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Users and Producers

Online News as Mediated Participation

Susanne M. Almgren

Jönköping University
School of Education and Communication
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The purpose of this thesis is to illuminate principles that guide mediated participation, taking place through the interplay between users and news producers. The research questions concern how the conditions comprising mediated participation – in terms of opportunities for users' participatory practices – differ between (1a) various types of online news sites, and (1b) various types of news, as well as how users exercise participatory practices (2a) on various types of news sites, and (2b) in connection to various types of news. The last research question (3) concerns how users express the connection to news producers, through participatory practices within participatory spaces. The results show that users and news producers take diverging approaches to user participation adjacent to online news. This is illustrated by the fact that the categories of news that users are most often permitted to interact with, coincide precisely with the news that users tend to decline to interact with, while the news categories that users tend to interact with (when given the chance) occur comparatively sparsely. The results also show that news producers are much more prone to permit users to share news through social media, than to permit them to comment news on the news site. When it concerns user practices, users share news on Facebook 20 times more often than they share news through Twitter or comment news on news sites. Tweeting news almost only occurs in news sites affiliated with big city national newspapers. Overall, the thesis illustrates that there are connections between various forms of electronic communication (i.e. commenting and sharing news through Facebook and Twitter), and the specific contextual and social settings that news sites are embedded within, with its specific situated audience, shaping the connections between users and news producers.



SUSANNE M. ALMGREN is a researcher and lecturer at Jönköping University, where she currently (2012-2017) conducts research on online news sites and their users. The public defence of her PhD thesis took place November 24, 2017. Her research interests primarily concern mediated participation related to newsroom cultures and audience reception studies.