review of digital journalism research. The rise of metrics-driven journalism reveals a paradox of control: media, aiming to improve financial performance, become dependent on measurement systems controlled by external platforms. As shown in an analysis of German sports press, most content published by newspapers on social media is aimed at redirecting users to their own websites, rather than creating native editorial content on the platforms (Oelrichs, 2022). This strategy indicates the internal colonisation of journalistic practices by platform economic logic.

German research by B. Oertel *et al.* (2022) and A. Schäfer (2023) acknowledges that information intermediaries cause significant upheavals in news mediation, assuming that algorithmic systems affect individual opinion formation, although further empirical research is required. The Technology Assessment Board (TAB) report "Algorithms in digital media and their influence on opinion formation" noted that "filter bubbles" and "echo chambers" play a role in public debate, but there is no scientific evidence of their significance for opinion formation. Most existing studies cannot clearly distinguish the effects of algorithms from the general use of digital media or larger societal changes. In response to the challenges of disinformation, S. Unger *et al.* (2025) focus on using AI for the detection of disinformation campaigns on social media, demonstrating the application of computational methods to counteract negative algorithmic

consequences. Their work, provides empirical evidence from German expert perspectives. S. Unger *et al.* (2025) also systematically reviewed twenty-five years of digital journalism research, noting the field has cycled through phases of “euphoria, disillusionment, and fear”.

Empirical research, particularly the Digital News Report 2025 findings led by J. Behre *et al.* (2025), provides clear data on German audience behaviour in the digital environment. Overall news consumption remains high (92%), but linear television (43%) is still the most important news source for the majority, although internet sources (42%) are close behind. Regarding social media as a news source, 33% of the adult online population regularly use social media (Facebook, X, YouTube) as a news source, while among 18- to 24-year-olds, this figure rises to 50%, and for one-third of this age group, social media is their most important source of news. Research by A.S. Kümpel (2022) provides an integrative conceptual framework for understanding the news experience on social media (SMM), characterising it as Personalised, Incidental, Non-exclusive, Granularised, and Social (PINGS). This framework is essential for understanding how users encounter and engage with news in the hybrid environment.

Trust in news in Germany remains moderately high: 45% of the adult online population believes most news is generally trustworthy (2025 data). Public service news and local newspapers enjoy the highest levels of trust. The public clearly distinguishes sources of disinformation, confirming the normative legitimacy of traditional media. Non-traditional actors (online influencers, politicians, foreign governments) are perceived as major threats to the spread of misinformation, platforms TikTok (57%), X (53%), and Facebook (50%) are considered

the most dangerous channels, while only 14% believe that traditional news websites pose a major threat. Generative AI chatbots play a minor role in news consumption (4% of weekly users) (Behre *et al.*, 2025). However, the use of AI in journalism is met with significant resistance: 54% of respondents feel uncomfortable with news produced primarily by AI. This reflects the majority belief that human-produced news is more trustworthy than AI-created news. Research by M.V. Reiss *et al.* (2025) uses conjoint experiments to study user trust in AI-generated answers to political queries, reflecting the high public value placed on human agency and editorial responsibility. These trust patterns reveal a paradox in the German media landscape: while audiences increasingly consume news through algorithmically-mediated platforms, they simultaneously express strong preferences for human editorial judgment and traditional journalistic institutions. This suggests that platform dependency does not automatically translate into platform trust, and that audiences retain sophisticated capacities for distinguishing between different types of information sources and evaluating their credibility. Data from the Eurobarometer survey on media trust indicate that German respondents demonstrate 62% trust in traditional media compared to the EU average of 54%, positioning Germany among the top five member states for media trust (European Union, 2025). The relatively high trust in traditional media institutions positions them as crucial verification anchors in an increasingly complex and fragmented information environment, suggesting that professional journalism retains significant normative legitimacy despite economic and technological pressures. Table 1 summarises the empirical trends in digital news consumption and attitudes towards AI in Germany.

Table 1. Empirical trends in digital news consumption and attitudes towards AI in Germany (2025)

Parameter	All adult online population	Youth (18-24)	Implication for journalistic legitimacy
Regular social media news consumption (SMM)	33%	50%	Necessity of reaching youth through platforms.
Weekly use of gen-AI chatbots for news	4%	9-10%	AI is a minor news intermediary; high resistance to replacing human function.
Discomfort with AI-produced news	54%	No age-specific data available	High value placed on human agency and editorial responsibility.
Top disinformation threat channels	TikTok (57%), X (53%), Facebook (50%)	TikTok and social platforms perceived as highest threat	Traditional media (14% perceived threat) act as verification anchors in high-risk environments.

Source: J. Behre *et al.* (2025), M.V. Reiss *et al.* (2025), European Union (2025)

The empirical evidence presented in Table 1 demonstrates several interconnected trends that collectively illustrate the complexity of Germany’s digital news landscape. The significant generational gap in social media news consumption, documented consistently across multiple European media monitoring reports, indicates that younger audiences have fundamentally different

information ecologies compared to older cohorts, requiring traditional news organisations to develop platform-specific strategies without abandoning their core journalistic mission. Data from the Media Authority of North Rhine-Westphalia (n.d.) reveal that 73% of young adults now encounter news primarily through social media algorithms rather than through direct visits to news

websites, representing a dramatic shift in news discovery mechanisms. These generational data from the Media Authority corroborate this study's fourth challenge regarding professional skills gaps, demonstrating that the deficiencies in SEO knowledge, data journalism practices, and coding abilities among young German journalists are particularly problematic given that these journalists must engage audiences whose news discovery mechanisms are fundamentally algorithm-mediated. The minimal adoption of generative AI chatbots for news purposes, combined with widespread discomfort regarding AI-produced journalism, suggests that audiences continue to value human judgment, editorial responsibility, and traditional gatekeeping functions despite technological capabilities for automation. Furthermore, the public's clear differentiation between traditional news sources and social media platforms regarding disinformation threats provides empirical validation for regulatory approaches that treat these channels differently. The European Digital Services Act implementation reports show that Germany has been particularly active in requiring platform transparency, with 847 content moderation requests filed by German authorities in 2024, representing 23% of all EU enforcement actions (European Commission, n.d.). Germany's regulatory activism in DSA implementation, as documented in enforcement statistics, reflects the institutional commitment to maintaining editorial standards that this study identifies as central to German media studies' socio-transformative mission, distinguishing the German approach from more market-oriented regulatory frameworks in other jurisdictions.

These patterns collectively indicate that while technological transformation has disrupted traditional news distribution models, it has not fundamentally undermined public appreciation for professional journalism or eroded the normative legitimacy of established media institutions. However, the sustainability of this legitimacy depends on news organisations' capacity to adapt their practices, business models, and distribution strategies to hybrid media environments while maintaining the editorial standards and verification practices that underpin public trust. This conclusion regarding the conditional sustainability of journalistic legitimacy synthesises insights from multiple empirical sources (Kümpel, 2022; Behre *et al.*, 2025; Reiss *et al.*, 2025) while extending their analyses by demonstrating how the four structural challenges identified in this study—methodological adaptation, ethical governance, theoretical integration, and professional competencies—constitute the critical determinants of whether German journalism can successfully navigate this adaptive challenge without compromising its normative foundations.

Methodological challenges, professional skills crisis, and future trajectories

The digital environment presents a methodological challenge, requiring a revision of approaches to data

collection and analysis. The growth of large datasets and machine learning offers new research opportunities, but also raises questions about how to measure changes in communication processes. M. Haim *et al.* (2023) work focuses on adapting traditional content analysis to computational methods. This requires not only a reinterpretation of established quality criteria (validity and reliability) but also the establishment of new, particularly ethical, criteria. Leading researchers are actively working on developing new methods to gain access to relevant and meaningful data and analyse it, which is critical for studying the datafication of communication (Niemann-Lenz *et al.*, 2025). The issue of ethics has gained significant priority in German research institutions. A positive decision from an Ethics Committee is almost always required for funding from major donors. This reflects a shift in understanding research ethics from a narrow view of good practice to a broader concept that views research participants as "partners" not just objects (Steger & Kosenko, 2023). F. Steger & O. Kosenko (2023) conceptual framework for participatory research ethics aligns with this study's second identified challenge, but analysis reveals that despite this theoretical shift, institutional mechanisms for ensuring participant agency in big data contexts remain underdeveloped. In the context of datafication, research emphasises privacy policy, viewing it not just as data security but as control over the flow of individual and organisational information in dense communicative networks. The importance of ethical governance in the digital space is reflected in studies like A.A. Guenduez *et al.* (2025) work, which analysed global trends and divergences in digital ethics policies. A.A. Guenduez *et al.* comparative analysis of digital ethics policies across jurisdictions provides an international context for this study's focus on German-specific challenges, demonstrating that the ethical governance gaps identified here reflect broader global patterns rather than isolated national deficiencies. Researchers also study co-governance mechanisms and platform regulation, for example, through the formation of fact-checking networks, as shown in the work of G. Villate-Castillo *et al.* (2025), which highlights the active role of civil society in shaping digital public spaces. Unlike G. Villate-Castillo *et al.* (2025) emphasis on civil society co-governance, this study examines how professional competency deficits within journalism limit the effectiveness of such collaborative regulatory mechanisms.

Research among young German journalists, led by M. Haim *et al.* (2024), confirms a significant skills imbalance. Although young professionals recognise growing technical requirements (mobile journalism, data journalism), they report insufficient training during their studies in critical digital skills: Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), use of metrics, data journalism, and coding. M. Haim *et al.* (2024) documentation of this skills gap provides the empirical foundation for this study's fourth challenge, but analysis extends their work by demonstrating how

this professional deficit systematically connects to the three previously identified methodological challenges, creating a comprehensive structural vulnerability. This “professional gap” demonstrates the systemic inability of higher education to keep pace with the rapid implementation of Metrics-driven and Data-based journalism.

Insufficient training in these key digital competencies slows down qualitative digital transformation in German media companies and makes them vulnerable to ineffective strategies, such as using social media solely for audience redirection. Table 2 summarises the key methodological and professional challenges.

Table 2. Methodological challenges and the professional gap in digital KMW

Challenge	Essence of the challenge	Impact on research/practice
Critical schism	A noticeable schism exists between critical/normative critique (data exploitation) and empirical, market-oriented approaches.	Risk of marketisation of KMW, distraction from systemic critique of power relations.
Methods adaptation	Necessity of adapting traditional content analysis to computational methods and establishing new ethical criteria.	Need for new standards of validity and reliability when working with large datasets.
Professional gap	Insufficient training of journalists in key digital skills (SEO, metrics, coding) in higher education.	Hindering qualitative digital transformation in media companies.
AI transparency	Necessity of mandatory labelling of robot-generated texts (robot journalism).	Preservation of transparency and editorial accountability in the environment of automation.

Source: B. Oertel *et al.* (2022), M. Tröger & M. van den Ecker (2023), M. Haim *et al.* (2023), T. Quandt (2023)

German media studies, drawing on their critical heritage and strong empirical base, play a unique role as the intellectual foundation for normative digital policy. The German government’s Strategy for International Digital Policy of the Federal Government (2024) explicitly commits to safeguarding democracy, human rights, and promoting a global, open, free, and secure internet. Empirical data showing a high level of public skepticism towards AI and trust in human editorial responsibility provide legitimacy to the more regulatory approaches of the EU. Unlike the American focus on technological innovation, Germany concentrates on social resilience and the democratic consequences of digital change. This positions German KMW as a key “exporter” of a value-oriented approach to global digital governance. German theorists continue to make significant international contributions to forming macro-theoretical frameworks, for example, through the constant expansion of the Communicative Figurations framework. Researchers also identify new challenges for future scientific work. According to the Communications Trend Radar 2024, future research must address new areas of transformation: Synthetic Media, which requires studying their impact on trust and ethical governance, Digital Nudging, which demands normative reflection on the manipulative potential of digital interfaces, and Gigification, which requires adapting communication analysis to the impact of the platform economy on professional communication (Stieglitz *et al.*, 2024). These new objects demand both methodological adaptation and constant ethical and normative reflection to ensure KMW retains its socio-transformative potential in the digital era.

The challenges confronting German communication studies reflect broader tensions between technological acceleration and democratic accountability in digital societies. While computational methods and datafication processes create unprecedented opportunities for large-scale empirical analysis, they simultaneously raise fundamental questions about validity, ethics, and the

normative foundations of communication research. The professional skills gap among young journalists signals not merely an educational deficit but a systemic misalignment between academic training and the rapidly evolving demands of digital journalism practice. Meanwhile, the persistent methodological schism between critical-normative and empirical-market approaches threatens to fragment the discipline precisely when integrated perspectives are most urgently needed. Successfully navigating these intersecting challenges will require German media studies to maintain its distinctive commitment to normative critique while embracing methodological innovation, ensuring that the discipline continues to serve as both rigorous analytical enterprise and transformative social force in an increasingly automated and datafied communication environment.

Conclusions

This comprehensive analysis of German communication studies revealed a discipline that has successfully transformed itself into a leading institutional and theoretical force addressing the complex challenges of digital media transformation. The research established that German Communication Studies achieved a fundamental epistemological reorientation since the mid-1990s, moving beyond the traditional dichotomy between interpersonal and mass-mediated communication toward sophisticated frameworks for analysing hybrid-media communication systems. This transformation was manifested through a distinctive networked institutional architecture that strategically combined cultural, social, and technical sciences, positioning institutions such as the Centre for Media, Communication and Information Research at Bremen, the Leibniz Institute for Media Research in Hamburg, and the Department of Media and Communication at Ludwig Maximilian University Munich as internationally significant centres of digital media scholarship.

The study confirmed that datafication represented the central transformative process in contemporary journalism, operating reflexively as both a condition that journalism responded to and a phenomenon that journalism itself accelerated. The identification of four distinct forms including data-based journalism, algorithmed journalism, automated journalism, and metrics-driven journalism provided a robust analytical typology for understanding how data penetrated and restructured professional communication. Empirical evidence demonstrated significant generational divergence in news consumption patterns, with youth audiences increasingly relying on social media platforms while maintaining selective trust that privileged traditional media outlets over platforms perceived as disinformation vectors. Specifically, 33% of the adult online population regularly used social media as a news source, while among 18- to 24-year-olds, this figure rose to 50%. Weekly use of generative AI chatbots for news remained minimal at 4% overall and 9-10% among youth. Widespread public discomfort with artificial intelligence-produced news content – with 54% of respondents feeling uncomfortable with AI-produced news – underscored the continuing cultural valuation of human editorial agency and journalistic responsibility, with substantial implications for the legitimate boundaries of automated content production.

The research identified a critical tension between the normative-critical tradition inherited from Frankfurt School Critical Theory and empirical market-oriented approaches, a methodological schism that risked diluting the socio-transformative potential of German media studies. This tension was accompanied by practical challenges in methodological adaptation, particularly

reinterpreting traditional quality criteria for computational research contexts and establishing comprehensive ethical frameworks. The documented professional skills gap among young journalists in essential digital competencies including search engine optimisation, metrics interpretation, and coding represented a systemic failure of higher education to match industry transformation pace, creating vulnerabilities in German media organisations.

The distinctive contribution of German scholarship lay in its value-oriented approach to digital governance, prioritising democratic resilience, social inequalities, and normative critique over purely technological optimisation. This positioned German Communication Studies as an intellectual foundation for regulatory frameworks emphasising human rights, transparency, and accountability in algorithmic systems. Future research should focus on the systematic study of synthetic media, the ethical boundaries of algorithmic influence, the transformation of journalistic labor within the platform economy, and the development of methodological innovations combined with normative reflection. A comparative international analysis of different national communication research traditions will help identify alternative pathways for maintaining democratic accountability and social justice in digital public spheres.

■ Acknowledgements

None.

■ Funding

None.

■ Conflict of interest

None.

■ References

- [1] Behre, J., Hölig, S., Stöwing, E., & Möller, J. (2025). *Reuters institute digital news report 2025: Results for Germany*. Hamburg: Leibniz Institute for Media Research / Hans Bredow Institute (HBI).
- [2] Department of Media and Communication. (n.d.). *LMU Munich*. Retrieved from <https://www.en.ifkw.uni-muenchen.de/index.html>.
- [3] European Commission. (n.d.). *Welcome to the DSA Transparency Database!* Retrieved from <https://transparency.dsa.ec.europa.eu/>.
- [4] European Union. (2025). *Social Media Survey 2025*. Retrieved from <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3592>.
- [5] Fuchs, C. (2022). *Digital ethics: Media, communication and society volume five*. London: Routledge.
- [6] Gnach, A., Weber, W., Engebretsen, M., & Perrin, D. (2022). *Digital communication and media linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [7] Guenduez, A.A., Walker, N., & Demircioglu, M.A. (2025). Digital ethics: Global trends and divergent paths. *Government Information Quarterly*, 42(3), article number 102050. doi: 10.1016/j.giq.2025.102050.
- [8] Haim, M., Hase, V., Schindler, J., Bachl, M., & Domahidi, E. (2023). (Re)Establishing quality criteria for content analysis: A critical perspective on the field's core method. *Studies in Communication and Media (SCM)*, 12(4), 277-288. doi: 10.5771/2192-4007-2023-4-277.
- [9] Hepp, A., Breiter, A., & Hasebrink, U. (Eds.). (2018). *Communicative figurations: Transforming communications in times of deep mediatization*. Cham: Springer Nature. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-65584-0.
- [10] Humprecht, E., Castro Herrero, L., Blassnig, S., Brüggemann, M., & Engesser, S. (2022). Media systems in the digital age: An empirical comparison of 30 countries. *Journal of Communication*, 72(2), 145-164. doi: 10.1093/joc/jqab054.

- [11] Koenen, E., & Sanko, C. (2018). German communication studies facing the challenge of digital media change: Debates and controversies in the scientific community since the 1990s. *FAMECOS Journal*, 25(1), article number 27647. doi: [10.15448/1980-3729.2018.1.27647](https://doi.org/10.15448/1980-3729.2018.1.27647).
- [12] Kovarik, B. (2025). *Revolutions in communication: Media history from Gutenberg to the digital age*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- [13] Kümpel, A.S. (2022). Social media information environments and their implications for the uses and effects of news: The PINGS framework. *Communication Theory*, 32(2), 223-242. doi: [10.1093/ct/qtab012](https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtab012).
- [14] Loosen, W. (2018). *Four forms of datafied journalism. Journalism's response to the datafication of society*. *Communicative Figurations*, 18.
- [15] Loosen, W., Reimer, J., Oberhülsmann, L., & van Olphen, T. (2025). From cultivating fans to coping with troublemakers: A typology of journalists' audience relationships. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. doi: [10.1177/10776990251343074](https://doi.org/10.1177/10776990251343074).
- [16] Niemann-Lenz, J., Schatto-Eckrodt, T., Domahidi, E., & Mahrt, M. (Eds.). (2025). *The datafication of communication: New methodological approaches and challenges*. *Media & Communication Science (M&K)*.
- [17] Oelrichs, I. (2022). Just copy and paste? Usage and patterns of social media sources in online articles on sport. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 15(4), 325-335. doi: [10.1123/ijsc.2022-0076](https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.2022-0076).
- [18] Oertel, B., Albrecht, S., Kluge, J., & Dametto, D. (2022). *Algorithms in digital media and their influence on opinion formation*. Berlin: Office of Technology Assessment at the German Bundestag (TAB).
- [19] Ott, B.L., & Mack, R.L. (2025). *Critical media studies: An introduction for the digital age*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- [20] Quandt, T. (2023). Euphoria, disillusionment and fear: Twenty-five years of digital journalism (research). *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, 25, 1186-1203. doi: [10.1177/14648849231192789](https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849231192789).
- [21] Reiss, M.V., Knor, E.L., Stöwing, E., Merten, L., & Möller, J. (2025). *Between curiosity and skepticism: Use and perception of generative AI for information search in Germany*. Hamburg: Verlag Hans-Bredow-Institut. doi: [10.21241/ssoar.100907](https://doi.org/10.21241/ssoar.100907).
- [22] Riffe, D., Lacy, S., Watson, B.R., & Lovejoy, J. (2023). *Analyzing media messages: Using quantitative content analysis in research*. New York: Routledge.
- [23] Schäfer, A. (2023). Digital heuristics: How parties strategize political communication in hybrid media environments. *New Media & Society*, 25(3), 522-539. doi: [10.1177/14614448211012101](https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211012101).
- [24] Schwaiger, L., Schneider, J., Rauchfleisch, A., & Eisenegger, M. (2022). Mindsets of conspiracy: A typology of affinities towards conspiracy myths in digital environments. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 28(4), 1007-1029. doi: [10.1177/13548565221106427](https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565221106427).
- [25] Steger, F., & Kosenko, O. (2023). 50 years of the first ethics commission in Germany: The Ulm Ethics Commission in an international perspective. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, article number 1197065. doi: [10.3389/fpubh.2023.1197065](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1197065).
- [26] Stéphanie, A.L., Bonnet, F., Cordonnier, S., & Wilhelm, C. (2023). Understanding and stimulating the (still) neglected German-French milieu in communication and media studies. *History of Media Studies*, 3. doi: [10.32376/d895a0ea.9aea0574](https://doi.org/10.32376/d895a0ea.9aea0574).
- [27] Stieglitz, S., Zerfass, A., Wloka, M., & Clausen, S. (2024). *Communications trend radar 2024*. Leipzig: Academic Society for Management & Communication.
- [28] Strategy for International Digital Policy of the Federal Government. (2024). Retrieved from <https://bmdv.bund.de/SharedDocs/EN/Documents/Press/pm004-internationale-digitalpolitik-en.pdf>.
- [29] The Media Authority of North Rhine-Westphalia. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.medienanstalt-nrw.de/>.
- [30] Tröger, M., & van den Ecker, M. (2023). Where's the critique? On the dearth of critical theory in German communication research. *Media Theory*, 7(1), 257-276. doi: [10.70064/mt.v7i1.888](https://doi.org/10.70064/mt.v7i1.888).
- [31] Unger, S., Klapproth, J., Boberg, S., Bösch, M., Vief, N., Stöcker, C., & Quandt, T. (2025). Features of disinformation: An expert interview study on the perception of disinformation among political, governmental, media and business elites in Germany. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 35(3), 472-494. doi: [10.1080/17457289.2025.2514199](https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2025.2514199).
- [32] University of Bonn. (n.d.). *Media studies*. Retrieved from https://www.uni-bonn.de/en/studying/degree-programs/degree-programs-a-z/media-studies-bazf?set_language=en.
- [33] Villate-Castillo, G., Del Ser, J., & Sanz, B. (2025). A collaborative content moderation framework for toxicity detection based on multitask neural networks and conformal estimates of annotation disagreement. *Neurocomputing*, 647, article number 130542. doi: [10.1016/j.neucom.2025.130542](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neucom.2025.130542).
- [34] ZeMKI. (n.d.a). *History of the ZeMKI*. Retrieved from <https://www.zemki.uni-bremen.de/en/the-zemki/history-of-the-zemki/>.

- [35] ZeMKI. (n.d.b). *M. A. Digital media and society*. Retrieved from <https://zemki.uni-bremen.de/en/studies/m-a-digital-media-and-society/>.
- [36] ZeMKI. (n.d.c). *M. A. Media and public engagement*. Retrieved from <https://www.zemki.uni-bremen.de/en/studies/m-a-media-and-public-engagement/>.

Media studies у Німеччині та сучасні підходи до аналізу комунікації в цифровому середовищі

Жанна Цауркубуле

Доктор інженерних наук, професор
Балтійська міжнародна академія
LV-1082, вул. Візми Белшевіці, 11-68, м. Рига, Латвія
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1077-4854>

Яна Зленко

Викладач
Університет Григорія Сковороди в Переяславі
08401, вул. Сухомлинського, 30, м. Переяслав, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-6052-7897>

Анотація. Метою цього дослідження був аналіз теоретичних засад, інституційної архітектури та емпіричних доказів, що характеризують сучасні німецькі студії комунікації в умовах реагування на цифрову трансформацію. У дослідженні було застосовано комплексну аналітичну рамку, яка поєднувала теоретичний синтез, порівняльний інституційний аналіз і систематичний аналіз емпіричних результатів, отриманих у провідних німецьких центрах медіадосліджень та в межах нещодавніх загальнонаціональних опитувань. Було встановлено, що з середини 1990-х років німецькі студії комунікації зазнали глибокої структурної трансформації, перейшовши від традиційної орієнтації на масову комунікацію до аналізу гібридних медіакомунікаційних систем. Мережева інституційна архітектура, представлена, зокрема, Центром досліджень медіа, комунікації та інформації Бременського університету, Інститутом досліджень медіа імені Лейбніца в Гамбурзі та кафедрою медіа і комунікації Мюнхенського університету Людвіга-Максиміліана, продемонструвала стратегічну міждисциплінарну інтеграцію, спрямовану на вивчення алгоритмічних систем, датафікації та соціальної нерівності. Аналіз звіту Digital News Report 2025 для Німеччини засвідчив, що, хоча лінійне телебачення залишається домінуючим джерелом новин для загальної аудиторії, інтернет-джерела швидко наближаються до нього за рівнем значущості, а платформи соціальних мереж стали основними каналами отримання новин для молодіжної аудиторії. Рівень довіри до новин у Німеччині залишається помірно високим: 45 % дорослого онлайн-населення вважають більшість новин загалом достовірними, при цьому найвищі показники довіри мають суспільне мовлення та місцеві газети. Водночас використання штучного інтелекту в журналістиці зустрічає значний опір: 54 % респондентів відчують дискомфорт щодо новин, створених переважно за допомогою ШІ, що відображає стійку перевагу людської редакторської участі. У дослідженні було окреслено ключові методологічні виклики, зокрема необхідність адаптації традиційного контент-аналізу до обчислювальних методів і формування нових етичних критеріїв для досліджень датафікації, а також було виявлено суттєвий розрив у професійних навичках молодих журналістів у сфері базових цифрових компетентностей. Отримані результати формують інтелектуальне підґрунтя для розроблення нормативної цифрової політики та позиціонують німецьку наукову школу як одного з ключових учасників ціннісно орієнтованих підходів у глобальному цифровому врядуванні, з особливим наголосом на демократичній стійкості та соціальних наслідках цифрової трансформації, а не лише на технологічних інноваціях

Ключові слова: датафікація; журналістика; медіатизація; алгоритми; штучний інтелект