ISSN 2960-4125

medien & zeit

Kommunikation in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart

Thema
The media we refused to use

HerausgeberInnen
Christian Schwarzenegger
Gaby Falböck

1/2023

Jahrgang 38

medien & zeit

Inhalt

Impressum

Medieninhaber, Herausgeber und Verleger
Verein: Arbeitskreis für historische Kommunikationsforschung (AHK)
Währinger Straße 29, 1090 Wien
ZVR-Zahl 963010743

Der AHK wird vom Institut für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft, Universität Wien, unterstützt.

HerausgeberInnen
Christian Schwarzenegger, Gaby Falböck

Redaktion Buchbesprechungen
Thomas Ballhausen, Hendrik Michael, Simon Sax

Redaktion Research Corner
Erik Bauer, Christina Krakovsky

Satz
Grafikbüro Ebner, Wiengasse 6, 1140 Wien

Erscheinungsweise & Bezugsbedingungen
medien & zeit erscheint halbjährlich in digitaler Form
Heftbestellungen aus dem Printbestand (1986–2022):
Einzelheft (exkl. Versand): 6,50 Euro
Infos und Kontakt unter redaktion@medienundzeit.at
sowie auf http://www.medienundzeit.at

ISSN (print) 0259-7446 / ISSN (online) 2960-4125

Offenlegung nach § 25 Mediengesetz
Grundlegende Richtung: *medien & zeit* ist eine wissenschaftliche Fachzeitschrift für historische Kommunikationsforschung. Sie will Forum für eine kritische und interdisziplinär ausgerichtete Auseinandersetzung über Theorien, Methoden und Probleme der Kommunikationsgeschichte sein.

Editorial

This issue of *medien & zeit* is a turning point for our journal in several ways. First, we are proud to present the first issue in a new era of publishing policy of *medien & zeit*. For 37 years *medien & zeit* was a journal based on thematic issues with the editorial board and executive editors – all volunteers dedicated to the history of media and historical communication research – in charge of the editorial process and quality control. With this issue we transition to an era as a fully peer reviewed journal. As a journal we are convinced that this will not hinder the broad and inclusive approach to media and communication history we had pursued for the last decades, but instead will allow for more diversification, a widened range and broadened scope, and even more expertise. Henceforth, we will continue to have theme issues initiated by thematic calls for papers and in the responsibility of (guest) editors. In addition, each issue will be accompanied by an open section covering a wide range of current topics. The responsibility for review however will be shared with the community. Although *medien & zeit* is a journal focused on communication history, it is not ignorant of the changes in the academic publishing. We adhere the ambition of making science as open as possible. Consequently, and with the ambition to make the research which is entrusted to the journal for publication even more accessible and inclusive, *medien & zeit* is now a digital open access journal: We are happy to have the University of Vienna as a strong partner in this endeavor.

This first issue of the brand new *medien & zeit* addresses a thematic field that has seen some growth in recent years, but mostly with regards to digital media: Disconnection from, non-use of and refusal of digital media. The nascent field of disconnection studies was very prolific over the last couple of years with conferences (e.g., as preconference series at the ICA), special issues, books, projects and collaborations well on the way. The interest in disconnection spiked as a reaction to the overwhelming presence and perseverance of the society and everyday lives with the imperative of digital media. But disconnection from media with regards to individual well-being, for educational reasons, life-style choices or activist aims is not something that emerged from a void and is genuinely linked to digital communication. Disconnection has a history. While media users and the impact of media and communication on societies as well as on individuals are a main focus in media and communication research, the group of non-users have widely remained unexplored. And if addressed they were rather seen as a deviation, a group that does not yet but should become users, should become part of the audience. That media, once established in society, are to be used and further diffused into usage is a normalized view in media and communication research. Non usage was widely interpreted as a hindrance to diffusion and a problem that has to be solved. Investigating voluntary abstention from using media is a turn in the perspective. While this disconnective turn gained traction in recent years, it is yet to be historicized. The four original articles in this issue of *medien & zeit* engage with the media we refused to use in a longterm perspective and historical lenses.

Young adults and their news-usage are in the research focus of Ulla Authenrieth, Fiona Fehlmann and Matthias Künzler. The authors focus on the questions of how news usage is implemented in daily media usage of young people. Furthermore, they enlighten the motives of non-media usage and the requirements for appealing news content. To overcome the challenge of researching daily media usage a triangulation of methods was applied. The methods chosen were observation, think aloud techniques and conducting interviews. The location of the research was an apartment with media equipment called Use Lab. Participants in the study were 40 young adults between the ages of 19 to 32 years and differ regarding to age, sex and formal education background. The participants got 2 different tasks: First they should gain information about actual news of the world using their familiar media set. Secondly, they got shown pictures of informative content of the broadcasting station of Switzerland (SFR) and were asked about their knowledge of these programs. Afterwards they could use online content of the SRF to gain relevant news. The findings show that the young adults are aware of the social expectation of having knowledge about the latest news. The authors describe how the participants justify their poor news perception: they are engaged in feminism and climate protection, they live their lives, their reception of print or TV news is connected to media socialization in the family and still occurs there. In their daily routines they prefer news apps that offer short, catchy information for free. While the participants mainly use tabloid content, they are well informed about qualitative journalism. If they get news they are interested in via apps or social media they investigate for more information in qualitative newspapers like NZZ. In general, they prefer written content regarding to news. The findings show that the young people experience themselves as being good enough informed to handle daily life. Compared with society's expectations they describe themselves as minor informed. The youngsters know about the problem of algorithm and filter bubbles, but they forget about it in daily routines. They spend their time on social media and describe this practice as a failure. In the interviews they also spoke about their ambivalent view on media production. They don't like the concept of agenda setting in mass media and are aware of perceptive messages. For this reason, they ignore mass media, even though their own lacks on the subject of news informativeness are well known. Not at least they describe the problem of information overload, especially bad news and crises and the lacks in competences of selection. Non-usage seems to be an act of self-protection. Advice by peers is an important strategy to handle information overload. The authors interpret the young adults according to former research as news deprived but also as pragmatic information oriented. They collect information for their personal life. Documentations are a high ranked format of news content. Political topics are preferred as a mixture of information and entertainment in satirical formats. Social media channels like TikTok and Instagram are main resources for actual news or content of platforms like Y-Kollektiv. In the end the authors conclude that the content creators should shift their ideas of news formats.

While the contemporary debate on disconnection is often linked to individual self-care, Viktoria Kratel argues to take sociological factors into account. Kratel brings in the factor that social structural and power relations are at the heart of the decision who can voluntarily disconnect and who can't. Not everyone is given sufficient agency, privilege, and control to have a fully self-determined media use. Therefore, the author proposes a figure called homo disconnectus, that is based on agency concepts informed by Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens placed in the tradition of fictional agents like homo economicus and homo sociologicus. To sketch an ideal disconnection subject Kratel builds on a systematic literature review and investigates sociodemographic factors: As Kratel describes gender is a decisive category when it comes to self-determined use of digital media also the social class. The homo disconnectus has the opportunity to disconnect or not, while others, in particular with care obligations do not have the privilege of choice. While there are professions in which the workforce is forced to disconnect during working hours, for other professions disconnection is not a choice they can make. The ability to voluntarily disconnect is telling with regards to the social status and social inequalities in the digital society.

Learn how to write a program code or just be a user without these specific skills? – this is the question that drives the debate in the community of computer experts and pedagogues. The article of Patryk Wasiak set out to explore the history of computer culture and the shifts regarding this discourse in two historical settings: The 1980's and the presence. Facing the particular problem of the lack of sources Wasiak decided to investigate how other social actors – programmers and pedagogues - defined users and non-users and shaped the discourse. The first setting is labelled as era of microcomputers with the rise of home technology (Commodore 64 or Apple II) and marked by the programming languages BASIC and LOGO as well as the emerging gaming culture. The author assumes that this era was marked by the utopian imagery of the positive impact of computers on personal lives and economies. Besides this debate Wasiak explores the discourse how computer literacy was defined as an important skill for children. Based on the sources of special interest journals to computing and historical work published in the 1980s a pathological imagery of children non-programmers became visible. Simply using available software meant that the child passively follows orders given by the software designers. In his longitudinal work Wasiak compares these debates with the current discussions about children's digital skills: The enthusiastic view on the opportunities of access to computers and the hope that access will solve a range of educational, social and economic problems characterized recent debates. The presence is dominated by a computer culture named as "learn to code" movement regarding to the development in digital economy and the need of resistance by having coding skills. As Wasiak points out the current discourse might be summarized as anti-utopianism. In sum this article attempts to show that the main core of the debate is the demand of user agency and the aim to give people control over the digital technology.

The normalization of use or non-use and proper ways of using has been a traditional era of publica debates, especially around (then) new media and how they might affect vulnerable groups, as children. This vulnerable group is of highly interest in public discourse and the entrance of new media in the media system was always accompanied by the appeal to protect children. Since the pedagogical view has made a shift in the 1960s the stance of making the children competent and self-determined has enriched the discussion. When it comes to digitalization the shift to the positive aspects of usage happened quickly. Meanwhile the common talk about digital technologies in childhood and education is to point out the positive potential on access to digitalization and digital literacy. Jesper Balslev and Mie Oehlenschläger challenge this widely held view and argue for a position that is more differentiated, incorporating scientific findings. Using a qualitative document analysis of strategic policy papers since 1994 the authors describe the public and political discourse of Denmark as a country that is on top of international surveys asking for the digitalization of the public sector. What they found was a stabile optimism about the potentials of digital technologies regarding motivation, learning, global competition, management, communication between school and parents. Raising doubts are an exception in the reports and concrete strategies to educate digital or media literacy were only part of one report. Digital non-use is connoted through the digital-divide lens and a challenge that should be overcome. Besides the scientific discourses adopt a different, critical position to digital media use in childhood regarding to physical and mental health, productivity, freedom and sustainability. As the authors point out these positions regarding to non-usage are not explicitly stated in educational policy papers and that these themes are salient to education. Facing a generation that is concerned about economic crises and climate discourses the authors suggest a positive framing of disconnectivity: the positioning for sustainability and mental health might be more motivating for the grown-ups and young adults.

In conclusion this issue shows that disconnectivity can and should be read in a variety of ways. The historic perspective adds important nuance to this current debate. We hope you find the reading enjoyable and informative.

Christian Schwarzenegger &
Gaby Falböck

Authenrieth, U., Fehlmann, F., & Künzler, M. (2023). Keine News und dann? Junge Erwachsene zwischen News Deprivation und Informationsorientierung. medien & zeit, 38(1), 5–19.

Keine News und dann?

Junge Erwachsene zwischen News Deprivation und Informationsorientierung

Ulla Authenrieth

Institut für Multimedia Production, Fachhochschule Graubünden

Fiona Fehlmann

Institut für Angewandte Medienwissenschaft,
Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften

Matthias Künzler

Institut für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft, Freie Universität Berlin

Abstract

Wie zahlreiche Studien zur journalistischen Nachrichtennutzung von jungen Menschen zeigen, hat sich die Art und Weise des Zugangs zu solchen Inhalten im Umfeld von digitalen Plattformen stark verändert. Oft fokussieren sich entsprechende Studien primär darauf, diese Veränderungen in der Nutzung klassischer Nachrichtenformate zu beschreiben. In der Regel bleibt dabei jedoch unklar, welche Inhalte und Informationen aus Sicht der jungen Nutzer:innen in ihren Alltagspraktiken als News gewertet werden, wie sie mit entsprechenden Inhalten umgehen und welche Erwartungen sie an diese haben. Diesem Forschungsdesiderat nimmt sich die vorliegende Studie an und untersucht, anhand qualitativ erhobener Daten im Rahmen eines Media Use Lab, in dem vierzig junge Erwachsene im Alter zwischen 19 und 32 Jahren bei ihrer Mediennutzung beobachtet sowie interviewt wurden, welche Praktiken, Handlungen und damit verbundene Sinnbezüge für junge Menschen im Umgang mit News von Bedeutung sind. Die Resultate zeigen, dass klassische Nachrichtenangebote bei den interviewten jungen Menschen zwar eher eine untergeordnete Rolle in ihrer tatsächlichen Mediennutzung spielen, sie deren Nutzung jedoch als grundsätzlich wichtig erachten und sehr genaue Gründe für eine Nicht-Nutzung von News nennen können. Gleichzeitig interessieren und beschäftigen sie sich mit Themen, die einen Bezug zu ihrer Lebenswelt aufweisen. Junge Mediennutzer:innen scheinen deshalb zwar tatsächlich "news depriviert", jedoch informationsorientiert zu sein.

Keywords: *Nachrichtennutzung, Informationsorientierung, junge Zielgruppen, News-Avoidance, News-Deprivation, Mediennutzung, Media-Use-Lab*

Das heutige Medienumfeld ist u.a. geprägt durch eine Fülle von Nachrichteninhalten, die über eine Vielzahl verschiedener Geräte und Plattformen zeitlich und örtlich unabhängig genutzt werden (Edgerly et al., 2018; Kümpel, 2020; Poindexter, 2018). Die Nutzung gesellschaftlich relevanter Nachrichten, insbesondere über politische, wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Vorgänge, wird in Demokratien als Voraussetzung zur informierten Wahrnehmung am politischen Prozess gesehen (vgl. z. B. Habermas 2006). Vor dieser in breiten Kreisen anerkannten normativen Annahme sind aktuelle Befunde der Medienwirkungsforschung beunruhigend, die zeigen, dass die junge Bevölkerung im Vergleich zu älteren Mediennutzer:innen ein geringeres Interesse an tagesaktuellen Nachrichten hat und solche weniger nutzt (Aharoni et al., 2021; Antunovic et al., 2018; fög, 2020, 2021, 2022; Newman et al., 2021; Poindexter, 2018; Tamboer et al., 2020).

Online stoßen junge Erwachsene tendenziell eher beiläufig und "zufällig" durch algorithmische Empfehlungen via Social Media auf Nachrichten (Gnach et al., 2020; Kümpel, 2020; Tamboer et al., 2020). Dementsprechend beschreiben Studien besonders Gruppen junger Menschen als potentiell “News Deprivierte” (fög, 2020, 2021). Darunter verstehen einige Forscher:innen Personen, die typischerweise einen „unterdurchschnittlichen Newskonsum über alle Medien hinweg“ (fög, 2021, 108) aufweisen und News lediglich „über gratis verfügbare Online- oder Social-Media-Angebote“ (fög, 2021, 109) nutzen. Ausserdem finden sich einige Studien, welche die Nachrichtennutzung junger Menschen als personalisiert, beiläufig und fragmentiert beschreiben (Edgerly et al., 2018; Kümpel, 2020; Molyneux, 2018; Tamboer et al., 2020).

Auffallend ist, dass in zahlreichen Studien primär die Beschreibung veränderter Zugänge zu Nachrichteninhalten sowie Nachrichtennutzungsmustern im Vordergrund stehen und lediglich selten untersucht wird, wie und aufgrund welcher Merkmale junge Mediennutzer:innen in ihren Mediennutzungspraktiken Nachrichteninhalte als solche wahrnehmen, verstehen und welche Sinnbezüge damit einhergehen (Bengtsson & Johansson, 2021; Schwaiger et al., 2022). Außerdem stellen bspw. Swart und Kolleg:innen fest (2022, 13), dass Studien oft aufgrund journalistischer, branchenbezogener Definitionen von “News” die Häufigkeit und Art und Weise der Nachrichtennutzung untersuchen und schlagen daran anschließend vor: “We propose [...] shifting the focus from what news use is toward what is experienced as “informative”.” In der bestehenden Forschung tendenziell weniger erforscht sind deshalb Fragen wie: Welche Angebote werden aus welchen Gründen aus Sicht junger Erwachsener als informativ wahrgenommen? Welchen Stellenwert haben dabei journalistische Nachrichteninhalte? Inwiefern und aufgrund welcher Motive werden Newsinhalte gemieden? Welche Präferenzen haben junge Erwachsene in Bezug auf Nachrichteninhalte, die sie auch als informativ wahrnehmen?

In diesem Artikel wird analysiert, welche Praktiken, Handlungen und damit verbundenen Sinnbezüge für junge Erwachsene zwischen dem 19. und 32. Lebensjahr im Umgang mit Nachrichten- bzw. Informationsinhalten von Bedeutung sind.

Nachrichtennutzung im Plattformzeitalter und deren Erforschung

In zahlreichen Ländern rund um den Globus werden Online-Plattformen wie Instagram, Twitter, Facebook und jüngst auch TikTok immer zentraler für die Auseinandersetzung mit aktuellen Nachrichten und Informationen (z.B. Newman et al., 2021). Die Mannigfaltigkeit an Plattformen und Diensten im Zuge “tiefgreifender Mediatisierung” (Hepp, 2021, 22) führt nicht zuletzt zu einer Diversifizierung individueller Medienrepertoires. Besonders junge Zielgruppen wenden sich in vielfältiger Weise digitalen Plattformen zu, während die Nutzung klassischer Medienanbieter in jüngeren Altersgruppen abnimmt. Ihre Nachrichtenrepertoires sind somit in der Regel ‘digitaler’ im Vergleich zu älteren Personen (Hepp, 2021). Auf Social Media Plattformen stoßen Nutzer:innen in der Regel nicht auf Inhalte, die von einem einzigen Medienunternehmen kuratiert und gebündelt werden, sondern die Auseinandersetzung mit Nachrichteninhalten geschieht in einem algorithmisch personalisierten Umfeld und wird in der Forschung u.a. als zufällig, nebenbei oder granular beschrieben (Kümpel, 2021; Merten, 2021; Schwaiger et al., 2022).

Wie Bengtsson und Johansson (2021, 2876 f.) festhalten, bewegt sich die kommunikationswissenschaftliche Forschung zum Nachrichtenkonsum auf digitalen Plattformen in den folgenden zwei Bereichen: Erstens wird primär untersucht, welche Einflüsse die Nachrichtennutzung auf digitalen Plattformen auf das Wissen von Bürger:innen und auf ihr ziviles Engagement hat (z.B. Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2017; Prior, 2007), einschließlich der Frage, wie sie bspw. Desinformationen (z.B. Fletcher et al., 2018; Humprecht et al., 2020) oder die algorithmische Kontrolle über ihre Nachrichtengewohnheiten verstehen und einordnen. Damit verbunden sind teilweise auch Debatten darüber, wie Nutzer:innen zu Produzent:innen sowie Verbreiter:innen von Newsinhalten werden und welche positiven sowie negativen Implikationen dies haben kann.

Der zweite weniger stark entwickelte Forschungsbereich untersucht, in welcher Weise die (digitale) Nachrichtennutzung in den alltäglichen Praktiken der Rezipient:innen verwoben ist und welche sozialen, kulturellen und erfahrungsbasierten Sinnbezüge mit der Nachrichtennutzung einhergehen (Bengtsson & Johansson, 2021; Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2010). Forschungsvorhaben in diesem Bereich versuchen in der Regel sich aus einer qualitativen Perspektive "bottom-up" dem Phänomen der veränderten Nachrichtennutzung anzunähern. Jüngste Studien aus diesem zweiten Bereich heben bspw. die mobile, stetige Verfügbarkeit von Nachrichten in einem Multiplattformumfeld hervor (Swart, 2021; Tamboer et al., 2020) und beschäftigen sich mit neu entstehenden Praktiken in diesem Kontext wie bspw. "News Snacking" (Molyneux, 2018) oder "(News) Scrolling" (Groot Kormelink & Costera Meijer, 2019). Im Anschluss an diesen zweiten Forschungsbereich werden im vorliegenden Beitrag folgende Forschungsfragen adressiert:

- FF1: Welchen Stellenwert haben journalistische Newsinhalte im Mediennutzungsverhalten von jungen Erwachsenen in der Schweiz?

- FF2: Welche Motive nennen junge Erwachsene für die Nichtnutzung von News-Angeboten?

- FF3: Wie müssten aus Sicht der jungen Erwachsenen Informationsinhalte aufbereitet sein, damit sie diese nutzen? oder: Welche Präferenzen äußern die jungen Erwachsenen in Bezug auf Newsinhalte??

Um Praktiken bei der Nachrichtennutzung junger Menschen möglichst nah an deren Alltag beobachten zu können, wurde zur Erforschung der oben genannten Fragen ein sogenanntes Media Use Lab in einer extra dafür gemieteten Wohnung in Basel (CH) eingerichtet. Im nächsten Abschnitt wird die dazugehörige methodische Vorgehensweise beschrieben, gefolgt von den Ergebnissen zu den Forschungsfragen auf Basis der durchgeführten Beobachtungen und Interviews im *Media Use Lab*.

Methodisches Vorgehen

Media Use Lab

Für die Untersuchung wurde ein methodisches Verfahren entwickelt, das Elemente einer teilnehmenden Beobachtung, mit lautem Denken und Interviewepisoden miteinander kombiniert. Als Basis diente ein teilstandardisierter Leitfaden. Ort der Erhebung war das eigens hierfür eingerichtete Media Use Lab, das entsprechend der Nutzungspräferenzen der Teilnehmenden vorbereitet wurde. Mit diesem Media Use Lab wurde versucht nachzuzeichnen, wie die Teilnehmer:innen ihre Praktiken im Umgang mit Nachrichten, in denen sie involviert sind, verstehen und beschreiben (Costera Meijer & Groot Kormelink, 2015). Um sowohl die gewählten Inhalte als auch die artikulierten Aussagen der Beteiligten festzuhalten, wurden die Interaktionen im Untersuchungsverlauf per Video aufgezeichnet und anschliessend als Sprechprotokoll transkribiert. Während der Erhebung waren zwei Untersuchungsleiter:innen anwesend. Eine Person übernahm hierbei die technische Leitung, kümmerte sich um die Aufnahmen und den reibungslosen Ablauf, die zweite Person fokussierte sich auf die Gesprächsführung und inhaltliche Gestaltung der Erhebung.
Insgesamt wurden 40 Untersuchungen mit jungen Erwachsenen im Alter zwischen 19 und 32 Jahren (M_{Alter}= 24.65 Jahre) durchgeführt. Bislang existiert keine einheitliche Definition des Begriffs 'junge Erwachsene'. Gemeinhin werden hiermit junge Menschen umschrieben, die die Volljährigkeit erreicht haben und sich auf dem Weg in die Unabhängigkeit von ihren Elternhäusern befinden (Berner Konferenz für Sozialhilfe, Kindes- und Erwachsenenschutz, 2021). Der Fokus lag auf dieser Altersgruppe, da in diesem Alter in der Regel die obligatorische schulische Ausbildung abgeschlossen ist, erste Schritte Richtung eigener Berufstätigkeit unternommen und zunehmend eigene Haushalte gegründet werden. Damit verbunden ist eine weitere Loslösung vom Elternhaus, auch in Bezug auf die Verfügbarkeit und Nutzung von Medien, respektive die Übernahme von mehr finanzieller Verantwortung wie durch die Zahlungsverpflichtung für Radio- und Fernsehgebühren (Freymond, 2016). Die Erhebungen wurden im Zeitraum von Juni bis August 2019 durchgeführt. Bei der Rekrutierung wurde darauf geachtet, innerhalb dieser Spanne ein nach Alter, Geschlecht und formalem Bil-

dungshintergrund möglichst diversifiziertes Sample zusammenzustellen (siehe Tabelle 1).

Tabelle 1: Demografische Angaben zum Untersuchungssample

Alter	n
19-25 Jahre	22
26-32	18
Geschlecht	
Weiblich	26
Männlich	14
Formaler Bildungshintergrund	
Höherer Schulabschluss / Studium	30
Niedriger bis mittlerer Schulabschluss / Ausbildung	10

Für die Beobachtungen wurde eine Zeitspanne von ca. zwei bis drei Stunden angesetzt. Damit mussten die Teilnehmenden bereit sein, einen vergleichsweise großen Aufwand zu leisten. Hierfür erhielten sie eine Aufwandsentschädigung von 100 CHF, was im Untersuchungszeitraum ca. 90 Euro entsprach.
Im Rahmen eines Vorbereitungsgesprächs wurde abgeklärt, welche Geräte und Medienangebote die Teilnehmenden häufig nutzen. Hierdurch konnte sichergestellt werden, dass die entsprechenden Zugänge im Rahmen der Erhebung für die Teilnehmenden verfügbar waren.
Studien zur Mediennutzung Jugendlicher und junger Erwachsener beziehen sich in Interviews und Befragungen meist auf Erinnerungs- und Schätzdaten. Die Teilnehmenden werden zu ihrem Handeln in der Vergangenheit befragt und ihre Bewertung um ihre Einschätzung gebeten. Hierbei besteht die Gefahr von Verzerrungen durch den zeitlichen Abstand zu den jeweiligen Nutzungsepisoden, gleichzeitig verbleiben die Angaben durch Lücke zwischen Nutzung und Befragung eher im Abstrakten und Ungefähren.
Ziel der vorliegenden Studie war es, diese Differenz aufzuheben und die Teilnehmenden direkt im Moment der Medienexponierung zu ihrem Rezeptionserlebnis zu befragen. Für die Erhebung wurden die Teilnehmenden in zwei Gruppen (je n=20) unterteilt, die einen je spezifischen Untersuchungsfokus hatten. Eine Gruppe konzentrierte sich auf die Rezeption audiovisueller Inhalte zum Zweck der persönlichen Unterhaltung, die andere Gruppe verfolgte das Ziel, sich spezifisch zum aktuellen Geschehen in der Welt zu informieren.
Durchgeführt wurde die Erhebung in zwei Phasen. In Phase eins erhielten die Teilnehmenden als Stimulus zunächst die Aufforderung, sich über das aktuelle Weltgeschehen zu informieren. Hierbei hatten sie freien Zugang zu verschiedenen Geräten und Ausspielkanälen. Ziel dieser Phase war es, Einblicke in die persönlichen Präferenzen und Auswahlstrategien in Bezug auf das Informationsverhalten der Proband:innen zu erhalten. Während dieser Phase wurden sie von den Untersuchungsleitenden angeregt, ihre Handlungen und Eindrücke zu verbalisieren, um einen Einblick in ihre Nutzungsstrategien und Entscheidungsfindungsprozesse zu erhalten.
In Phase 2 konnten die Teilnehmenden sich Inhalte aus dem Angebot des deutschschweizer öffentlichen Fernsehprogramms SRF (Schweizer Radio & Fernsehen) auswählen. Hierzu wurden den Teilnehmenden zunächst Fotos von verschiedenen Formaten aus dem Bereich ‘Information’ gezeigt. So konnte zunächst eingeschätzt werden, welche Inhalte den Teilnehmer:innen aus dem Senderangebot überhaupt bekannt sind. Anschliessend bekamen die Proband:innen die Möglichkeit, sich einzelne Angebote anzusehen, bzw. auf Webseiten und Mediatheken der Sender nach für sie relevanten Inhalten zu suchen. Währenddessen wurden sie weiterhin gebeten, ihre Eindrücke und Überlegungen zu verbalisieren.

Auswertungsverfahren

Die insgesamt 40 Beobachtungen wurden audiovisuell aufgezeichnet und anschließend vollständig transkribiert. Zusätzlich wurde durch die zweite Untersuchungsleitung ein Beobachtungsprotokoll angefertigt. Dies ermöglichte es, erste Überlegungen, Interpretationsansätze oder Besonderheiten bereits im Verlauf des Forschungsprozesses festzuhalten (vgl. Buber 2009., 558; Gehrau 2017, 39-40). Insbesondere für die Auswertung war dies hilfreich, da es die Arbeit mit den Transkripten erleichterte, indem beispielsweise

Formatwechsel oder auffallende Handlungen dokumentiert und so besser nachvollziehbar waren. Begründet ist dieses aufwendige Verfahren durch das Ziel, im Auswertungsprozess nicht auf Erinnerungen und vorschnelle Rekonstruktionen zurückzugreifen, sondern einen "registrierenden Zugriff" auf die soziale Lebenswirklichkeit der Befragten zu erhalten und für die folgende Analyse aufzubereiten (Ayass 2005, 377). Um eine bessere Lesbarkeit zu ermöglichen, wurden die Aufnahmen aus dem Schweizerdeutschen direkt ins Hochdeutsche übertragen. Weiterhin wurde die Verschriftlichungen im Sinne eines Basistranskripts erstellt, d.h. der Fokus lag auf der schriftlichen Wiedergabe der inhaltlichen Sprachebene, nicht etwa auf prosodischen Sprachelementen. Im Anschluss wurden die Transkripte kategoriengeleitet thematisch fokussiert ausgewertet. Hierzu wurde zunächst in einem induktiv-deduktiven Verfahren ein Kategoriensystem entwickelt. Grundlage hierfür waren sowohl die theoretischen Vorannahmen als auch das faktisch vorhandene Datenmaterial. Mit dem Ziel einer effizienten und intersubjektiv nachvollziehbaren Analyse wurden die Transkripte der Untersuchungen anschließend mit Hilfe einer Software zur Auswertung qualitativer Daten (MAXQDA) codiert, um die unterschiedlichen Themendimensionen entsprechend herausarbeiten zu können. Dies erlaubt es wie folgt, eine fokussierte Analyse vorzunehmen, bei der vor dem Hintergrund der Forschungsfragen die besonders relevant erscheinenden Themenaspekte, die Rekonstruktion von Handlungsstrategien und Entscheidungsmustern, ausgeführt und fallübergreifend anhand des empirischen Materials dargestellt werden können.

Resultate

Im Folgenden werden nun die Ergebnisse aus den Erhebungen zusammengefasst. Zunächst wird hierfür auf den Stellenwert journalistischer Informationsinhalte im Mediennutzungsverhalten der jungen Menschen eingegangen (FF1), anschließend werden deren Motive einer geringen Auseinandersetzung mit Nachrichteninhalten dargelegt (FF2), bevor abschließend diskutiert wird, wie Newsangebote aus der Perspektive junger Zielgruppen aufbereitet sein müssten, um ihren Wünschen und Bedürfnissen besser zu entsprechen (FF3).

Stellenwert journalistischer Newsinhalte im Mediennutzungsverhalten junger Menschen

Die befragten jungen Menschen äußern ein starkes Empfinden bezüglich normativer Erwartungen an eine als 'gut und richtig' empfundene Mediennutzung, als deren Ziel sie den bzw. die gut informierte(n) Bürger:in artikulieren. Entsprechend häufig werden Konjunktiv-Formulierungen genutzt und die Befragten merken oft an, dass sie sich mehr informieren 'müssten' und 'sollten'.

> *2a: Ja, ich müsste mich ein wenig mehr interessieren, nein, ein wenig mehr informieren.*

Nach wie vor besteht die Wahrnehmung auch bei jungen Menschen, dass es ein wünschenswertes Ziel und eine gesellschaftlich verbreitete Erwartung ist, über das Weltgeschehen und politische Inhalte informiert zu sein. Damit einhergehend erleben viele ihr eigenes Informationsverhalten als defizitär, respektive nicht ausreichend. In der Folge ist es ihnen eher unangenehm, dies zuzugeben und sie versuchen, ihr Nutzungsverhalten zu erklären bzw. verweisen auf zukünftige Vorhaben, sich hier entsprechend den empfundenen gesellschaftlichen Konventionen anzupassen.

> *1a: Ich habe gerade gemerkt, dass ich zu wenig echte Nachrichten schaue, und es stört mich ein bisschen an mir selber. Das ich halt zu wenig „10vor10" [spätabendliche Nachrichtensendung des SRF, Anm. d. Verf.] schaue, oder zu wenig aktuelle Nachrichten. Und das versuche ich jetzt zu ändern, dass ich mindestens alle zwei Tage mal reinschaue, irgendwie.*

Gleichzeitig beschreiben sich viele der jungen Erwachsenen sehr wohl als politisch interessiert. Insbesondere große politische Ereignisse, sowie Themen, die sie für sich persönlich als relevant einschätzen - wie die Bereiche Klimaschutz und Feminismus - werden häufig als starke Interessenfelder genannt.

14a: Ich habe auch selber von mir manchmal das Gefühl, ich sollte mich eigentlich ein bisschen mehr informieren. Aber es fällt mir sehr viel einfacher, das dann einfach zu ignorieren und zu denken, ich mache halt so mein Ding und ich setze mich für die politischen Sachen ein, die ich selber wichtig finde und mich damit auseinandersetzen möchte und so den Rest lasse ich so ein bisschen verelenden.

Jedoch ist die tatsächliche Motivation, sich über klassische Medienangebote wie Print-Zeitungen oder Nachrichtensendungen zu informieren, eher gering ausgeprägt. Kontaktanlässe mit diesen Medienangeboten findet eher zufällig - bspw. über Social Media - statt, respektive sind stark mit den Medienrezeptionsweisen in der Herkunftsfamilie verbunden. So werden Zeitungsabonnements, wenn, dann über die Eltern genutzt, respektive die Abendnachrichten als Ritual bei einem Besuch im Elternhaus gemeinsam rezipiert. Allein, respektive im Zusammensein mit der Peergroup werden diese Nachrichtenmedien jedoch kaum wahrgenommen. In der Folge werden klassische Newsangebote eher zufällig und nur sporadisch rezipiert.

2a: Herumliegende Zeitungen, also wenn es wirklich eine richtige Zeitung ist, NZZ oder Luzerner Zeitung in meinem Fall, dann lese ich auch wirklich ab und zu drin, wenn es, also ich lese den ganzen Artikel. Aber das ist eher selten der Fall.

Mehrheitlich werden insbesondere News-Apps als Schwerpunktmedien für den Zugang zu aktuellen Informationen angegeben. Der Fokus liegt hier auf der Möglichkeit, sich durch einen Blick auf den Newsfeed, durch das kurze Überfliegen der Headlines sich einen Überblick über die aktuellen Ereignisse zu verschaffen. Dieses 'Scannen' von Überschriften und kurzen Teaser-Texten – auch"News Snacking" (Molyneux, 2018) genannt – wird gemeinhin für den Alltag als ausreichend empfunden, um über aktuelle Geschehnisse informiert zu sein. Entsprechend werden von den Apps meist nur die kostenlosen Angebote wahrgenommen, ohne für erweiterte und vertiefende Informationen zu bezahlen. In der Schweiz beliebt bei jüngeren Zielgruppen sind insbesondere die Angebote der Anbieter 20min und blick.ch. Diese zeichnen sich durch ihre kurzen, eher boulevard-orientierten Inhalte aus.

17a: Das habe ich auch schon lange. Ja, einfach Blick-Online. Ja, aber da weiß ich, daß es nicht so das ist, was man sollte.

2a: Ja, ich würde sagen Newsfeed ist wirklich Themengeber und Überblickbeschaffer, ähnlich wie eben 20 Minuten.

Auch wenn die tatsächlich präferierten Angebote eher im Bereich des Boulevard-Journalismus anzusiedeln sind, ist von Seiten der Befragten sehr wohl ein starkes Bewusstsein von 'gutem Journalismus' bzw. eine Qualitätsdifferenzierung der verschiedenen Anbieter vorhanden und orientiert sich eindeutig an etablierten Standards. So werden von den Befragten überwiegend die klassisch dem Qualitätsjournalismus zugeordneten Angebote wie die Neue Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ) oder die Angebote aus dem öffentlich finanzierten Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (SRF) als qualitativ hochwertigere Angebote beschrieben. Gleichwohl offenbart sich jedoch auch hier eine normative Ambivalenz und Differenz zwischen dem als wünschenswert wahrgenommenen, d.h. anzustrebenden Verhalten und den tatsächlich gelebten persönlichen Nutzungspräferenzen.

4a: Also das Ding ist, dass ich gehört habe, dass es einfach rein von den Artikeln her, wie sie geschrieben sind, das merke ich auch selbst, dass es einfach etwas anderes ist als 20 Minuten. Also es ist nicht mit Vorurteilen oder voreingenommen. Habe ich auch von anderen Seiten gehört.

16a: Wäre eigentlich nicht schlecht, SRF ja. Ist irgendwie ein bisschen eine sicherere Quelle oder so. Ich weiß schon, 20 Minuten hat nicht so einen guten Ruf.

Insgesamt zeigt sich deutlich, dass tagesaktuelle Nachrichteninhalte zwar für bedeutsam gehalten werden, jedoch selten einen großen Anteil innerhalb der jeweiligen Mediennutzungsepisoden bzw. innerhalb des persönlichen Medienrepertoires einnehmen. Gleichwohl kann festgestellt werden, dass junge Menschen sehr wohl ein großes Bedürfnis äußern, sich über das Geschehen in der Welt zu informieren – allerdings gemäß ihren eigenen Interessen und Präferenzen. Dies geschieht in einem ersten Schritt selten über die etablierten, als qualitativ hochwertig wahrgenommenen klassischen Medienanbieter, jedoch wird deren Relevanz und Qualität durchaus wertgeschätzt. Denn auch wenn die erste Aufmerksamkeit für ein Thema oder Ereignis überwiegend durch kostenlose News-Apps oder über Social Media generiert wird, so werden im Falle eines vertieften Informationsbedürfnisses insbesondere die als 'seriös' eingestuften Quellen zur Verifizierung herangezogen.

> *20a: Jetzt zum Beispiel - das mit dem Klima; sie haben gesagt, wegen dem Sommer, wenn der so heiß ist, es würde alles absterben, dann schaue ich nochmals, also „Klima und Sommer", und dann gehe ich einfach nochmals auf Google schauen, was sonst noch andere Leute sagen, auf NZZ zum Beispiel, denke ich: „Okay, das tönt schon vertrauensvoller." Und dann schaue ich da ein bisschen und dann steht da meistens das Ähnliche, aber so ein bisschen sachlicher formuliert. Ja, das mache ich oft, nochmals googlen, wenn auf 20 Minuten etwas steht.*

Weiterhin festzuhalten ist, dass bezogen auf die Newsnutzung noch eine starke Orientierung an klassisch textbasierten Inhalten artikuliert wird. Rezipiert werden insbesondere kurze Newsteaser, durch die eine überblicksartige Informiertheit zum Geschehen in der Welt gewährleistet werden soll. Audiovisuelle Angebote auf Newsportalen finden vergleichsweise wenig Zuspruch. Ebenso ist die Wahrnehmung von Social Media-Plattformen wie Instagram und TikTok als Nachrichtenkanäle bislang schwach ausgeprägt.

> *2a: Ja, ich bin halt eben nicht so Fan von Videos was News anbelangt.*

> *20a: Aber so, eben so Nachrichten und Informatives, das ist für mich Insta fast gar nicht.*

Im Folgenden werden nun die Gründe dargelegt und analysiert, die zu einer eher zurückhaltenden Nutzung von Nachrichteninhalten von Seiten der jungen Zielgruppen angeführt werden.

Motive für die Nichtnutzung von Newsinhalten

Wie die Analyse der Erhebungen zeigt, wird der Bedarf an tagesaktuellen Nachrichten von den Teilnehmenden häufig situativ bewertet. Hierbei verdeutlicht sich, dass der Umfang an zu rezipierenden Newsinhalten im Alltag als eher gering eingestuft wird. Anders wird die Situation bewertet, wenn es zu besonderen Ereignissen kommt. Diese führen zu einem verstärkten Bedarf an Informationen mit einer entsprechenden Anpassung der Nutzung von Nachrichtenmedien. So kann insgesamt von einer pragmatischen Nachrichtenrezeption gesprochen werden: In Abhängigkeit der Ereignisse wird das tagesaktuelle Geschehen bewertet und je nach Einschätzung adaptiert.

> *4a: Nein, aber ich bin auch nicht jemand, der jetzt so viele Infos braucht zu einem Thema. Es sei denn, es ist wirklich etwas und dann schaue ich auch nach.*

> *10a: Politische Themen, wenn jetzt irgendetwas konkret - also gerade bei irgendwelchen Initiativen. Oder was auch immer. Dann schaue ich mir halt auch wegen dem die Sachen an, einfach um die Diskussionen ein bisschen mitzubekommen. Weil es ja schon irgendwie wichtig ist, da so eine informierte Entscheidung zu haben.*

Gemäss der eigenen Einschätzung wird der Grad an persönlicher Informiertheit als ausreichend bewertet. Dies muss nicht zwangsläufig mit einer starken Newsrezeption einhergehen. Vielmehr wird der Umfang, der für den eigenen Alltag als ausreichend empfundenen Informiertheit als erfüllt betrachtet, auch wenn gemäss verinnerlichter Normen im Sinne des/der 'gut informierten Bürger:in' mehr Zeit investiert werden sollte.

> *6a: Ja, meistens bin ich ja eh recht gut informiert, habe ich zumindest das Gefühl.*

Hieraus ergibt sich die für die Befragten teilweise schwer zu überbrückende Differenz zwischen gesellschaftlich erwarteten, respektive verinnerlichten Normen und Erwartungen in Kontrast zum eigenen Handeln und dem dabei empfundenen Bedarf an Nachrichteninhalten. So bewerten die Befragten ihr eigenes Medienhandeln zwar häufig als defizitär in Anbetracht der gesellschaftlichen Konventionen für eine anerkannt sinnstiftende Mediennutzung, gleichzeitig jedoch als ausreichend und sinnvoll in Bezug auf eine erfolgreiche Bewältigung des eigenen Alltags. Aus Sicht der Befragten ergibt sich jenseits der Erfüllung gesellschaftlicher Konventionen kaum ein Mehrwert durch eine vermehrte Rezeption von tagesaktuellen Newsinhalten. Die etablierten Nutzungsgewohnheiten der jungen Zielgruppen sind nicht an klassischen Legacy-Medienangeboten orientiert, selbst wenn diese verfügbar sind.

> *10a: Ich habe das schon seit Ewigkeiten, dass ich immer denke, ich sollte eigentlich öfters Zeitung lesen. Also ich habe ja die Möglichkeiten, ich sollte das öfters machen. Aber ich mache das dann einfach irgendwie nicht, weil - ich weiss auch nicht. Ich bin nie in so eine Routine reingekommen oder was auch immer und dann geht das einfach mega unter und dann bringt es mir auch nicht viel, wenn ich eine App auf dem Handy habe und es dann eh nicht brauche.*

Der im Zuge der zunehmenden Digitalisierung sich vollziehende Medienwandel führt darüber hinaus zu sich veränderten Nutzungsgewohnheiten bzw. -erwartungen auf Seiten des Publikums. Durch Social Media-Plattformen, Personalisierungsmöglichkeiten, schnell lernende Algorithmen und Empfehlungssysteme sind Rezipierende inzwischen daran gewöhnt, Medieninhalte präsentiert zu bekommen, die sich stark an ihren bestehenden Präferenzen orientieren. Die Auswahlstrategie von als relevant eingestuften Inhalten bei Newsanbietern obliegt jedoch zunächst einer anderen Logik: der des Nachrichtenwerts. Entsprechend deutlich wird eine Ambivalenz der Nutzer:innen zwischen dem Bedürfnis, sich an den eigenen Präferenzen zu orientieren und der empfundenen Notwendigkeit gesellschaftlich relevante Inhalte zu rezipieren.

> *10a: Bei Instagram oder so hast du extrem die Sachen auf dich gesteuert. Und dann ist das ja einerseits angenehm, weil du die Sachen bekommst, die dich interessieren, aber jetzt gerade wenn es jetzt Nachrichten angeht - du solltest ja auch mit anderen Meinungen konfrontiert werden oder so. Und das hast du halt gar nicht mehr. Es ist einfach nur noch - es wird dir das zugeführt, das du willst. Aber die Diskussion oder Konfrontation mit anderen Sachen ist mir eigentlich schon noch wichtig.*

Diese Ambivalenz muss von Newsanbietern überbrückt werden, d.h. Aufmerksamkeit für die verschiedenen Inhalte zunächst geschaffen werden, was beispielsweise durch den vermehrten Einsatz von Clickbaiting beobachtet werden kann. Gleichwohl ist eine entsprechende Anpassung an sich verändernde Rezeptionsweisen und -erwartungen ebenfalls nicht frei von Kritik, wie das oben angeführte Zitat dokumentiert.

Ein nicht zu unterschätzendes Problem aus Perspektive der Untersuchungsteilnehmenden ist die Auswahl adäquater Inhalte. Auch die eigene, an Schlagzeilen und kurzen 'News–häppchen' orientierte Nutzungsweise wird durchaus kritisch reflektiert. So wird teilweise zwar viel Zeit auf Newsplattformen verbracht, gleichzeitig werden jedoch nur wenige Inhalte vertieft rezipiert. Zur Kenntnis genommen wird im Alltag vielmehr, was schnell, einfach und kostenlos verfügbar ist.

> *14a: am Schluss verbringe ich vielleicht trotzdem eine Stunde dort, hätte ich gerade so gut einen tiefgründigeren Bericht lesen können. Aber ich habe in dieser Zeit halt irgendwie fünfzig random Schlagzeilen gesehen und erste Abschnitte und so. Ich finde es selber von mir nicht gut, wie ich es mache, aber es ist halt irgendwie so - es passiert so, weil ich mir nicht die Zeit nehme, um mich richtig zu informieren, sondern halt einfach das nehme, was man mir hinwirft.*

Gleichzeitig besteht vielfach eine kritische Haltung bezüglich der Auswahl an Medieninhalten über die verstärkt berichtet wird. Aus Perspektive der Untersuchungsteilnehmenden ist es nur bedingt nachvollziehbar, welche Meldungen es in den Fokus der Öffentlichkeit schaffen und welche hierbei ausgeklammert werden. Hieraus ergibt sich eine gewissermaßen fatalistische Einschätzung der Relevanzsetzungen durch Newsanbieter. Vor diesem Hintergrund erscheint das eigene Informationsverhalten gleichsam beliebig und damit nicht existenziell notwendig.

> *13a: Ich bin dann auch immer so misstrauisch. Ich denke dann immer, dass irgendwelche Leute auswählen, welche News dort zuoberst stehen. Ich frage mich dann, wieso das relevant ist und nicht etwas völlig anderes? Welche Katastrophe wird beleuchtet und welche eben nicht? Und dann denke ich, wenn ich gar nichts davon konsumiere, spielt das auch keine grosse Rolle.*

Ein weiteres zentrales Motiv der Nachrichten-Nichtnutzung ist der Aspekt der Überforderung. Als Belastung empfunden wird hier die quantitative Übermacht der Meldungen, die jeden Tag über die verschiedenen Kanäle distribuiert werden. Hieraus die für einen selbst relevanten Inhalte herauszufiltern, um daraus einen persönlichen Mehrwert zu generieren, wird als wenig gewinnbringend empfunden, gleichzeitig wird das ständige Eintreffen von Push-Nachrichten auf dem Handy als störend empfunden.

> *14a: Aber es ist eben so ein Überfluss an Infos, wo ich dann so denke, okay wichtig - aber ich schaue es nicht, weil ich das Gefühl habe, ich bin eigentlich easy informiert zum Klimawandel mittlerweile.*

> *19a: Ich habe auch keine News App, welche mir Push-Nachrichten oder so gibt. Das ist mir zu viel Stress.*

Noch häufiger sind es jedoch inhaltliche Faktoren, die als Begründung für eine Nichtnutzung von Newsangeboten angeführt werden. Aus Perspektive vieler Teilnehmenden werden bereits das eigene Leben, die eigenen Probleme als intensive Herausforderung erlebt. Die artikulierte 'Flut' an Informationen, insbesondere mit negativen Inhalten, wird als überwältigend empfunden. In diesem Sinne wird es als Selbstschutz betrachtet, keine Nachrichtenangebote aktiv aufzusuchen, um damit die Angst vor Überforderung durch die überwiegend als bedrohlich empfundenen Inhalte besser steuern zu können. Entsprechend wird die bewusste Vermeidung von Nachrichtenangeboten als adäquates Mittel betrachtet, sich vor damit verbundenen negativen Emotionen zu schützen und abzugrenzen.

> *16a: Ich habe so viel um die Ohren und in meinem Leben zu tun und arbeiten und sonstige Probleme und so, wenn ich mir dann auch noch alles so Sachen, Weltprobleme und Krisen und alles auf der ganzen Welt anschauen würde, dann würde mich das, glaube ich, eher ein bisschen überfordern. Also es würde mich wahrscheinlich schon mehr interessieren als ich jetzt eigentlich weiß oder ja, aber ich mache es wahrscheinlich auch auf eine Art bewusst nicht, einfach weil es zuviel wäre.*

Gleichzeitig gehen die Teilnehmenden überwiegend davon aus, dass sie bei wichtigen Ereignissen die wesentlichen Informationen auch ohne eigene Initiative erreichen. Aufgrund der Präsenz auf verschiedenen Social Media-Plattformen, respektive durch den Austausch mit anderen ist eine vollständige Vermeidung von Nachrichteninhalten kaum durchführbar. Als zentral empfundene Informationen werden so aufgenommen und können dann bei Bedarf entsprechend vertieft werden, ohne sich jedoch einer konstanten aktiven Newsrezeption auszusetzen. Zwar wird ein solches Mediennutzungsverhalten vor dem Hintergrund oben bereits dargelegter normativer Erwägungen durchaus kritisch betrachtet. Aus Perspektive der Befragten überwiegt der wahrgenommene Nutzen dieses Rezeptionsverhaltens für den eigenen Alltag jedoch die so nicht erfüllten normativen Erwägungen.

> *13a: Ich hatte das Gefühl, wenn etwas mega Wichtiges geschieht, dann bekomme ich das auch so mit. Und dann weiss ich OK, darüber musst du dich informieren. Aber ich muss nicht ständig lesen, wo es überall Krieg gibt und wo Kinder ermordet wurden. Das kann man dann nicht herausfiltern. Irgendwann ist das dann passiert, dass ich aufgehört habe, Nachrichten zu konsumieren. Ich habe gemerkt, dass es mich belastet hat. Aber ich will nicht sagen, dass ich das gut finde, dass ich jetzt so bin. Ich hinterfrage das auch, das Verhalten von mir.*

Anschliessend werden nun die Bedürfnisse und Wünsche der jungen Untersuchungsteilnehmenden in Bezug auf die journalistische Aufbereitung von Newsinhalten und Informationen dargelegt.

Präferenzen in Bezug auf die journalistische Aufbereitung von Informationen aus der Perspektive junger Erwachsener

Insgesamt zeigt sich in den Erhebungen, dass zwar das Bedürfnis nach tagesaktuellen News vergleichsweise gering ausfällt, also sowohl eine gewisse News Deprivation (z.B. fög, 2022) als auch News Avoidance (Newman et al., 2017, 43) beobachtet werden kann. Gleichzeitig wird jedoch ebenso deutlich, dass sehr wohl ein Bedürfnis nach Information besteht, dass qualitativ hochstehender Journalismus durchaus als solcher wahrgenommen wird und dass die grundsätzlichen normativen Einschätzungen in Bezug auf die positive Wahrnehmung des 'Informiert-Seins' nach wie vor bestehen. Gleichzeitig offenbart sich bei vielen der Befragten ein gewisses Gefühl der Überforderung. Die Auswahl an möglichen Quellen wird als überwältigend wahrgenommen, für die Rezipierenden stellt sich das Problem der Kuratierung von Informationsanbietern und -inhalten.

> *13a: Ich glaube aber schon, dass es wichtig ist, dass man sich informiert. Aber ich frage mich dann immer was die guten Quellen sind. Es gibt ja etliche Zeitungen und Newskanäle, was entspricht jetzt mir am meisten? Und schon mich damit zu befassen finde ich mega anstrengend.*

Als Orientierungshilfen und erste Anlaufstellen bei Informationsbedarf werden Google und Wikipedia betrachtet. Diese sind zumeist die zentralen Anlaufstellen, von denen weitere Recherchen ausgehen. Entsprechend bedeutsam ist es für Medienabieter, wenn diese bei jungen Zielgruppen an Relevanz gewinnen wollen, hier über die entsprechenden Suchanfragen auffindbar zu sein.

> *15a: Google ist eigentlich so meine - meine Start-Base für alles. Und dann schaue ich halt einfach gewisse Seiten an. Wikipedia benutze ich eigentlich eher für wenn ich etwas über das Land oder so erfahren will, dann benutze ich Wikipedia.*

> *8a: Auf ARD, ich habe die auf Google gesucht und dann bin ich auf die Mediathek gekommen.*

Gerade für die Angebote des öffentlichen Rundfunks bspw. von ARD, ZDF, SRF oder ORF ergäbe sich durch die Freigabe von Inhalten zur Einbindung auf nicht-kommerziellen Plattformen wie der Wikipedia eine Chance, die eigenen Inhalte einem erweiterten Publikum, insbesondere aus den Reihen der jungen Zielgruppen, verstärkt zugänglich zu machen (vgl. Dobusch 2019). Erste Versuche mit Inhalten aus der Wissenssendung TerraX des deutschen öffentlich-rechtlichen Senders ZDF zeigen hier einen möglichen Weg.

Generell erschließt sich im Zuge der Erhebungen, dass Dokumentationsformate grossen Zuspruch erfahren. Diese werden von den Befragten als präferierte Möglichkeit der Information zu einer Vielzahl von Themen angegebenen. Dabei wird auf die Verschmelzung der Aspekte Information und Unterhaltung verwiesen, ebenso wie auf die vertiefte und hintergründige Darstellung der gezeigten Thematiken. In diesem Sinne gelten Dokumentation als ideales Schnittfeld verschiedener Zielinteressen und erfreuen sich außerordentlicher Beliebtheit.

> *12a: Also ich schaue generell viel Dokus. [...] Wo er dann einfach erzählt aus seiner Zeit als Heroinabhängiger. Und das ist halt so indirekt informativ, also ist halt noch interessant zu sehen, wie haben sie es überlebt.*

Des Weiteren wird deutlich, dass insbesondere im Bereich Politik eine Vermischung aus informativen Inhalten in Kombination mit unterhaltenden Elementen sehr positiv bewertet wird. Bedeutsam ist jedoch, dass der informative Aspekt hierbei tatsächlich erfüllt wird.

> *11a: Dass es halt eben auch so ein bisschen lustige Sachen drin hat. Dass es nicht nur so mega Info ist, aber dass, wenn es Infos hat, es wirklich auch informativ ist.*

Entsprechende Formate wie 'die Anstalt' oder das 'ZDF Neo Magazin Royale', insbesondere aus den öffentlich finanzierten TV-Angeboten von ARD und ZDF erfreuen sich großer Beliebtheit und werden häufig als gern rezipierte Formate mit Informationsanteilen genannt. Hierdurch eröffnet sich ein Potenzial, auf Basis von unterhaltenden Elementen die politische Meinungsbildung nachhaltiger anzuregen, als dies über die reine Vermittlung von Fakten möglich wäre (Leuenberger 2005). Dies jedoch weniger entlang tagesaktueller Nachrichtenmedienangebote, sondern basierend auf längeren Formaten mit humoristischen Anteilen.

> *1a: Das eine ist halt eher Unterhaltung, wie das „Neo Magazin Royale“, das finde ich jetzt eher weniger politisch. Also es hat schon politische Aspekte dabei, aber eher weniger. Die „Heute Show“ ist halt eher politisch, die sich darüber lustig macht. Und „Die Anstalt“ ist halt eigentlich auf ein spezifisches Thema. Ich weiß nicht, wie man es ranken würde. Ich würde, wenn ich jetzt sage, vom Informationsgehalt, würde ich wahrscheinlich „Die Anstalt“ oben setzen. Halt, aber halt nur auf ein spezifisches Thema. Und danach wahrscheinlich „Die Heute Show“ und danach das „Neo Magazin Royale“. Beim „Y-Kollektiv“ ist es eher weniger politisch, sondern eher menschlich.*

Weiter von Relevanz ist eine verstärkte Präsenz auf den entsprechenden Social Media-Kanälen. Hier wiederum zeigt sich die Bedeutung, aktuellen Trends zu folgen. Während Facebook bei vielen User:innen unter 30 Jahre kaum noch von Bedeutung ist, erweisen sich gegenwärtig Instagram und TikTok als zentrale Anlaufstellen. Auch wenn diese im Bereich journalistischer Informationsvermittlung noch nicht die ersten Anlaufstellen sind, so sind es doch die Onlineangebote, auf denen große Teile der jungen Zielgruppe sehr aktiv sind.

Ein sehr erfolgreiches Beispiel, wie die Verbindung aus Informations- und Unterhaltungsfunktion auf Social Media-Plattformen bereits umgesetzt wird, ist das Beispiel Y-Kollektiv. Y-Kollektiv ist ein preisgekröntes Format von funk, dem öffentlich-rechtlichen Angebot von ARD und ZDF. Funk hat zwar eine eigene Website, über welche die verschiedenen Formate abgerufen werden können, produziert und distribuiert seine Inhalte jedoch primär über Social Media-Plattformen, insbesondere YouTube, Facebook und Instagram. Für seine Sendungen erhielt Y-Kollektiv bereits zahlreiche Preise und Auszeichnungen aus dem Bereich Journalismus/Information. Gleichzeitig wird es von den Befragten als außerordentlich unterhaltsames und beliebtes Format regelmäßig erwähnt.

> *10a: Ja, die [Y-Kollektiv, Anm. der Verf.] schaue ich irgendwie auch noch gerne. Aber ich würde das jetzt nicht wirklich als ‘News’ anschauen, weil ich schaue es ja nicht im Sinn von was ist heute so passiert, sondern sie haben mehr halt ihre Beiträge, denn das finde ich interessant und das schaue ich mal an und so. Ja, ist halt ein bisschen anders irgendwie.*

Sowohl auf Social Media-Plattformen, als auch im analogen Alltag spielen Empfehlungen von anderen bei den Teilnehmenden eine grosse Rolle in der Auswahl der rezipierten Medienangebote. Insbesondere Personen, denen ein gewisser Expert:innenstatus zugesprochen wird, haben in Bezug auf die Meinungsbildung einen Einfluss. Gerade in Bezug auf die Auswahl und Einschätzung von Informationsinhalten offenbart sich eine hohe Peer-Orientierung.

> *18a: Eher noch mit Leuten reden, wo ich irgendwie weiss, die kennen sich aus. Das mache ich manchmal auch noch fix: Was sie davon halten und denken. Und dann vielleicht auch halt zwei oder drei. Dann habe ich quasi auch mehrere Meinungen und kann dann meine Meinung dazu bilden.*

> *14a: Wenn ich jetzt die NZZ oder irgendwie das Magazin oder so die Berichte wirklich lese, bräuchte es halt mehr Zeit. Also das mache ich ja wirklich nur selten und dann auch oft, wenn mir irgendjemand halt etwas direkt empfiehlt.*

In der Zusammenführung des Bedürfnisses nach Komplexitätsreduzierung in Umfang und Auswahl der zu rezipierenden Informationsinhalte, des Wunsches nach einer Kombination aus Information mit unterhaltenden Elementen, der starken Präsenz auf Social Media-Plattformen verbunden mit einer ausgeprägten Orientierung an Empfehlungen, erschließt sich ein erster Hinweis zum Erfolg sogenannter Influencer:innen. Diesen gelingt es, insbesondere junge Menschen in teilweise beeindruckend großen Zahlen direkt anzusprechen und mit ihnen zu interagieren. Dass dies auch mit fundierten informativen Inhalten gelingen kann, zeigen Beispiele wie Y-Kollektiv oder etwa Mai Thi Nguyen-Kim aus dem Angebot von funk.

Fazit

Die Analysen der Daten zeigen, dass ein Großteil der jungen Menschen, unabhängig von Bildungshintergründen, wenig interessiert ist an traditionellen Nachrichten. Durch die Beobachtungen und Interviewsequenzen im Media Use Lab wurde es möglich, sich den Alltagspraktiken junger Menschen im Umgang mit Newsinhalten anzunähern und zu verstehen, welche Inhalte aus welchen Gründen als News bzw. als informativ wahrgenommen werden. Von besonderem Vorteil hierbei war, dass Äußerungen, Angaben und Reflektionen direkt im Moment der Interaktion gemacht wurden und nicht mit Zeitverzögerung aus der Erinnerung, wie dies häufig im Rahmen von Interviewstudien der Fall ist. Durch die vergleichsweise lange und intensive Zeit der Beobachtung bzw. Befragung war es möglich, besonders intensive Einblicke in die Relevanzsetzungen und Nutzungspräferenzen von jungen Erwachsenen zu gewinnen.

Weiter offenbaren sich eine Reihe von Ambivalenzen, die das komplexe Verhältnis von Newsanbietern und jungen Zielgruppen beschreiben. Nach wie vor betrachten junge Menschen eine intensive Auseinandersetzung mit Nachrichteninhalten als grundsätzlich erstrebenswert und wichtig für eine funktionierende Demokratie. Entsprechende normative Einstellungen sind also nach wie vor präsent. Gleichzeitig stehen diese jedoch im Kontrast zur tatsächlichen Mediennutzung der Befragten im Alltag. Hier erleben die jungen Menschen eine geringe Auseinandersetzung mit tagesaktuellen News als ausreichend und sehen nur bei besonderen Ereignissen einen vermehrten Bedarf sich vertiefter mit den Geschehnissen in der Welt auseinanderzusetzen.

Grundsätzlich differenzieren die jungen Menschen sehr deutlich zwischen den inhaltlichen Qualitätskriterien und dem journalistischen Anspruch der unterschiedlichen medialen Angebote. Hierbei orientieren sie sich klar an etablierten Standards und bewerten die anspruchsvollen klassischen Anbieter journalistischer Inhalte wie den SRF oder die NZZ als besonders glaubwürdig und positiv. Doch zeigt sich hier ebenso ein ambivalentes Verhalten. Denn auch wenn diese Angebote als qualitativ hochstehend betrachtet werden, spielen sie innerhalb des eigenen Medienrepertoires nur eine untergeordnete Rolle. Überwiegend rezipiert werden eher dem Boulevardjournalismus zugeordnete Angebote und auch hier sind es eher die Schlagzeilen und Teasertexte, die überblicksartig überflogen werden. Somit könnte argumentiert werden, dass das “ungerichtete Informationsbedürfnis” (Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2010, 55) in der untersuchten Altersgruppe weniger ausgeprägt ist und andere Formen von Informationsbedürfnissen, die bspw. eher gruppenorientiert sind, in den Vordergrund rücken. Gleichzeitig fördern Intermediäre wie Social-Media-Plattformen “Tendenzen zur Entgrenzung” (Habermas, 2022), was nicht zuletzt dazu führen kann, dass in diesem Kontext Grenzen zwischen verschiedenen Informationsbedürfnissen fliessend sein können.

Die Bereitschaft für Nachrichtenmedien zu bezahlen ist nur sehr schwach ausgeprägt. Überraschenderweise geht dieses Desinteresse an klassischen Nachrichten nicht mit einem generell fehlenden Interesse an gesellschaftlichen Debatten einher; ganz im Gegenteil: Die jungen Studienteilnehmer:innen äußern ein großes Interesse an gesellschaftspolitisch aktuellen und relevanten Themen, sofern ein Bezug zu ihrer Lebenswelt hergestellt wird. Somit artikulieren die Befragten zwar ein geringes Bedürfnis nach Newsinhalten, zeigen jedoch ein ausgeprägtes pragmatisches und themenorientiertes Informationsbedürfnis.

Für ihre geringe Nutzung von Nachrichtenmedien können die jungen Menschen eine Reihe von Gründen darlegen. Zunächst festzuhalten sind die im Zuge von digitalen, mobilen und vernetzten Medienzugängen etablierten Rezeptionsgewohnheiten, die zwar eine konstante Onlinepräsenz gewährleisten, in denen klassische Newsangebote jedoch nur eine untergeordnete Rolle spielen. Für die erfolgreiche Bewältigung des eigenen Alltags wird von Seiten der Befragten keine Notwendigkeit gesehen, ihre Nutzungsrepertoires entsprechend anzupassen. Vielmehr zeigt sich eine kritische Haltung bezüglich der vorgenommenen Newsauswahl durch die Anbieter. Diese erscheint vielen jungen Menschen nicht nachvollziehbar. In der Folge erleben sie die präsentierten Nachrichten als willkürlich und damit auswechselbar. Hierauf schlussfolgernd erscheint es für sie wenig

relevant, die ihrer Ansicht nach austauschbaren Meldungen zur Kenntnis zu nehmen.
Ein weiteres zentrales Motiv zur Nichtnutzung von News ist der Aspekt der Überforderung. Die vielfach artikulierte Belastung äußert sich dabei sowohl in quantitativer als auch in inhaltlicher Hinsicht. Der ständige Strom an Meldungen wird als Stressfaktor betrachtet, der nur schwer zu kontrollieren ist. Insbesondere aber sind es Nachrichten mit zugespitzten negativen Inhalten über Umweltkatastrophen und Gewalt, die von den Teilnehmenden als schwer zu bewältigen beschrieben werden. In diesem Sinne wird die Vermeidung von News als ein Akt des Selbstschutzes betrachtet.
Die vorliegenden Befunde werden dahingehend interpretiert, als dass junge Menschen zwar "news-depriviert" in dem Sinne sind, dass sie kaum traditionelle, tagesaktuelle Nachrichtenangebote insbesondere mit politisch-institutionellen und einseitig negativen Inhalten rezipieren. Sie sind jedoch in hohem Masse pragmatisch *informationsorientiert*, indem sie sich mit gesellschaftlich relevanten Themen mit lebensweltlichen Bezügen durchaus regelmäßig beschäftigen. Hierfür überwinden sie Plattformgrenzen, sind offen für vertiefende Inhalte durch qualitativ hochwertige journalistische Angebote. Gleichzeitig verspüren sie ein großes Bedürfnis nach einer unterhaltenden Vermittlung auch anspruchsvollerer Themen sowie nach Orientierung und Leitfiguren in einer ansonsten schnelllebigen Medienlandschaft. Für einen Journalismus, der junge Menschen ansprechen möchte, bedeutet dies, dass dieser sein Verständnis von Nachrichten anpassen und auf neue Formate und Zugangsweisen setzen muss.

Literaturverzeichnis

Aharoni, T., Kligler-Vilenchik, N., & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, K. (2021). "Be Less of a Slave to the News": A Texto-Material Perspective on News Avoidance among Young Adults. *Journalism Studies*, *22*(1), 42–59. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1852885

Antunovic, D., Parsons, P., & Cooke, T. R. (2018). 'Checking' and googling: Stages of news consumption among young adults. *Journalism*, *19*(5), 632–648. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884916663625

Ayass, R. (2005). Transkription. In: Lothar Mikos und Claudia Wegener (Hg.). Qualitative Medienforschung. Ein Handbuch. Konstanz: UVK, 377-386.

Bengtsson, S., & Johansson, S. (2021). A phenomenology of news: Understanding news in digital culture. *Journalism*, *22*(11), 2873–2889. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884919901194

Berner Konferenz für Sozialhilfe, Kindes- und Erwachsenenschutz. (2021). 1. Grundsätze/Zielgruppe. https://handbuch.bernerkonferenz.ch/stichwoerter/stichwort/detail/junge-erwachsene/

Buber, R. (2009). Denke-Laut-Protokolle. In: Renate Buber und Hartmut H. Holzmüller (Hg.). Qualitative Marktforschung. Konzepte- Methoden - Analysen. Wiesbaden: Gabler, 555-568.

Costera Meijer, I., & Groot Kormelink, T. (2015). Checking, Sharing, Clicking and Linking: Changing patterns of news use between 2004 and 2014. *Digital Journalism*, *3*(5), 664–679. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2014.937149

Dobusch, L. (2019). Terra-X-Redaktion zu freien Lizenzen: „Öffentlich-rechtlicher Bildungsauftrag". https://netzpolitik.org/2019/terra-x-redaktion-zu-freien-lizenzen-oeffentlich-rechtlicher-bildungsauftrag/

Edgerly, S., Vraga, E. K., Bode, L., Thorson, K., & Thorson, E. (2018). New Media, New Relationship to Participation? A Closer Look at Youth News Repertoires and Political Participation. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *95*(1), 192–212. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699017706928

Fletcher, R., Cornia, A., Graves, L., & Nielsen, R. K. (2018). *Measuring the reach of "fake news" and online disinformation in Europe (Factsheet)*. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/our-research/measuring-reach-fake-news-and-online-disinformation-europe

fög. (Hrsg.) (2020). *Jahrbuch Qualität der Medien 2020*. Schwabe Verlag. https://www.foeg.uzh.ch/dam/jcr:13f6efc8-f9c4-45dd-816c-b6a8356edfe6/2020_Gesamtausgabe.pdf fög. (Hrsg.) (2021). *Jahrbuch Qualität der Medien 2021*. Schwabe Verlag. https://www.foeg.uzh.ch/dam/jcr:80fd64b0-c078-4ba7-8bba-e2c79bf1a654/2021_Gesamtausgabe.pdf

fög. (Hrsg.) (2022). *Jahrbuch Qualität der Medien 2022*. Schwabe Verlag. https://www.foeg.uzh.ch/dam/jcr:e38aba0b-4d51-4b89-a087-ec7d346ed317/JB_2022_online_gesamt_20220923.pdf

Freymond, C. (2016). Wegzug der Jungen. In: Bundesamt für Statistik (Hg.). Newsletter Dezember 2016. Informationen aus der Demografie. file://///edu.local/FHGR_Home/_homeMA/autenrieulla/Downloads/238-1602-05.pdf

Gehrau, Volker (2017): Die Beobachtung - als Methode in der Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaft. Konstanz und München: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft mbH.

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Weeks, B., & Ardèvol-Abreu, A. (2017). Effects of the News-Finds-Me Perception in Communication: Social Media Use Implications for News Seeking and Learning About Politics. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *22*(3), 105–123. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12185

Gnach, A., Keel, G., Frei, N. K., Weber, W., Wyss, V., Burger, M., Benecchi, E., Calderara, L., & Mazzoni, P. (2020). *How to Reach Swiss Digital Natives with News. A Qualitative Study*. https://www.bakom.admin.ch/dam/bakom/en/dokumente/bakom/elektronische_medien/Zahlen%20und%20Fakten/Studien/studie-wie-man-die-digital-natives-der-schweiz-mit-nachrichten-erreicht.pdf.download.pdf/FinalReport_Digital_Natives_Date_En.pdf

Groot Kormelink, T., & Costera Meijer, I. (2019). Material and sensory dimensions of everyday news use. *Media, Culture & Society*, *41*(5), 637–653. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443718810910

Habermas, J. (2022). *Ein neuer Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit und die deliberative Politik* (Originalausgabe, erste Auflage). Suhrkamp.

Habermas, J. (2006). Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research. Communication Theory, 16(4), 411–426.

Hasebrink, U., & Domeyer, H. (2010). Zum Wandel von Informationsrepertoires in konvergierenden Medienumgebungen. In M. Hartmann & A. Hepp (Hrsg.), *Die Mediatisierung der Alltagswelt* (1. Aufl). VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Hepp, A. (2021). *Auf dem Weg zur digitalen Gesellschaft: Über die tiefgreifende Mediatisierung der sozialen Welt*. Herbert von Halem Verlag.

Humprecht, E., Esser, F., & Van Aelst, P. (2020). Resilience to Online Disinformation: A Framework for Cross-National Comparative Research. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *25*(3), 493–516. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161219900126

Kümpel, A. S. (2020). Nebenbei, mobil und ohne Ziel? Eine Mehrmethodenstudie zu Nachrichtennutzung und -verständnis von jungen Erwachsenen. *Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft*, *68*(1–2), 11–31. https://doi.org/10.5771/1615-634X-2020-1-2-11

Kümpel, A. S. (2021). Social Media Information Environments and Their Implications for the Uses and Effects of News: The PINGS Framework. *Communication Theory*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtab012

Leuenberger, M. (2005). Gute Unterhaltung! Rede an der Festivaleröffnung der Rose d'Or 2005 im Kultur- und Kongresszentrum Luzern. http://www.uvek.admin.ch/dokumentation/00476/00477/00740/index.html?lang=de https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-06/Digital_News_Report_2021_FINAL.pdf

Merten, L. (2021). Block, Hide or Follow—Personal News Curation Practices on Social Media. *Digital Journalism*, *9*(8), 1018–1039. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1829978

Molyneux, L. (2018). Mobile News Consumption: A habit of snacking. *Digital Journalism*, *6*(5), 634–650. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1334567

Newman, N., Schulz, A., Andı, S., Robertson, C. T., & Nielsen, R. K. (2021). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2021* (10th Edition). *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-06/Digital_News_Report_2021_FINAL.pdf

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A. & Levy, D., Nielsen, R. K. (2017). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017*. R*euters Institute for the Study of Journalism*. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Digital%20News%20Report%202017%20web_0.pdf

Poindexter, P. M. (2018). *Millennials, news, and social media: Is news engagement a thing of the past?* (Revised and updated 2nd edition). Peter Lang.

Prior, M. (2007). *Post-broadcast democracy: How media choice increases inequality in political involvement and polarizes elections*. Cambridge University Press.

Schwaiger, L., Vogler, D., & Eisenegger, M. (2022). Change in News Access, Change in Expectations? How Young Social Media Users in Switzerland Evaluate the Functions and Quality of News. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612211072787

Swart, J. (2021). Tactics of news literacy: How young people access, evaluate, and engage with news on social media. *New Media & Society*, 146144482110011448. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211011447

Swart, J., Groot Kormelink, T., Costera Meijer, I., & Broersma, M. (2022). Advancing a Radical Audience Turn in Journalism. Fundamental Dilemmas for Journalism Studies. *Digital Journalism*, *10*(1), 8–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.2024764

Tamboer, S. L., Kleemans, M., & Daalmans, S. (2020). 'We are a neeeew generation': Early adolescents' views on news and news literacy. *Journalism*, 1464884920924527. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884920924527

Ulla Authenrieth,
Prof. Dr., Forschungsleiterin an der Fachhochschule Graubünden am Institut für Multimedia Production. Ihre Arbeitsschwerpunkte sind Social Media, Visuelle Kommunikation, Medienkompetenz, junge Zielgruppen, Medieninnovationen, Lokaljournalismus und öffentlich-rechtliche Medien.

Fehlmann, Fiona,
Dr. des., wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin an der Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften am Institut für Angewandte Medienwissenschaft (IAM). Ihre Arbeitsschwerpunkte sind Public Service Media und Media Literacy.

Künzler, Matthias,
Prof. Dr, Leiter der Arbeitsstelle „Kommunikationspolitik & Medienökonomie" am Institut für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (IfPuK) der Freien Universität Berlin. Seine Arbeitsschwerpunkte sind Lokalkommunikation, öffentlicher und privater Rundfunk im Ländervergleich und Medieninnovationen.

Kratel, V. (2023). To disconnect or not to disconnect. A question negotiated between unequal structures and different scopes of personal agency. medien & zeit, 38(1), 20–31.

To disconnect or not to disconnect

A question negotiated between unequal structures and different scopes of personal agency

Victoria A. E. Kratel
Institute of Media Studies, University of Tübingen

Abstract
In the "digital age" (Ahmed, 2020) and its "constant connectivity" (Couldry & Hepp, 2017), the countertrend of digital disconnection is gaining momentum in both popular culture and academia. And although media non-use practices seem more relevant than ever, not everyone is able to self-determine their media use. This scholarly essay seeks reasons for the unequal access to digital disconnection. The theoretical basis is provided by contributions of Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens to the structure and agency debate. Building on this, I introduce the fictitious agent of *homo disconnectus*, who is given maximum agency and the best structures to digitally disconnect. The homo disconnectus thus serves as a tool to illustrate contrasts between privileges and marginalization. A deeper examination of gender and class reveals that digital disconnection is particularly difficult for women and low-income earners. Therefore, I conclude that research should not focus solely on digital disconnection that is already practiced but should also closely investigate where and why it cannot take place.

Keywords: *digital disconnection, self-determined media use, homo disconnectus, structure and agency, right to disconnect, gender, feminism, social class*

In an interview with the lifestyle magazine *Elle*, musician and actress Selena Gomez stated that she no longer had social media apps installed on her smartphone. She admitted that she did not want to be tempted to waste time as she "could spend hours looking at other people's lives" (Chocano, 2021). Even though Gomez is not the only person who wants to spend more time outside the online world, there is one peculiarity: With more than 400 million followers, Selena Gomez is the most-followed woman on instagram (CBBC, 2023). But how does one of the most successful online personalities manage to be offline? While she retains a say in which content is posted, her accounts are managed by her assistants (Chocano, 2021). The example of Selena Gomez makes it clear that status and money allow her to use social media only by proxy. The effort is mainly made by others. This leads to the assumption that as long as you have the resources, you can be somewhat digitally disconnected and connected at the same time. Since only a few have the possibility to have their online presence managed by an own team of assistants, the self-help industry sensed its chance to cash in by pointing to other possibilities to decrease one's media use. Be it through books, expert talks, detox camps or apps, media users are marketed various ways to optimize their consumption (Moe & Madsen, 2021; Syvertsen, 2020). And even if you do not have to be a globally successful musician and actress to do this, the suspicion is growing louder that some people have better prerequisites than others. To put it in the words of Laura Portwood-Stacer: "It takes privilege to opt out" (Portwood-Stacer, 2014). In this essay, I will deal with the unequal structural conditions that can deny the opportunities for digital disconnection for certain groups of people and thus hinder them from self-determined media use.

Initially, the conversation on media non-use was mainly on closing the digital divide by granting everyone access to the Internet (e.g. Richardson, 2015; Wyatt, 2003). Since then, a paradigm shift, a "wider disconnection turn" (Fast, 2021), has taken place. People are saturated with the overabundance of digital media and are looking for solutions.

The focus is primarily on various ways to disconnect from digital media. These practices have led to the emergence of their own field of research, "disconnection studies" (Kania-Lundholm, 2021; Lomborg & Ytre-Arne, 2021), forming the basis for this very contribution. In addition to the widely used term of digital disconnection, the included empirical research and theoretical contributions make use of various labels such as "disentanglement" (Adams & Jansson, 2021), "unplugging" (Morrison & Gomez, 2014), and "demediatization" (Grenz & Pfadenhauer, 2017; Kopecka-Piech, 2020). Regardless of their name, they all describe practices of media non-use ranging from final termination and temporary abstention to smaller scale adjustments (Zurstiege, 2019). Still, people seem to be at the mercy of digital media. Therefore, in this scholarly essay, I examine the question of who is assigned responsibility while reflecting on the significance of individual privileges. While the self-help industry thrives off the allegation that the extent of media consumption is an individual decision, science is increasingly pointing out the significance of societal structures. In the tradition of the sociological structures and agency debate, which was contributed to by Pierre Bourdieu (1990) and Anthony Giddens (1984), tension between individual scope for action and social constraints can also be identified in the realms of digital disconnection. Within this theoretical frame, I continue by sketching the image of an ideal disconnector, the *homo disconnectus* who is given unrestricted agency and the ideal structures for *self-determined media use*. The traits listed are composed of various structural privileges that, according to disconnection studies, particularly favor voluntary forms of digital disconnection. In this way the homo disconnectus functions as a tool to show that disconnection as a phenomenon is neither generic nor egalitarian. This can also be seen in the social categories of gender and class, which I will continue to discuss in more depth. Addressing gender, it is noticeable that women are subjected to a stronger set of expectations than men. And it seems that they can never get it right: While in some communities digital disconnection is enforced as a female virtue, others expect women to conduct care work in the digital (Neriya-Ben Shahar, 2017; Portwood-Stacer, 2014). Unfair societal expectations are also directed at people of lower classes. This is especially apparent in terms of labor. While low-income earners were among the last to gain digital access, they are now economically dependent on the Internet (Woodcock & Graham, 2020). As a result of the "new work culture" (Mehta, 2020), the low-wage sector has gone online too.

The examination of the utopian ideal conditions of digital disconnection through the depiction of a homo disconnectus and unequal social structures such as gender and class show that a broadening of the focus is needed: Not only real disconnection behavior should be considered, but also the reasons why digital disconnection cannot be practiced.

Connected to structures, disconnected from agency

Life in the "digital era" (Ahmed, 2020) is characterized by being in a state of "constant connectivity" (Couldry & Hepp, 2017) and the overall demand to be "always on" (Turkle, 2008). As technology extensively evolved, especially over the last three decades, a "pro-innovation bias" (Hesselberth, 2019) has prevailed. Due to that it has not only become possible, but a societal norm to be online anywhere at any given time. However, the conquest of time and space through digital media came with the hefty price of its appropriation. This is sometimes even referred to as "colonization" (Kania-Lundholm, 2021) or "intrusions" (Syvertsen & Ytre-Arne, 2021) through technology. When you wake up with the alarm clock of your smartphone in your bed, you are one of many people granting technology access to one of the most personal spaces in your life. And when you start scrolling right after turning off your alarm, then be prepared to feed into the overall trend of increasing screen time. But it is not just the mere presence of digital devices in personal times and spaces that can prove to be problematic due to their intrusive nature. Rather, it is the gateway to a whole range of disadvantages. For one, the default mode of being online is increasingly associated with expectations such as staying on top of the news or being in reach for family, friends, and acquaintances. This can lead to negative feelings such as news fatigue and social overload (Andersen, 2020; Zhang et al., 2016), taking a toll on one's mental health. Further discourses on the harms of the online world include cyber bullying, political unrest, and surveillance (Zurstiege, 2019). Hence, people are not just online reaping the benefits of living in the digital era but are seemingly "tethered" (Turkle, 2008) to the online world and its downsides. Yet apparently there seems to be a simple solution that allows one to cast of the shackles: digital disconnection. This includes different forms of media non-use such as a complete termination of media use, a temporary break, or the application of a predefined set of rules (Zurstiege, 2019). Regardless of which form is practiced, they can all be described as acts of opting out of a persisting system. Therefore, disconnection is often framed as "refusal" (Portwood-Stacer, 2014) or "rejection" (Ribak & Rosenthal, 2015). It is much more an act of omission than an action itself. Instead of a doing, a negative sociology of not-doing takes place (Kaun, 2021). So, while one might decide to digitally disconnect in one way or another, the great scheme of things remains unaffected leaving everyone else still connected. Accordingly, disconnection behavior predominantly takes place at the individual level. This narrow sphere of action is increasingly pointed out in disconnection literature. Trine Syvertsen (2020) accuses the digital detox industry to spread the mantra of "you are the problem!" (p. 49). She links this to the term responsibilisation, a term coined within the realms of governmentality (Juhila & Raitakari, 2019), which describes how responsibility is shifted from causative structures to single individuals. It is not about how digital media impacts individuals but to what extent individuals allow digital media to impact them. Responsibilisation is a recurring theme in phenomena that are linked to the self-help industry where happiness and well-being must be pursuit alone instead of questioning the overall circumstances (Cabanas & Illouz, 2019). Görland and Kannengießer (2021) participated in the exposure of this mechanism dealing with the triad of digital media, time, and sustainability. They perceive time as a sustainable human resource that can be capitalized on by digital media. In this context, the role of the individual should not be exaggerated but rather the exploitative character of societal contexts and ideologies of capitalism should be taken into consideration. Magdalena Kania-Lundholm (2021) argues similarly by proposing a critical research agenda on online disconnection addressing "the conditions of power and labour in digital capitalism" and "the ideological underpinnings of capitalism".

It is a reoccurring motif that digital disconnection is not a personal decision but is negotiated somewhere between individual needs and societal constraints. In this sense, Zeena Feldman (2021) argues that there might be a choice as to which media is used, but the overall demand to be online remains undisputed. From her empirical results, she derives a beyond choice ontology and discusses digital disconnection within the domain of personal agency. Along these lines, a link can be drawn to the longstanding sociological debate about the relation of agency and structures. Pierre Bourdieu (1990a) describes this relation as an "absurd opposition between individual and society" (p. 31). He depicts personal needs and overriding demands as contrasting forces resulting in conflicts of interest. As humans try to navigate through this, they are each embodying a certain habitus. This includes, on the one hand, socialization through experiences and expectations due to the location of the social position of the individual, which Bourdieu understands to be the *field*. On the other hand, the habitus is also geared towards maintaining or acquiring capital, i.e. personal advantages (Bourdieu, 1997). With structuration theory, Anthony Giddens (1984) builds on this understanding but extends it to include a "duality of structure" (p. 15). The structures are thus the product and medium of social actions which in turn indicates that structures and agency are not isolated but intertwined. While this contains an emancipatory potential for change, agency is not equally attained. Therefore, it is important that agency is viewed in a differentiated manner. Agency is not something that is either completely at one's disposal or not at all, but is gradual as it is dependent on multiple factors. The overall result is that unequal living conditions lead to unequal opportunities to change things. This refers to both the individual scope and the ability to transform social structures. Applying this theoretical insight to digital disconnection, it can be assumed that not everyone is given sufficient agency to self-determine their media use. This includes both, the possibilities to get connected in the first place and the freedom to get digitally disconnected. Therefore, I pledge that digital disconnection should not be treated as a generic phenomenon equally applicable to all, but as highly specific.

The homo disconnectus as an ideal disconnector

The examination of structures and agency in an unequal society includes that there are the marginalized. But before I go into more detail on them, I am going to clarify who has the "privilege to opt out" (Portwood-Stacer, 2014) mentioned in the introduction. A central connecting point is provided by Alex Beattie (2020), who describes the "ideal disconnection subject". He attributes the ability to digitally disconnect to "hegemonic masculinity" and its encouragement of "regular independence or social disconnection" that excuses men from performing affectionate labor. Consequently, disconnection is portrayed as a male virtue that is also applicable to digital disconnection. Building on Beattie's ideal disconnection subject and further contributions that I have encountered through a literature review, I have collected further sociodemographic factors that enable individuals to digitally disconnect. They are the ideal structures to obtain maximum agency to self-determine one's media use. Inspired by the theoretical models of homo economicus (Pareto, 1906; Spranger, 1966 [1914]) and homo sociologicus (Dahrendorf, 1977) I am proposing another fictitious agent, the homo disconnectus. While the homo economicus and the homo sociologicus describe the ideal means for a human being in an economical or sociological environment, I have considered factors that enable a human being to digitally disconnect in a highly connective environment. The homo disconnectus thus joins a tradition of fictional agents who are known for their capability "of grasping the conditions of human action and social order" (Reckwitz, 2002). They are able to depict both structural conditions as well as means of agency, which corresponds to the theoretical basis used in this very essay. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the models are abstractions. For example, they do not consider the impact of shared knowledge that shapes the way people make sense of reality (Reckwitz, 2002). Therefore, it must be noted that the depiction of the homo disconnectus is not a checklist that has to be worked through in order to be able to disconnect, but rather a metaphorical tool. This also explains why Selena Gomez, who served as an example in the introduction, can also practice digital disconnection even though she is a woman. She possesses other traits attributed to homo disconnectus. In a comparable matter, Beattie (2020) also describes how the ideal image of a man often remains an unfulfilled aspiration for real men. The homo disconnectus serves as a utensil to highlight the contrasts between those who cannot disconnect and those who can, ultimately granting insight to the root causes that can interfere with the free decision to use or not use digital media. However, these are always embedded in individual circumstances.

Having explained the functions of the homo disconnectus, he[1] can be described as a white man who lives in a heterosexual marriage, has a college education, and holds a position as a knowledge worker in a high-income country. Situated in this way, the homo disconnectus does not have to practice digital disconnection but is in the ideal spot to make a conscious decision on this matter and act accordingly. At the core of this argument lies voluntariness. As early as 2003, Sally Wyatt dealt with the aspect of voluntariness in the context of the digital divide. In her taxonomy of non-use she introduces the terms *want nots* and *have nots*. The want nots are composed of the resisters and the rejectors who have never used the Internet, simply never want to, or voluntarily broke away from it. On the other side are the have nots. They are socially and technically excluded as they were never granted access or expelled from the Internet as they have lost access. Wyatt thus describes that there is one group that can easily access the Internet but makes the conscious decision to not do so while others

1 As I am portraying the homo disconnectus as male, I proceed to use the male pronouns of he, him and his.

cannot. Even though disconnection is more of a gradual phenomenon and does not require total dismissal of digital media, the traits of the ‚want nots‘ can also be applied to the here depicted homo disconnectus. He definitely has the means to appropriate digital media, be it through infrastructure, financial resources to buy the needed devices, or the competence to operate them. He is financially well off and lives in a region where the digital infrastructure has been greatly expanded (Treré, 2021). Hence, his non-use is in no way due to a lack of money, structural access, competence, and knowledge but to an assertion of independence and willpower (Portwood-Stacer, 2013). Since the homo disconnectus is aware that the use of digital media makes demands on his time and energy, he uses digital disconnection as a deliberate "strategy for work" (Fast, 2021). As a knowledge worker in a neo-liberal environment, he knows that he must eliminate distractions to be productive (Fast, 2021; Karlsen & Ytre-Arne, 2021). His work also allows him zones of recreation such as weekends and vacations. There, homo disconnectus can rest so that he can again give everything to his career. After all, full concentration is demanded of him in the office. In this respect, digital disconnection is a form of "efficiency engineering" (Gregg, 2018). The professional comes first, private use of digital media is more of a frill. As stated by Beattie and indicated by others, maintaining a social environment via social media is demanded of him as a man only to a limited extent and most parts of his social responsibilities are handed over to a female person close to him (Portwood-Stacer, 2014). In a heteronormative manner the homo disconnectus becomes a user by proxy of his wife. She is the one expected to send digital birthday greetings on his behalf as well as filter and forward any other relevant information. Instead of reflecting on his privileges and showing gratitude, he boasts about his position. The fact that he does not need digital media is an achievement on display which is referred to as an act of "conspicuous non-consumption" (Portwood-Stacer, 2013). The homo disconnectus is thus a beneficiary of the structures granting him the most agency. And even if he wants to emancipate himself from the overall system that he profits from, he can revolt by making use of strategies of civil disobedience. In his privileged role, he does not have to fear any personal consequences, or at least has the resources to conquer them. The means to fight back and bring change are thus only available to a few (Hesselberth, 2018). It is the homo disconnectus alone who is given the highest degree of agency regarding his media use.

Gender: The pitfalls of maneuvering digital media not being a man

One of the most salient features of Homos disconnectus is his gender as he is unmistakably male. Gender is thus a decisive category when it comes to self-determined use of digital media. This significance cannot be attributed to biological sex, but to the socially constructed gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Boys and men therefore do not inherently have a wider range of abilities regarding media use but are granted more leeway due to existing power structures. The performativity of doing gender is benefiting men by granting them a maximum of self-determination over their media use. But what about everyone else? There is not only a clear androcentrism that favors males, but also a prevalent cisnormative understanding of gender that excludes the experiences of non-binary people. While gender studies and queer studies have examined the non-binary representation in the media (e.g. Miller, 2019; Quinan & Hunt, 2021), there is little clear-cut evidence regarding the use of digital media of genderqueer people. Therefore, no statements can be made here about their disconnection behavior or their possibilities for self-determined media use. However, their non-mention at least implies that they do not have the male privileges. These privileges are also denied to women. As already indicated, girls and women are subjected to different standards that decrease their capabilities of self-determining their use of digital media. This includes denying women access to digital media and enforcing that they be disconnected. An example of this are conservative communities such as the Amish and the ultra-Orthodox. In general, these women are granted some sort of agency, since they are responsible for enforcing and passing on existing rules. Per contra, they are expected to severely limit their media use in the face of their patriarchal traditions and the role assigned to them therein (Neriya-Ben Shahar, 2017). In more liberal communities more subtle mechanisms are used. There is no strict employment of rules, but rather different forms of discouragement and gatekeeping. The overriding view is that girls and women do not have the basic competence to use digital media (e.g. Brosnan et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2019). The self-determination of girls' and women's media use is therefore curtailed, and their digital disconnection is imposed on them when the legitimacy of their use is denied. But it is not only involuntary non-use that can be problematized. At the other end of the spectrum, girls and women are coerced into media use and are not given opportunities for disconnection. The cause lies in capitalist structures that require women to perform unpaid care work. It is their obligation to look after the well-being of their family and closer social environment. With increasing digitalization, affective labor has also shifted to the online world (Portwood-Stacer, 2014). While it could be assumed that the development of technologies provides some kind of support for women, Judy Waycman (2015) noted that "technologies rarely reduce women`s unpaid working time and even, paradoxically, produce some increase in domestic labor" (p. 118). The newly emerged "digital mundane work" (Wilson & Yochim, 2017) includes a broad range of tasks such as "replying to emails or texts, sending happy birthday messages on social media or simply checking in on close friends and family" (Beattie, 2020, 175). But women are not only required to devote themselves to these social tasks for their own benefit. In heteronormative dualism between breadwinner and caretaker, a wife is attributed the responsibility to manage everyday life around the employed husband, regardless of whether she has a job herself. Thus, she also must assume his tasks. While he can be disconnected, she keeps him "abreast of the news that gets announced online" (Portwood-Stacer, 2014). Doing so, she fulfills the role of Kylie Jarretts (2016) figure of the *digital housewife* who is devoting her cognitive and affective efforts to engage in "creative acts of social reproduction" (p. 3). Based on this, Karin Fast (2021) claims that the digital housewife has also become aware of the disconnection turn and has evolved to the *Post-Digital Housewife*. She is no longer solely responsible for the affective work that is done both online and offline but must now find the right balance between the two in order to maintain digital health for her family members and herself. Hence, "[t]he Post-Digital Housewife would advise the Digital Housewife to go offline and do some post-digital housekeeping" (Fast, 2021, 9). Even when their devotion towards digital care work is demanded, they are expected to know the limits. This in turn means that practices of disconnection are also becoming work.

In the digital age, women can't seem to please anyone: The demands placed on them range from enforced disconnection and its opposite of hyper-connectivity to the quixotic expectation to negotiate in-between them. In none of these expectations are women allowed to completely self-determine their use of digital media, their agency is always restricted. Interestingly, women often defend and uphold these set of rules they are subjected to. For example, the women from restrictive communities declare that they find empowerment in their renunciation (Neriya-Ben Shahar, 2017). In a similar manner, the modern women claim to enjoy online networking as "they are sincerely devoted to their families, and they are comfortable in a social role in which they facilitate the transmission of information, affection, and resources among their loved ones" (Portwood-Stacer, 2014). These alleged preferences might be a product of the patriarchal bargain. Therein women maintain patriarchal structures because they were able to negotiate arrangements that grant them certain benefits. To oppose patriarchal expectations is to lose those advantages and be completely cast out (Kandiyoti, 1988). Female refusal is thus a highly political matter that is drawing on personal resources. In the end, female self-determination remains an illusion granting them no other option than to surrender to their expected media. In this sense, the justification of one's own circumstances forms to be a coping mechanism when agency is lacking.

Social class and labor: Click to exist

While the homo disconnectus boasts of conspicuous non-consumption, this status

symbol is not available to all. Otherwise, it would not be a status symbol. Yet, according to Bell Hooks (2000), it is actually "conspicuous consumption" that frees people from class shame. However, the tables have turned: It is not the latest smartphone model that is being bragged about anymore but the rudimentary "dumb phone" (Bearne, 2022).
Closely linked to the issue of consumption, digital disconnection is also a matter of social class. Since there have been numerous suggestions in scholarly discourse to define, model, and classify social class, I choose to focus on class in terms of labor. Lower classes are characterized accordingly by a lower income and are largely referred to as the working class (e.g. Nolan & Weisstanner, 2022; Reuning & McElwee, 2021). Labor is also a recurring issue in disconnection studies (e.g. Fast, 2021; Hesselberth, 2018; Syvertsen, 2020), fostering the discussion of class. As illustrated through the homo disconnectus, digital media is seen as a threat to productivity within neoliberal culture. Just a quick glance at your smartphone can tempt you into an hour-long session of doom scrolling, leaving you unprofitable. But mixing leisure and work works both ways. Whereas in the past, employees could only be reached in an emergency after hours, on weekends, or even on vacation, today they are just a text message, email, or phone call away. To protect workers from exploitation, the automotive companies *Volkswagen* and *Daimler* are known to have their own policies to prevent communication outside working hours. Meanwhile, the matter has been raised to a legislative level. Various countries followed France's *El Khomri Law* and passed bills drawing a clear line between work and leisure. What is popularly known as the *right to disconnect* is considered a contender for a new human right (Von Bergen & Bressler, 2019). But while the right to disconnect is viewed as a milestone for digital disconnection, it is still subjected to legitimate criticism. In this context, Pepita Hesselberth brings up the structuring paradox of disconnection that implies that one has to be connected at some point to make use of the right to disconnect. Opting out indicates that "one (first) has to connect more, that is, spend more time, energy, and effort engaging with these connective technologies, even if they are the very thing, or paradigm, one wishes to opt out from" (Hesselberth, 2018). The right to disconnect consequently becomes an achievement that must be earned first.
Although I acknowledge the right to disconnect as a step towards self-determined media use, there is an underlying classist understanding of work that needs to be addressed. To be precise: The right to disconnect seems to be only useful to those who work in white collar jobs in bigger companies leaving their desk directly after they have finished their 9 to 5 workday. It does not draw any new boundaries but merely helps to enforce the working hours that are already regulated by the employment contracts. People with flexible work hours or no steady employment are largely left out of the conversation. Still, they are the ones who are particularly affected, since remote activities and shift work require additional arrangements, which are made via digital media (Gregg, 2011).
Not only are the boundaries between work and leisure becoming fundamentally blurred, but also between corporate profit and personal gain. The Internet has increasingly become a "professional necessity" (Beattie, 2020) for marketing one's own work to secure future employment. The extent to which professional networking and the promotion of one's own performance are also pursued outside the office hours is therefore up to the individual. This applies to a broad range of highly respected professions such as journalism, public relations, and academia (Beattie, 2020). For the precarious sector it becomes even more drastic. The linchpin forms the gig-economy. While many see an opportunity to earn big money online, the gig economy has established parlous working models. Be it passenger transport services and food deliveries or the sale of self-made goods as well as creative skills: "The tasks that underpin the gig economy are also typically short, temporary, precarious and unpredictable, and gaining access to more of them depends on good performance and reputation" (Woodcock & Graham, 2020, 9). On the part of the employees, this means little long-term security and a high dependence on the Internet. There is no steady income, but only payment in the course of each performed gig. This working model is therefore not only in conflict with digital disconnection but is

also fundamentally subject to inadequate labor standards. The situation can be made even worse through intersections of the lower class with other socio-demographics. Often the described work performed by migrant workers who have additional dependencies on digital media as they are geographically separated from their social environment and need digital media to maintain contact (Merisalo & Jauhiainen, 2021; Van Doorn et al., 2020). Moreover, an even greater global disparity can be identified. Large companies are increasingly taking advantage of the massive supply of labor in low-wage countries and outsource their clickwork. The consequences weigh heavily, because not only the pay, but also the overall working conditions are exploitative (Mehta, 2020).

Digital disconnection is neither a quick fix, nor is hyperconnectivity just a first world problem. This is particularly evident in how the classist structures of labor affect media use. It seems that the more precarious the work, the more people are pushed into digital dependency. In addition, other intersections can come into play. For instance, a woman working in the low-wage sector is also subjected to the expectations described in the section on gender above. Thus, the self-determined use of media is made more difficult for her from several sides. And although there is a clear need to create protective structures for the vulnerable, responsibilisation pins down the already affected individual. People from lower classes are "living on the edge" (Pascale, 2021), their scope of self-determination lies in assessing their pain tolerance and how much they can take. Different models of work and intersections of discrimination categories reveal the yearning for broader perspectives.

Concluding remarks: The digital disconnection that does not happen

In this article, I have shown that the individual possibilities to digitally disconnect are deeply embedded in social structures that are shaped by sociodemographic factors such as gender and class. While in today's normative environment almost everyone is demanded to be online, marginalized people face even greater pressure to use digital media. They are often expected to perform tasks for privileged individuals. The husband relaxes offline not worried about missing out as his wife forwards him anything important. The Silicon Valley worker enjoys his stay in a digital detox camp while the low wage workers click to secure their existence. No wonder the homo disconnectus, my proposal of an ideal disconnector, appears as the epitome of a privileged person in the 21st century: white, male, heterosexual, educated, knowledge worker, and living in a high-income country. Fulfilling most social norms, he is granted the "luxury" (Feldman, 2021) to opt out, refuse and reject digital media as he is given high agency to self-determine his media use. At the same time, I do not claim that the homo disconnectus depicted here is complete nor set in stone. I have deliberately designed the fictitious agent in such a way that the traits can be reflected and, where necessary, supplemented. However, the recognition that the individual and subordinate structures are not isolated from each other, but interdependent, should remain a guiding principle. In the sense of the long-running sociological structures versus agency debate and Giddens' (1984) contribution of duality of structure, disconnection behavior can and should be holistically acknowledged as a product of agency and structure.

With the perspective on agency and structures presented, a deeper exploration of digital disconnection is enabled. While it is interesting how and why digital disconnection is performed, there remains a blind spot: The digital disconnection that does not happen through limited agency. Of course, it is important to examine digital disconnection that is already put in practice. But we should not ignore the fact that not all people have the means to engage in them. Inspired by Sally Wyatt (2003) and her take on involuntary and voluntary non-use differentiating between can nots and want nots, one could speak here of involuntary use and refer to affected individuals as *have tos*. Instead of focusing exclusively on the digital disconnection that happens, there should be a greater focus on the digital disconnection that does not happen and why it remains unperformed. This essentially corresponds

with the examination of people who have no or only limited resources to self-determine their media use. Therefore, we should give them a space to express their desires and what they need to self-determine their media use. However, as described by the term responsibilisation (Juhila & Raitakari, 2019; Syvertsen, 2020), it is not up to the individual alone to articulate their needs to improve their situation, but institutional support is also required. This is where science and public discourse come into play. Only in this approach, opportunities can be created to call out and eliminate inequalities holistically.
Giving a voice to those who cannot digitally disconnect can also result in something grotesque: They might not want to. Instead, they might state that they are satisfied with their current situation. Since people are pressured by societal expectations to use media in a certain way, it is especially interesting to look at those who willingly surrendered to their circumstances. Still, this is a very ambivalent undertaking. It is understandable that people somehow have to come to terms with their situation as they alone cannot change it. Accordingly, they make peace with their situation by upholding an illusion of agency. They do not necessarily position themselves as victims, but rather reproduce the expectations and arguments of the systems of oppression. Due to their situation, they lack the means for reflection as depicted in the remarks on the patriarchal bargain (Kandiyoti, 1988). But completely invalidating these statements is skating on thin ice. Because in the course of this, an already marginalized person is denied the credibility and legitimacy of their own opinion. Considering the duality of structure, social expectations and personal preferences must also recognized to be interdependent. The ultimate goal should be to grant everyone the highest possible degree of agency, not just the illusion of it, so that they can self-determine their media use. We should not dismiss disconnection as a mere longing but reflect on self-determined media use as a fundamental human need.

References

Adams, P. C., & Jansson, A. (2021). Introduction: Rethinking the Entangling Force of Connective Media. In A. Jansson, & P. C. Adams (Ed.). *Disentangling: The Geographies of Digital Disconnection*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197571873.003.0001

Ahmed, S. T. (2020). Managing News Overload (MNO): The COVID-19 Infodemic. *Information*, 11(8), 375. https://doi.org/10.3390/info11080375

Andersen, K. (2020). Realizing good intentions? A field experiment of slow news consumption and news fatigue. Journalism Practice, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2020.1818609

Beattie, A. (2020). *The Manufactur of Disconnection*. PhD Thesis, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Te Herenga Waka – Victoria of University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Bourdieu, Pierre. (1984). *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. (1990). *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Polity Press.

Bearne, Suzanne. (2022). Not smart but clever? The return of 'dumbphones'. *BBC*. https://www.bbc.com/news/business-60763168

Brosnan, M., Joiner, R., Gavin, J., Crook, C., Maras, P., Guiller, J., & Scott, A. J. (2012). The impact of pathological levels of internet-related anxiety on internet usage. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 46(4), 341–356. https://doi.org/10.2190/EC.46.4.b

Cabanas, E., & Illouz, E. (2019). *Manufacturing Happy Citizens. How the Science and Industry of Happiness Control our Lives*. Polity Press.

Chocano, C. (2021). The Return of Selena. *Elle*. https://www.elle.com/culture/celebrities/a37319287/selena-gomez-interview-2021/

CBBC (2023): *Selena Gomez becomes Instagram most-followed woman once more*. CBBC. https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/65007236

Couldry, N., & Hepp, A. (2017). *The mediated construction of reality*. Polity.

Dahrendorf, R. (1964). *HOMO SOCIOLOGICUS. Ein Versuch zur Geschichte, Bedeutung und Kritik der Kategorie der sozialen Rolle.* 4th Edition. Köln, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Fast, K. (2021). The disconnection turn: Three facets of disconnective work in post-digital capitalism. *Convergence,* 27(6), 1615–1630. https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565211033382

Feldman, Zeena. (2021). Quitting Digital Culture. Rethinking Agency in a Beyond-Choice Ontology. In A. Chia, Jorge, A., & Karppi, T. (Ed.), *Reckoning with social media: Disconnection in the age of the techlash,* 103–123. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Görland, S. O., & Kannengießer, S. (2021). A matter of time? Sustainability and digital media use. *Digital Policy, Regulation and Governance*, 23(3), 248–261. https://doi.org/10.1108/DPRG-11-2020-0160

Gregg, Melissa. (2018). *Counterproductive: Time Management in the Knowledge Economy.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Grenz, T. & Pfadenhauer, M. (2017). De-Mediatisierung: Diskontinuitäten, Non-Linearitäten und Ambivalenzen im Mediatisierungsprozess. In M. Pfadenhauer & T. Grenz (Ed.), *De-Mediatisierung. Diskontinuitäten, Non-Linearitäten und Ambivalenzen im Mediatisierungsprozess.* Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2–23.

Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hesselberth, P. (2018). Discourses on disconnectivity and the right to disconnect. *New Media & Society*, 20(5), 1994–2010. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817711449

Hooks, Bell (2000). *Where we stand: Class matters.* New York: Routledge.

Jarrett, K. (2016). *Feminism, labour and digital media: The digital housewife.* Routledge.

Juhila, K., & Raitakari, S. (2019). Responsibilisation in Governmentality Literature. In K. Juhila, S. Raitakari, & C. Hall (Ed.), *Responsibilisation at the Margins of Welfare Services*, 11–34. Routledge.

Kandiyoti, D. (1988). Bargaining with patriarchy. *Gender & Society*, 2(3), 274–290. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124388002003004

Kania-Lundholm, M. (2021). Why Disconnecting Matters. Towards a Critical Research Agenda on Online Disconnection. In A. Chia, Jorge, A., & Karppi, T. (Ed.), *Reckoning with social media: Disconnection in the age of the techlash,* 13–34. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Karlsen, F., & Ytre-Arne, B. (2021). Intrusive media and knowledge work: how knowledge workers negotiate digital media norms in the pursuit of focused work. *Information, Communication & Society, 1–16.* https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1933561

Kaun, A. (2021). Ways of seeing digital disconnection: A negative sociology of digital culture. Convergence, 27(6), 1571–1583. https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565211045535

Kopecka-Piech, K. (2020). Methodological Aspects of Research on Mediatization and Demediatization of Everyday Life. Current State and Key Challenges. Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia De Cultura, 12(4), 113–121. https://doi.org/10.24917/20837275.12.4.9

Lee, A. M., Holton, A., & Chen, V. (2019). Unpacking overload: Examining the impact of content characteristics and news topics on news overload. *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*, 8(3), 273–290. https://doi.org/10.1386/ajms_00002_1

Lomborg, S., & Ytre-Arne, B. (2021). Advancing digital disconnection research: Introduction to the special issue. *Convergence,* 27(6), 1529–1535. https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565211057518

Mehta, B. S. (2020). Changing Nature of Work and the Gig Economy: Theory and Debate. *FIIB Business Review.* https://doi.org/10.1177/2319714520968294

Merisalo, M., & Jauhiainen, J. S. (2021). Asylum-Related Migrants' Social-Media Use, Mobility Decisions, and Resilience. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 19(2), 184–198. https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2020.1781991

Miller, Q. (2019). *Camp TV. Trans Gender Queer Sitcom History*. Duke University Press.

Moe, H., & Madsen, O. J. (2021). Understanding digital disconnection beyond media studies. *Convergence*, 27(6), 1584–1598. https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565211048969

Morrison, S. L., & Gomez, R. (2014). Pushback: Expressions of resistance to the "evertime" of constant online connectivity. *First Monday*, 19(8). https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v19i8.4902

Neriya-Ben Shahar, R. (2017). Negotiating agency: Amish and ultra-Orthodox women's responses to the Internet. *New Media & Society*, 19(1), 81–95. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816649920

Nolan, B., & Weisstanner, D. (2022). Rising income inequality and the relative decline in subjective social status of the working class. *West European Politics*, 45(6), 1206–1230. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2022.2038892

Pareto, V. (1906). *Manuale d'economia politica con una introduzione alla scienza sociale*. Piccola biblioteca scientifica, 13. Milan: Societá editrece libraria.

Pascale, C.-M. (2021). *Living on the Edge: When Hard Times Become a Way of Life*. Cambridge, Medford: Polity.

Portwood-Stacer, L. (2013). Media refusal and conspicuous non-consumption: The performative and political dimensions of Facebook abstention. *New Media & Society*, 15(7), 1041–1057. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812465139

Portwood-Stacer, L. (2014). Care Work and the Stakes of Social Media Refusal. *New Criticals*. http://www.newcriticals.com/care-work-and-the-stakes-of-social-media-refusal/print

Quinan, C. L., & Hunt, M. (2021). Non-binary gender markers: Mobility, migration, and media reception in Europe and beyond. *European Journal of Women's Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1177/13505068211024891

Reckwitz, A. (2022). Toward a Theory of Social Practices. A Development in Culturalist Theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5(2), 243–263. https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310222225432

Reuning, K., & Mcelwee, S. (2021). The precarious: how American voters view the working class. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2021.1908149

Ribak, R., & Rosenthal, M. (2015). Smartphone resistance as media ambivalence. *First Monday*. https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v20i11.6307

Richardson, S. (2015). Beyond Diffusion: A Conceptual Approach to Studying (Non) Users of Information and Communication Technologies. *Journal of Technologies and Human Usability*, 10(3-4), 31–44. https://doi.org/10.18848/2381-9227/CGP/v10i3-4/56437

Spranger, E. (1966 [1914]). Lebensformen: geisteswissenschaftliche Psychologie und Ethik der Persönlichkeit. 9th Edition. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Syvertsen, T. (2017). *Media Resistance Protest, Dislike, Abstention*. Palgrave Macmillan. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-46499-2

Syvertsen, T. (2020). *Digital detox: The Politics of Disconnecting*. Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/9781787693395

Syvertsen, T., Ytre-Arne, B. (2021). Privacy, Energy, Time, and Moments Stolen. Social Media Experiencines Pushing towards Disconnection. In A. Chia, Jorge, A., & Karppi, T. (Ed.), *Reckoning with social media: Disconnection in the age of the techlash,* 85–102. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Treré, E. (2021). Intensification, discovery and abandonment: Unearthing global ecologies of dis/connection in pandemic times. *Convergence*. 27(6), 1663–1677. https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565211036804

Turkle, S. (2008). Always-On/Always-On-You: The Tethered Self. In J. Katz (Ed.), *Handbook of Mobile Communication Studies*, 121–137. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9780262113120.003.0010

Van Doorn, N., Ferrari, F., & Graham, M. (2020). *Migration and Migrant Labour in the Gig Economy: An Intervention*. https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3622589

Von Bergen, C. W., & Bressler, M. S. (2019). Work, non-work boundaries and the right to disconnect. *The Journal of Applied Business and Economics*, 21(2), 51–69. https://doi.org/10.33423/jabe.v21i1.1454

Wajcman, J. (2015). *Pressed for time the acceleration of life in digital capitalism*. Univ. of Chicago Press.

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing Gender. *Gender & Society*, 1(2), 125–151. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243287001002002

Wilson, J. A., & Yochim, E. C. (2017). *Mothering through Precarity. Women's Work and Digital Media*. Duke University Press. https://doi.org/doi:10.1515/9780822373193

Woodcock, J. & Graham, M. (2020). *The Gig Economy: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge, Medford: Polity.

Wyatt, S. (2003). Non-users also matter: The construction of users and non-users of the Internet. In N. Oudshoorn, & T. Pinch (Ed.), *Now Users Matter: The Co-construction of Users and Technology*, 67–79. MIT Press.

Zhang, S., Zhao, L., Lu, Y., & Yang, J. (2016). Do you get tired of socializing? An empirical explanation of discontinuous usage behaviour in social network services. *Information & Management*, 53(7), 904–914. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2016.03.006

Zurstiege, G. (2019). *Taktiken der Entnetzung die Sehnsucht nach Stille im digitalen Zeitalter*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Victoria A. E. Kratel
served as a researcher in the project „Media Disconnection as a Self-Assertion Tactic in the Digital Age," funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) at the University of Tuebingen, Germany. Starting in August 2023, she will join the „Digitox" project as a PhD fellow at Kristiania University College in Oslo, Norway.

Wasiak, P. (2023). Rejection of learning how to code and the problem of 'non-use' in the history of computer cultures. medien & zeit, 38(1), 32–42.

Rejection of learning how to code and the problem of 'non-use' in the history of computer cultures

Patryk Wasiak
Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences

Abstract

This paper investigates how a host of social actors, such as computer science experts and educators, discursively constructed both positively valued 'user-programmers' and negatively valued ‚non-programmers,' that is computer users who reject the practice of writing programs on their computers. I argue that the central theme of such a strategy was user agency and the question of having control over the technology that one is using in everyday life. Firstly, I investigate two key themes of the discursive construction of non-programmers in the era of the microcomputer of the 1980s, the discourses towards economies and social development related to computer literacy programs, and next, the key role of programming as a developmental tool for children's education. Later, I compare that historical era with the contemporary 'learn to code' movement and investigate how it outlines the disadvantages of the neglect of learning programming.

Keywords: *non-use, programming, computer culture, retroprogramming, computer literacy, LOGO, learn to code*

This paper aims to investigate how a host of social actors, primarily computer science experts and educators, discursively constructed negatively valued "non-programmers," that is computer users who reject the practice of writing programs on their computers. This is a longitudinal study that seeks to compare the cultural logic of the construction of this specific form of "non-use" of computers in two historical settings. The first setting is the era of microcomputers of the 1980s with the emergence of the popularity of BASIC and LOGO programming languages accompanied by the mass market for books and magazines dedicated to the learning of coding skills. The second setting is contemporary computer culture with the 'learn to code' movement that pathologies the rejection of learning how to write program code in the époque of the convenience of the availability of instantly downloadable programs summarized by 'there is an app for that' slogan.

While discussing these two historical settings I aim to highlight both continuity and change between the campaigns for the popularization of programming among computer users in the 1980s and the contemporary "learn to code" movement. To do so, I investigate how three campaigns were structured with the key themes and strategies of convincing computer users how they will benefit by learning coding skills. Such an investigation also highlights the discursive construction of those who do not learn how to code as irrational and unwilling to learn new valuable skills related to the use of digital technologies. It helps to better grasp the historical trajectory of the social imaginary of the digital divide that is regularly described only as a recent development in the Internet era (Warschauer, 2003).

Digital studies scholar David Golumbia noted that "The computer encourages a Hobbesian conception of this political relation: one is either the person who makes and gives orders (the sovereign) or one follows orders" (Columbia, 2009, 224). My paper will illustrate how the discursive construction of practices of non-use of computers as tools for programming, and 'giving orders' to computers became embedded in the public imagery of computer use.

I argue that in all three discourses, the central theme was the user agency and the question of having control over the technology that one is using in everyday life. I will discuss how both discourses in the 1980s were structured upon the utopian imagery of the positive impact of computers on personal lives and economies if computer users would exercise their agency by learning how to control computers by programming them. Differently, the contemporary 'learn to code' movement's discourse is structured upon the anti-utopian vision of the dominance of actors that form the economy of digital capitalism and exert control over the lives of computer users who lack knowledge, that is coding skills, necessary to resist them.

This is also an exploratory paper and I intend to elaborate on the problems of studying how to research computer "non-users." Various forms of computer use are linked with the emergence of easily recognizable cultural identities such as a hacker, gamer, or a colloquial 'computer nerd.' Differently, except for contemporary 'digital detox' campaigns, the non-use of computers usually does not stimulate the emergence of such identities. For that reason, Eric Baumer and colleagues in their paper on technology non-use have a problem with how to refer to those non-users. As they note, "the *non* prefix seems ill-suited. *Non-hackers*? *Non-players*?" (Baumer, et al., 2015b). For the sake of clarity in this article, I will use a similar 'non-programmer' term.

Aside from investigating a historical trajectory of the case of "non-use" related to computerization, I aim to contribute to *medien & zeit* special issue by highlighting the lack of scholarly interest and theoretical considerations of the 'non-use' and 'computer laggards' in the history of computer cultures. The history of computing is dominated by the innovators, such as computer science professionals, hardware and game designers, and early adopters such as hackers, computer hobbyists, and individuals who innovatively appropriated computers in a variety of professional settings. However, little attention has been paid to the late majority and even less to the laggards.

In my investigation, I draw from the interpretative framework of studies on the figure of technology user in Science and Technology Studies, such as the seminal *How users matter?* edited volume (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003) and media studies. Such a toolset helps me to deconstruct key elements of the repertoire used by social actors who publically argued about the benefits of being a user-programmer for both personal development and social and economic progress. Such a positively valued model of the future was juxtaposed with the imagery of possible future perils related to the negligence of the development of coding skills by computer users.

My paper is structured as follows. First, I make a brief review of relevant works that help to understand the cultural logic behind the non-programmer figure. I will also discuss why not only such a figure but more broadly, the non-use of computer technologies has been overlooked in the scholarship on the history of computing. In the next sections, I will investigate two key themes of the discursive construction of non-programmers in the era of the microcomputer of the 1980s, that is the discourse towards economies and social development related to computer literacy programs, and next, the key role of programming as a developmental tool for children education. Finally, I will discuss the contemporary 'learn to code' movement and investigate how it outlines the disadvantages of the neglect of learning programming.

Computer non-users and computer history

Not only the history of computing but also the broader field of history of technology traditionally share the same focus on technological innovation and those who design and commercialize new technologies. Only recently have scholars turned their attention to technology users and diverse practices of using, or possibly rejecting to use technological innovations. The seminal edited volume *How users matter* (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003a) includes not only theoretical consideration on practices of technology use but also two papers on the rejection of using technologies such as telephones in the early Twentieth Century United States (Kline, 2003) and a study on the rejection to use the internet (Wyatt, 2003). Nelly Oudshoorn and Trevor Pinch in the introduction to the volume express their agenda: "One important research question addressed in this book is how users are defined and by whom" (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003b, 2). As this *medien & zeit* issue shows there is still an urgent need to supplement such an agenda by asking how non-users are defined and by whom.

The history of computing is still primarily focused on researching those who pioneered technological innovation, both technology designers and a range of actors that played a role in the early stages of the dissemination of such an innovation. Historian of computing Patricia Galloway in her theoretically oriented paper discusses "Inventor-Early Adopter Dialectic" (Galloway, 2011). This title summarizes the dominant theme of historical studies of computing which focus on these two groups. Firstly, the inventors such as those who design and commercialize computers and to a lesser extent software (Campbell-Kelly & Aspray, 2004; Ceruzzi, 2003). Secondly, early adopters who appropriate technologies in professional and household settings, or a broad category of 'hackers' (Alberts & Oldenziel, 2014). However, for now, there is still little research on further groups from the diffusion of innovation model: early majority, late majority, and particularly laggards.
Aside from a range of contemporary studies on the 'digital disconnection' particularly the rejection of social media (for instance, Moe & Madsen, 2021; Woodstock, 2014; Goodin, 2017; Hesselberth, 2017), there are virtually no historical studies on non-use of computers. The closest historical work that addresses the social choices of using or rejecting computers in professional and home environments is a monumental edited volume by Rob Kling (Kling, 1996a). Contemporary cultures of non-use leave some traces such as manifestos and personal testimonies over social media detox. There are two reasons for the lack of virtually any historical sources which were produced by non-programmers as well as any documents that explicitly address them. As Baumer and colleagues note, cultures of use can influence the emergence of some cultural identities: "Moving beyond the individual, the voluntary non-use of technology may function as the production or performance of a particular sociocultural identity" (Baumer et al., 2015a). Differently computer laggards who were not interested in the adoption of computers in their professional and private lives did not produce a similar identity. As Wyatt notes, studying non-use poses a particular problem due to the lack of sources but also the inability to apply the classical paradigm of social sciences:

> *"Non-users may not be a very cohesive group as people may have very different reasons for not using the Internet. This invisible group is another instance of the difficulties posed by an over-literal interpretation of the dictum to 'follow the actors.'" (Wyatt, 2003, 78)*

For that reason, we can only investigate how other social actors defined users and not-users according to their agenda. According to a historian of science Adele Clarke, in such a case both users, and particularly non-users, are 'implicated actors.' As Clarke and colleagues note:

> *"**Implicated actors** are actors silenced or only discursively present in situations. In discourse data, they are usually constructed by others for others' purposes. There are at least two kinds. The first, while physically present, are silenced, ignored, or made invisible by those having greater power in the situation. Second are those **not** physically present but **solely** discursively constructed by others, usually disadvantageously. **Neither** kind of implicated actor is actively involved in self-representation." (Clarke et al., 2015, 16, cf Oushdorn and Pinch, 2003, 6.)*

In my case, 'non-programmers' were obviously present since only a small percentage of computer users wrote even a rudimentary program. However, they were silenced by those who shaped the public discourse on programming. The most suitable term to discuss the host of social actors who took part in such construction is 'the network of technology promoters' (Rip & Talma, 1998, 313).

As I will discuss in subsequent sections, the discourse towards the necessity of using computers to learn how to write programs, and the relevant silencing of 'non-programmers' was shaped by the key theme of user's control over technologies they use. While discussing the issue of control, I will refer to the imagery of technological utopianism and anti-utopianism. As Rob Kling insightfully summarizes the core elements of both imaginaries:

> *“Technological utopianism does not refer to a set of technologies. It refers to analyses in which the use of specific technologies plays a key role in shaping a Utopian social vision, in which their use easily makes life enchanting and liberating for nearly everyone. In contrast, **technological anti-utopianism** examines how certain broad families of technology facilitate a social order that is relentlessly harsh, destructive, and miserable.” (Kling, 1996b, 42).*

Later I will highlight how such imagery was used as a point of reference in all three historical cases.

Computer literacy projects of the 1980s

The key moment for the cultural history of computing in the 1980s was the shift from the computer as a professional device located and used in professional, institutional, or scientific settings into a home technology. Such a shift was accompanied by a substantial effort to shape a new computer user according to guidance by a network of technology promoters: hardware and software manufacturers, computer science professionals, and educators. Historians of computing Tom Lean and Alison Gazzard in their studies of popular computing in Great Britain in the 1980s grasped the cultural logic of such public campaigns towards raising awareness of the need for mass ‘computer literacy’ (Lean, 2016; Gazzard, 2016). Home computers such as the Apple II, Commodore 64, and ZX Spectrum were extensively used to play computer games and run available software. However, technology promoters engaged in shaping the social imagery of the microcomputer emphasized the critical role of programming as a practice that has tremendous benefits not only for those who will decide to learn how to code but also more broadly for societies and economies in the years to come. There were some discussions on what exactly computer users should learn to succeed in the new economy. As Kling summarizes such debates on what exactly ‘computer literacy’ education should focus on:

> *“Must all effectively educated citizens have any special knowledge of computer systems? If so, what kinds of insights and skills are most critical, those that are akin to computer programming or those that are akin to understanding how organizational information systems function?” (Kling, 1996a, 13)*

My research suggests that both programming and learning how to operate information systems such as databases were equally considered key skills for a computer literate person.

While a range of primary sources for the history of computing such as computer magazines, popular books, and television programmers offer extensive coverage of programming techniques and the benefits of programming, they very scarcely include any depictions of those who were not interested in coding. They only addressed those who ‘do not code *yet*’ with a selection of arguments on the purposefulness of learning how to write code. Going back to the aforementioned Kling’s question, “Must all effectively educated citizens have any special knowledge of computer systems?”, in the 1980s the publically accepted answer was clearly “yes, all educated citizens are obliged to have a degree of knowledge on computer systems” More specifically, such desired degree of knowledge included at least rudimentary coding skills.

It is necessary to mention the exception of the emerging gaming culture that to some extent legitimized gaming as a publically accepted form of computer use. As Graeme Kirkpatrick notes the 1980s was an era when game publishers and game magazine editors successfully carried out a campaign of “Making Games Normal” (Kirkpatrick, 2014, 2015). Computer magazines dedicated exclusively to computer games, as well as majority of computer press, recognized gaming as the legitimate sole purpose of using a computer at home. But evengaming magazines encouraged gamers to learn how to code and regularly included tutorials on how to modify available games or even encouraged readers to design and code their own games.

In the decade of microcomputers programming became also identified as a rudimentary form of interaction with a computer: As Lean notes: "At the time programming was seen as key to developing a working knowledge of computers" (Lean, 2016). As an instance of how in the 1980s technology producers imagined programming as a natural form of computer use, I can bring the user's manual for the Commodore VIC-20, the predecessor of the Commodore 64. First, the user was instructed on how to connect the computer to the monitor and power supply. Just after that the manual presented a very simple program to type in and the user was instructed: "Try typing this program: type this program exactly as shown and see what happens!" (*Personal Computing on the VIC 20*, Commodore Electronics Ltd., 1982, 2). Aside from dedicated computer periodicals and books even magazines that had nothing to do with computers published short tutorials on programming in BASIC, and some public broadcasters introduced short-lasting television courses on BASIC programming.

Historian of technology Janet Abbate discusses how programming became identified as a form of social empowerment embedded in utopian visions of social change (Abbate, 2018). As she notes: "Coding was a path to intellectual awakening or immediate social goals" (138). She also remarks how learning how the network of computer technology promoters claimed how learning coding will address several social problems:

> *"programming skill has been variously constructed as a shift of power from management to labor, a means of economic uplift for minorities, or a thinking tool for children. I argue that coding initiatives have always been embedded in politics and that the specific types of power associated with computer skill have been tied to the social identities of coding proponents and their intended beneficiaries." (Abbate, 2018, 134)*

Abbate mentions several different campaigns that claimed an optimistic future for those who will make an effort to learn how to code. Here I would like to add that in the 1980s, programming became presented as a skill that will be necessary for most white-collar jobs (Kling, 1996a). Such campaigns usually did not explicitly mention what will happen to those who reject learning such a new skill. However, using the aforementioned summary by Abbate we may conclude that those who will reject it would not be able to control their life projects and still will be powerless labor, minorities devoid of opportunities for economic uplift, and children that did not learn how to think.

Technology promoters presented programming as a key skill that can help to find a place as a highly paid programmer. Here I would like to bring an example of how a utopian vision of programming skills was performed in commercial imagery. An advert for a software publisher in *Byte* magazine in 1981 presented a comic strip about a bored young white-collar worker with a passion for programming titled "How I made it big writing microcomputer software" (*Byte*, December 1981, 313). First, the protagonist of the strip complained "I have so much fun writing programs for my little micro [...] The only trouble is, I still have to get up at 7:00 and go to my boring job." After finding a publisher for his programs he was able to change his life: "As so, here I am today, on my newly purchased yacht somewhere off Greece." Those who do not learn how to program were missing out on such a lucrative opportunity. We may use this advert to learn that those who would not learn to program will still have to carry on their boring jobs instead of sailing their own yachts. As Lean summarizes, "Computer advertising explained that the information technology age was coming and that people risked being left behind if they did not adapt" (Lean, 2016).

The aforementioned instances of the discourse towards programming do not include specific references to the figure of the non-programmer. However, they clearly show that in the decade of microcomputers in the 1980s using computers for programming became a highly desirable and obvious form of computer use similarly to using computers to access the internet in the 2000s, which has been grasped by Wyatt as "a worldview in which adoption of new technology is the norm" (Wyatt, 2003, 78). Despite the availability of such knowledge, only a minor part of computer users became actually interested in coding. Referring to Clarke and colleagues this is an instance when social actors while physically present, were ignored and made invisible by those who had an impact on shaping public imagery of computing (Clarke et al., 2015, 16).

Programming as children's development

The aforementioned campaign for computer literacy equally emphasized both intellectual and practical elements of learning how to program computers. Here I would like to focus on an accompanying campaign of programming as a way of revolutionizing children's development. The imagery of 'child-programmer' was an instance of how learning programming was a way of reaching an 'intellectual awakening' for children (Abbate, 2018, 138). Generally, children were identified as those who particularly easily and naturally acquire computer skills. For instance, the *Byte* magazine editor pictured the desired vision of how adolescents should interact with computers: "a typical high school student could use computers to write compositions, memorize facts and vocabulary, understand relationships and concepts in mathematics and science, and write computer programs." (*Byte*, February 1987, 149)

American *Family Computing* magazine regularly published reports on 'computing families." In one of such stories we can find what parents expect from their children: "Both Tony and Penny Morris are obviously pleased that their kids program their own games (fairly simple ones), or at least can if they want to." (Frenkel, C., How to Program Success Into Your Computer, *Family Computing*, September 1983, 46).

Referring to Wyatt (2003, 78), this is another instance of a normative model of computer use. Both aforementioned sources inexplicitly shape pathological imagery of children non-programmers, as those who will not benefit from the educational opportunities offered by computers and also disappoint their parents.

The most notable case for a normative approach toward children-programmers can be found in works by mathematician and educator Seymour Papert who developed the LOGO program language at the MIT inspired by Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory. His most influential work is *Mindstorms. Children, Computers, and Powerful Ideas* (1980) in which Papert presented his concept of using computers in children's development drawing from the philosophical dichotomy of being controlled by technology/controlling technology. As he noted in *Mindstorms...*, in the ordinary educational environment "The computer programming the child" (19). Differently, "In the LOGO environment the relationship is reversed: The child, even at preschool ages, is in control: The child programs the computer" (19). Papert did not elaborate on what exactly means that the computer is programming the child, but here we can see a discursive construction of a child non-programmer as someone who does not have his or her agency and simply follow orders. As we may assume simply using available software meant that the child passively follows orders given by those who designed such software. Lean in his book discusses the impact of Papert's work on using computers in education:

> *"In common with microcomputing in general, programming was an important part of school computing in the 1980s. Educational computing articles of the time have an underlying rational of empowering children, an idea that they should program computers rather than be programmed* ***by*** *computers." (Lean 2016)*

In Papert's work we may find several claims that programming is natural for children:

> *"When I have thought about what these studies mean I am left with two clear impressions. First, that all children will, under the right conditions, acquire a proficiency with programming that will make it one of their more advanced intellectual accomplishments. Second, that the 'right conditions' are very different from the kind of access to computers that is now becoming established as the norm in schools." (1980, 16)*

Similarly, as another educator engaged in the LOGO project claimed, offering children access to LOGO is like "leading fish to water" (Higginson, W., Leading Fish to Water, *Byte*, August 1982, 328). Practical explanation of how Papert's educational program works can be found in highly influential work by Sherry Turkle (1984). She studied how a small group of "child programmers" took part in computer courses by using BASIC and LOGO under the supervision of MIT educators. Turkle's work provides a classical study for human-computer interaction and educational and philosophical studies. However, the children from her study definitely didn't come from an average American school and her study does not situate them in any social, cultural, and economic contexts of the United States of the early 1980s.

It is important to note that other studies on the history of computer education in schools are frequently written by educators themselves (for instance Tatnall & Davey, 2014). They primarily investigate the use of computers in teaching computer science and programming. However, such investigations are mostly biased since the authors enthusiastically discuss the successes of such educational campaigns and do not address children who struggle to learn to program or declare their lack of interest in their subject. A much more down-to-earth study of computers in education has been written by Larry Cuban (2001) and the title of his book: *Oversold and Underused. Computers in the Classroom* tells much about the realities of computer classrooms.

Cuban in his work discusses a key issue relevant to the use/non-use dichotomy. Previously, Turkle in her influential study showed a classroom environment where computers are at the same time physically present and used exactly as intended by educators who designed computer education curriculum based on Papert's work. Cuban, drawing from his fieldwork in the educational system in the US showed that the physical presence of computers in classrooms does not automatically guarantee that computers will be used as proponents of computer education expect to.

Similarly, in more recent work on the much-hyped One Laptop Per Child project Morgan Ames (2019) shows how MIT educators and policy-makers from the Global South expected that simply providing every child in the Globa South with access to a laptop would solve a range of educational, social and economic problems. Both Cuban and Ames articulate the issue of the "non-use" of computers that are physically available in educational environments. For both authors "non-users" are not silenced actors (Clarke et al., 2015, 16,). Instead, they offer complex investigations into why some educational programs shaped by technology enthusiasts do not work as intended.

Such an approach significantly differs from works by computer science educators. Such studies on computer use in education usually do not include any elaboration on those who for some reason do not embrace computer science teaching offered in educational systems (Tatnall & Davey, 2014). Such works imagine non-users as late majority or laggards that simply require more effort from educators to successfully evolve into "users."

'Learn to code' movement

Both discursive constructions of programmers and relevant silencing and ignoring of non-programmers discussed above have been strongly influenced by the utopian visions of the positive impact of computers on the future along with the promises of "making life enchanting and liberating for nearly everyone" (Kling, 1996b, 42). Differently, the contemporary 'learn to code' movement which emphasized the need to learn how to write code is still equally driven by a utopian and anti-utopian vision of the positive impact of computing on the future. If we look at the arguments of those who promote the movement's objectives, we see a much a dark vision of computing in the contemporary world. As I will discuss further, such a vision includes non-programmers.

The 'learn to code' movement is a prominent part of contemporary computer culture. Computers are ubiquitous and virtually everyone has some basic knowledge of using computers to run programs and browse the internet, but only a small percentage of users ever learned at least rudimentary coding skills. In such a context 'learn to code' movement identifies the ability of programming as a forgotten knowledge and identifies the problem of the convenience of 'there is an app for that' (Miller and Matviyenko, 2014) culture that results in the dominance of the model of casual computer use and the neglect of understanding of the role of software as the backbone of contemporary technological infrastructures.

The most prolific member of this movement is Code.org (https://code.org/), a nonprofit that, according to its website is "dedicated to expanding access to computer science in schools and increasing participation by young women and students from other underrepresented groups." This website also prominently includes slogans such as "Learn computer science. Change the world." and "Learn today, build a brighter tomorrow." In 2013 during the 'Hour of Code" initiative, the movement received an influential celebrity endorsement by president Barack Obama, who became 'the first president-programmer' (Finley, 2014). In his public speech Obama directly confronted 'there is an app for that' culture': "Don't just buy a new video game, make one. Don't just download the latest app, help design it" (President Obama asks America to learn computer science, uploaded by Code.org, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6XvmhE1J9PY).

The aforementioned slogan "build a brighter tomorrow" clearly suggests that our contemporary world is not so bright since most computer users do not know how to code and do not know how the software they use every day works. As software studies scholar Wendy Chun put it "Knowing software, ... enable us to fight domination or rescue software from "evil-doers" such as Microsoft" (Chun, 2011, 21). And what exactly digital 'evil-doers' do, can be summarized by the title of digital studies scholar Jathan Sadowski's book: *Too Smart. How Digital Capitalism Is Extracting Data, Controlling Our Lives, and Taking Over the World* (2020). Such imagery corresponds with remarks by Kling on the dark side of computerization:

> *"Much less frequently, authors examine a darker social vision when any likely form of computerization will amplify human misery—people sacrificing their freedom to businesses and government agencies, people becoming dependent on complex technologies that they don't comprehend, and sometimes the image of inadvertent global thermonuclear war." (Kling, 1996b, 41)*

The movement perceives learning how to understand and write software as a method of challenging the domination of the digital economy potentates and empowering individual users. As Abbate notes: "Code.org began to fuse the concerns of corporate interest, education, and social justice into a single discourse equating coding with empowerment (Abbate, 2018, 147). Going back to the previously quoted remark by Wyatt, the movement identifies the fact that the adoption of technology, that is programming, is not a norm (Wyatt, 2003, 78) as an acute social and economic problem. As a remedy, the movement intends to popularize the model of computer use in the 1980s and bring back programming 'as key to developing a working knowledge of computers" (Lean, 2016).

Interestingly, the 'learn to code movement is countered by a strong opposition of those who bring 'non-programmers' into the spotlight and explain why mass learning how to write rudimentary code is not a cure for acute social and economic problems (Shapiro, 2016; Farag, 2016). Moreover, in the era of public knowledge of the exploitation of employees in the digital economy, it is clear that programming would not guarantee a yacht, only plausibly a poorly paid job in an open space with compulsory overtime during 'crunch times.'

Discussion

In all three cases, I have discussed how a host of actors promoted not only computers as a technology of the future but also programming as a specific desirable form of computer use that will realize the full potential of technology. All three campaigns towards the need for learning how to write programs strongly resembles Wyatt's study of the Internet:

> *"Everyone is clearly understood as a potential user of the Internet. Access to the technology is seen as necessarily desirable, and increasing access is the policy challenge to be met in order to realize the economic potential of the technology" (Wyatt, 2003, 68).*

Going back to the question "how non-users are defined and by whom?" We have seen that such promoters of computerization did not explicitly define 'non-programmers' but rather made them silent and invisible (Clarke et al., 2015, 16). However, by investigating their visions of the benefits of the ability of programming and, thus, having control over one's life, we can conclude that 'non-programmers' will not be able to control their lives in the upcoming era of the information society.

All three historical cases shows how definition of use/non-use of technology was structured with a dichotomy of having control/being controlled. However, there is a key difference between the 1980s and the contemporary world. In the 1980s the enthusiasm towards programming was driven by the optimistic utopian vision of the future with promises based on the benefits of the skillful use of new technology. Differently in contemporary culture, the imagery of programming is equally structured with similar utopian visions of the possible future and anti-utopian vision of contemporary currents with digital economy 'evil-doers' (Chun, 2011, 21).

Finally, I would like to highlight the key difference between non-use of social media and 'non-programmers.' According to contemporary 'digital disconnection' campaigns, those who use social media are being controlled by those who design such technology with specific ways of forming an addiction to such use and applying non-transparent algorithms. As Baumer and colleagues note: "non-use may represent an individual's attempt to regain (a sense of) self-control over their own technology use. [...] In many of these cases, the discourse is one of control." (Baumer et al., 2015a).

In all three historical cases discussed in my paper, the situation was reversed. Actors who shaped the discourse equaled 'use,' that is learning how to program, with having control over technology. Contrary, 'non-use' was equaled with the situation when technology, or some malevolent social forces, have control over computer users.

Finally, I would like to highlight the lack of scholarly investigations on how social actors perceive not only the use/non-use dichotomy but rather a hierarchy of different forms of using digital technologies. There is extensive literature from game studies scholars on the history of controversies over gaming as a legitimate form of using digital technologies (Kirkpatrick, 2014, 2015; Madigan, 2016; Kowert & Quandt, 2015). However, those studies focus primarily on the issue of legitimization, a single form of computer use. We need more works that would offer investigations on a continuum between programming as an idealized purposeful and creative form of computer use and non-use.

References

Abbate, J. (2018). Code Switch: Alternative Visions of Computer Expertise as Empowerment from the 1960s to the 2010s. *Technology and Culture*, 59 (1), 134-159.

Alberts, G., & Oldenziel, R. (Ed.). (2014). *Hacking Europe. From Computer Cultures to Demoscenes*. Springer.

Ames, M. (2019). *The Charisma Machine. The Life, Death, and Legacy of One Laptop per Child*. MIT Press.

Baumer, E., Morgan G. Ames, M., Burrell, J., Brubaker, J., & Dourish, P. (2015a). Why study technology non-use? *First Monday*, 20 (11), 2 November 2015 https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/download/6310/5137

Baumer, E., Morgan G. Ames, M., Burrell, J., Brubaker, J., & Dourish, P. (2015b). On the importance and implications of studying technology non-use. ACM *Interactions, XXII, 2,* March-April 2015, https://interactions.acm.org/archive/view/march-april-2015/on-the-importance-and-implications-of-studying-technology-non-use

Campbell- Kelly, M. & Aspray, W. (2004). *Computer: A History of the Information Machine.* Westview Press.

Ceruzzi, P. (2003 [1998]). *A History of Modern Computing,* 2nd ed. MIT Press.

Chun, W. (2011). *Programmed Visions Software and Memory*. MIT Press.

Clarke, A., Friese, C., & Washburn, R. (Ed.). (2015). *Situational Analysis in Practice. Mapping Research with Grounded Theory*. Left Coast Press.

Cuban, L. (2001). *Oversold and Underused. Computers in the Classroom*. Harvard University Press.

Farag, B., (2016). Please don't learn to code, TechCrunch website, May 11, 2016, https://techcrunch.com/2016/05/10/please-dont-learn-to-code/).

Finley, K. (2014). Obama Becomes First President to Write a Computer Program, *Wired*, Dec. 8 2014, https://www.wired.com/2014/12/obama-becomes-first-president-write-computer-program/)

Galloway, P. (2011). 'Personal Computers, Microhistory, and Shared Authority: Documenting the Inventor-Early Adopter Dialectic. *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing*, 33)2), 60-74.

Gazzard, A. (2016) *Now the Chips Are Down: The BBC Micro*. MIT Press.

Golumbia, D. (2009). *The Cultural Logic of Computation*. Harvard University Press.

Goodin T. (2017). *OFF: Your Digital Detox for a Better Life*. Octopus.

Hesselberth P. (2017). Discourses on disconnectivity and the right to disconnect. *New Media & Society*, 20 (5), 1994–2010.

Kirkpatrick, G. (2014). Making Games Normal: Computer Gaming Discourse in the 1980s. *New Media & Society* 18 (8): 1439–1454.

Kirkpatrick, G. 2015. *The Formation of Gaming Culture: UK Gaming Magazines, 1981–1995*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Kline, R. (2003). Resisting Consumer Technology in Rural America: The Telephone and Electrification. In N. Oudshoorn & T. Pinch (Ed.). *How users matter: The co-construction of users and technology*. MIT Press, 51-66.

Kling, R. (Ed.). (1996a [1991). *Computerization and Controversy: Value Conflicts and Social Choices*. Academic Press.

Kling, R. (1996b). Hopes and Horrors: Technological Utopianism and Anti-Utopianism in Narratives of Computerization. In Kling, R. (Ed.). (1996a [1991). *Computerization and Controversy: Value Conflicts and Social Choices*. Academic Press, 40-58.

Lean, T. (2016). *Electronic Dreams. How 1980s Britain Learned to Love the Computer.* Bloomsbury.

Madigan, J. (2016). Getting Gamers. The Psychology of Video Games and Their Impact on the People Who Play Them. Rowman & Littlefield.

Miller, P. & Matviyenko, S. (Ed.). (2014). T*he Imaginary App.* MIT Press.

Moe, H., Madsen, O. (2021). Understanding digital disconnection beyond media studies. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 27(6), 1584–1598.

Oudshoorn, N. & Pinch, T. (Ed.). (2003a). *How users matter: The co-construction of users and technology*. MIT Press.

Oudshoorn, N. & Pinch, T. (2003b). Introduction: How users and non-users matter. In: Oudshoorn, N. & Pinch, T. (Ed.). (2003). *How users matter: The co-construction of users and technology*. MIT Press, 1–25.

Papert, S. (1980). *Mindstorms. Children, Computers, and Powerful Ideas*, Basic Books.

Rip, A. & Talma, S. (1998). Antagonistic Patterns and New Technologies In Disco, C. & van der Meulen, B. (Ed.) *Getting New Technologies Together Studies in Making Sociotechnical Order.* De Gruyter, 299-322.

Sadowski, J. (2020). *Too Smart. How Digital Capitalism Is Extracting Data, Controlling Our Lives, and Taking Over the World*. MIT Press.

Shapiro, J. (2016). President Obama Wants Every Kid To Learn Coding--For All The Wrong Reasons, *Forbes*, January 31, 2016, https://www.forbes.com/sites/jordanshapiro/2016/01/31/president-obama-wants-every-kid-to-learn-coding-for-all-the-wrong-reasons/

Tatnall, A. & Davey, B. (Ed.) (2014). *Reflections* on the History of Computers in Education Early Use of Computers and Teaching about Computing in Schools. Springer.

Turkle, S. (1984). *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit.* Simon & Schuster.

Warschauer, M. (2003). *Technology and Social Inclusion. Rethinking the Digital Divide.* MIT Press.

Woodstock, L. (2014). Media resistance: opportunities for practice theory and new media research. *International Journal of Communication,* 8, 1983-2001.

Wyatt, S. (2003). Non-users also matter: The construction of users and non-users of the Internet In: Oudshoorn, N. & Pinch, T. (Ed.). (2003). *How users matter: The co-construction of users and technology*. MIT Press, 67–79.

Research for this article was supported by the National Science Centre, Poland, grant 2020/37/B/HS3/03610. I would like to express my gratitude to the editors and two anonymous reviewers for their comments that helped me to revise and improve my manuscript.

Patryk Wasiak,
Dr., associate professor, Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, holds MA titles in sociology and art history (Warsaw University) and PhD in cultural studies (Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities). Former fellow of the Volkswagen Foundation, the Center for Contemporary History Potsdam, the Netherlands Institute of Advanced Study, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. His research interests include the cultural history of the Cold War, history of home technologies and history of computing. Currently he works on the the history of amateur programming and neo-liberal socio-economic order in the 1980s. His current project is supported with a 4-year research grant from the National Science Centre of Poland. He has published articles in IEEE Annals of the History of Computing, International Journal of Communication, and History and Technology.

Balslev, J. & Oehlenschläger, M. (2023). Towards digital disconnection in Danish educational policy. medien & zeit, 38(1), 43–58.

Towards digital disconnection in Danish educational policy

Jesper Balslev
Copenhagen School of Design and Technology

Mie Oehlenschläger
Independent Researcher

Abstract

When talking about the introduction of digital media into childhood and education, it has been common to talk about technology's positive potential for personalized learning, for increased access to knowledge, for the acquisition of important future competences, media literacy etc. These arguments are situated in a broader societal discourse about the potential of digital technologies as such. There is however a significant amount of evaluation reports that problematize the evidential basis of those claims. The emergence of the field of digital disconnection studies could offer novel approaches to understanding the relationship between education and technology. Our hypothesis is that digital disconnection literature could reveal reasons to argue for disconnecting from digital media in childhood and education. This could e.g., be mandated by findings in domains where warning flags have been raised based on perceptions of heightened health risks, cyberbullying, loneliness, exposure to online porn, distraction, manipulative features in online services etc. The aim of the article is to bring discussions from disconnection studies to the field of information- and communications technology (ICT) in education. It is a novel contribution that aims to relate the literature from digital disconnection studies to dominant literature on the purpose and value of ICT in education.

Keywords: *digital disconnection, education, policy, non-use*

The analysis is conducted through a qualitative document analysis of Danish strategic policy papers published since 1994. The documents are selected from the highest levels of political power, i.e., from governmental and ministerial agencies. The analysis focuses on arguments for the use of ICT in education, perceived problems as they have emerged from academic debates and, if possible, on how digital non-use has been conceptualized by policy makers (e.g., as resistance, as the product of anxiety, as caused by lack of funds etc.). Denmark is used as case because it ranks 1st out of the 27 EU Member States in the European Commission's 2021 edition of the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) and thereby offers insights into how the use of ICT in schools is portrayed as the prerequisite for the efficiency of learning, and again, to the extent that it is possible, how representations of non-use are used strategically in pro-digitization agendas. The primary aim of the article is to present an overview of the binary opposite of ICT in education i.e., scholarship on digital non-use, its' development of different typologies of digital non-use, represented by scholars like Moe & Madsen (2021), Hartmann (2021), Hesselberth (2018) among others. These provide explanations and schemata for different actors' varying motives for digital non-use of different technologies, and they introduce nuances to the understanding of digital non-use as a phenomenon. In the article we will introduce, and argue for, a synthesis of the different typologies that they present, which will then guide our discussion of institutional discourses on ICT in education. That approach could address current gaps in the scholarship in original and constructive ways. The analysis is carried out in two dimensions: an empirical and a methodological dimension. The empirical mapping of how digital use and non-use in other domains than education is portrayed, analyzed, and discussed in the light of how digital non-use is described by scholars like Hartmann, Hesselberth, Moe and Madsen and others. On a methodological level we discuss the usefulness of existing digital non-use typologies on political discourse and how their application might introduce valuable insights into the institutional perception of digital non-use actors in education.

1. Introduction: a historical mission to increase digital use in Danish education

For decades the increased use of ICT in public schools in Denmark has played an important role in the Danish government's objective to strengthen academic standards in Danish public schools. The assumption that IT promotes increased learning and productivity has driven the digitization of not only Danish schools but the entire Danish public sector – with Denmark being ranked at the top of surveys on international efforts to digitize the public sector.

In Denmark the percentage of students who use the internet at public schools for learning purposes is particularly high. Data from PISA 2018 show that in Denmark, Norway, or Sweden, almost all computers available in schools are portable. Around 90% of students in Denmark, Lithuania or Slovenia go to schools where principals report that the school's Internet bandwidth or speed is sufficient, in contrast to less than 30% in Colombia e.g. While almost all teachers in Denmark use ICT as part of their teaching practices and 90% of them do so with high frequency, fewer than 20% of teachers in Japan, for comparison, report using ICT for class work frequently or always (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020). According to a 2019 presentation from the Danish National Agency for IT and Learning (Togo, 2019) 9 out of 10 schools rate their schools' WIFI and IT-equipment "highly", and 98% of children from lower socio-economic groups have access to at least one computer at home. Moreover, there are more than 1 million registered users to the schools' digital platforms. It is safe to conclude that in Denmark, as one of the most digitized nations in the EU, digital use is pervasive. For a long time, a key part of the government's objective has been to integrate the use of ICT into all subjects and all daily lessons in Danish schools. In addition to infusing digital technologies into all curriculum, many municipalities have made efforts to provide all students with their own laptop, the so-called 1:1 plan (1 laptop for 1 student). Permanent connectivity, access to tablets, mobile devices and laptops, and subscription to cloud-based services have been the components in a national vision for an "always-on" education, as early as from 2003 (Regeringen, 2003).

Whether the interventions, and the ensuing rise in digital use in schools have had the desired effect of increased learning and fulfilling productivity goals is the subject of continuous evaluation and debate. Two of the most recent and largest evaluation reports commissioned by the "Steering group for IT in the public school"[1] (our translation), in 2014 and 2018, respectively, and both produced by the Rambøll thinktank, (Rambøll, 2014), (Rambøll, 2018) are inconclusive in their findings: In 2014 the conclusion was that the ICT use was "fairly frequent", in average of 40% of all classes during the school year. The three biggest pedagogical effects, according to the teachers who were asked, were in the domains of "teaching-differentiation", "motivation" and "authenticity" with a slight minority of teachers reporting "some positive effect". However, it must be noted that the number of caveats in the analysis undermine the validity of the results (the report doesn't measure on effects, but on *perceived* effects, respondents were not controlled for positive or negative (selection) bias, the survey was only a snapshot of the reality, and didn't track opinions over a longer period. Regarding productivity, the authors conclude that digital materials facilitate teacher's work. In 2018 a follow-up report was commissioned. It showed that ICT use had increased (49% of teachers now use ICT as a "natural" part of their teaching, and 70% of the teachers have used a learning platform. But teacher-confidence in the pedagogical value of ICT, had declined:

> *"The results in the figure below indicate a negative development in the perceived pedagogical effects of the didactic digital teaching aids compared with 2014. This is seen by*

1 *"Styregruppe for folkeskole-IT"*

> *the fact that the perceived effects in 2018 are on average lower than they were in 2014".*

Outside a Danish context, there are numerous findings that problematize the evidential basis of the investments in ICT. In 2016, Bulman and Fairlie (Bulman & Fairlie, 2016) note that the implications from these findings suggest that we should not expect large positive (or negative) impacts from ICT investments in schools or computers at home:

> *"Schools should not expect major improvements in grades, test scores and other measures of academic outcomes from investments in ICT or adopting Computer Assisted Instructions (CAI) in classrooms, though there might be exceptions such as some CAI interventions in developing countries."*

In October 2017, the director of education for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Mr. Schleicher, was quoted for saying: "In a nutshell today technology does some more damage than it actually does good" (Balslev, 2020).

Not only do political actors like Mr. Schleicher, economists like Bulman and Fairlie cast doubt on the value of using ICT in education, a varying range of academic positions outside the domain of media-research and educational ICT discuss risks connected to ICT in education. Digitization of education has raised concern about the risks associated to diminished learning outcomes (e.g. Schleicher above); for the ability to concentrate (Beland & Murphy, 2015); for mental health (Spitzer, 2018); how ICT use is related to the negative consequences of an increasingly sedentary lifestyle (Wacks & Weinstein, 2021); the decline in ability to perform deep reading and thinking (Wolf, 2019) and other factors that seem counterproductive to the goal of strengthening academic standards via ICT. Other studies have observed a lack of adoption or underutilization of technology (Cuban, 2003) or the less-than-successful adoption of behavioral technologies (Watters, 2021).

At a systemic level, critique has focused on the consequences of the privatization of education through the outsourcing of pedagogical functions to private companies, the large-scale commercialization of (public) education and conflicts between private and commercial agendas with the values and legislation behind public educational systems (Cone & Moos, 2022).

The debates, evaluations, and evidence provided by systematic reviews, warrant arguments for *not* using digital technologies, at least in some situations, for some actors, to achieve some purposes. In this paper we will examine to which extent digital non-use is recognized by Danish institutions that have influence on the use of ICT in education. To the extent that we can document that non-use is acknowledged, we document how it is described, conceptualized and/or rationalized – and how approaches to non-use should be operationalized, as described by policy actors. Our thesis is that institutions are biased towards digital use. Furthermore, it is our impression that non-use is interpreted from a *digital-first* normative position. Here we elaborate on Maren Hartmann's statement that: "the debates in the last decades in relation to non-use have developed into a different direction: a normative framework of connectivity" (Hartmann, 2021). Finally, we test our assumption that non-use, as described in policy papers, is perceived as a negative situation that needs to be fixed or repaired, or, to the extent that problems are acknowledged, whether more ICT is the answer. Symptomatic of this position is Mr. Schleicher's (Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD) statement that the problems mentioned, should not lead us to despair,

> *"We need to get this right in order to provide educators with learning environments that support 21st-century pedagogies and provide children with the 21st-century skills they need to succeed in tomorrow's world. Technology is the only way to dramatically expand access to knowledge." (OECD, 2015)*

The OECD is not blind to problems related to the introduction of ICT in education, but this does not affect the basic premise that the use of ICT is necessary "to succeed in tomorrow's world".

But is this the most rational stance? As suggested, the occurrence of analyses that problematize the beneficial effects of ICT in education is high. Or should the rationale rather be that using ICT in education *less* could have benefits. (as opposed to doubling down on ICT use, based on assumptions and speculations about "a digital future"). On a theoretical level, it is our ambition to inject or augment the political analysis of educational ICT with the insights and knowledge from academic studies on digital disconnection. In the discussion section we investigate how (and where) insights from non-use literature could be added to educational policy discourse.

Methodological considerations

There are, of course, numerous ways to investigate influential actors' perception of the advantages of ICT in education. Recently, influential studies, have come from investigating the social imaginaries that ICT is energized by. In this regard, the anthropological work of Christo Sims (Sims, 2017) and Morgan G. Ames (Ames, 2019) provide important insights into motivations behind digital interventions in education, and how imaginaries succeed in aligning and coordinating actors with disparate interests. Other notable works in the field, comprise Neil Selwyn's analyses (Selwyn, 2010), (Selwyn & Facer, 2013), (Selwyn, 2011), the mapping of the policy networks behind "Global Education Inc" (Ball, 2012), and how the idea of Big Data is used to influence "learning, policy and practice" (Williamson, 2017).

The method used in this paper, is inspired by a pragmatic analysis. This is a position that emphasizes the intellectual activity of political actors that frame and fund education, at the same time downplaying the influence of scientific or scholarly knowledge in the field. It is the position that there are competing actors in manufacturing the "truth" about education, and that policy practitioners often have a larger say than academic experts – as is the argument put forward by Benoit Godin in "The Idea of Technological Innovation" (Godin, 2020), an analysis of how consultants in global institutions should be studied as dominant theoreticians of innovation.

This points to a deliberate and explicit omission. We do not engage with the corpus of scholarship on the eventual pedagogical potentials and effects of ICT in education. This is not to minimize the importance of work done on digital literacy, digital learning platforms, the popularity of tech-labs, the use of robots, videogames, quizzes and the constructivist, social-constructivist, behaviorist, cognitivist or connectivist pedagogical schools of thought they derive their theories from (Selwyn, 2011)

Our method echoes work in "Evidence of a Potential" (Balslev, 2020), using document analysis: "'building a corpus of texts', and to analyze them 'in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge' and to 'identify overarching themes', and finally to 'generate new research questions'"(Bowen, 2009). In this paper we have built two (small) corpuses: The first consists of five documents (policy papers), spanning five decades, to track change and development in the discourse about the *use* of digital technologies in education. They are documents published by policy institutions. We use Michael Nelson's definition of a policy paper (Nelson, 2017) as different from the standard research paper in numerous respects: they are addressed at a non-academic audience, such as a particular official, agency, or organization and they often focus on prescriptive questions. They are defined as beginning with a diagnosis of a particular issue or situation, and then they: "typically argue for a solution that will address that issue or situation. Often, policy papers are focused on being persuasive. The intention is to convince the target audience that your position is the correct one."

The second corpus consists of seven academic articles about *non-use* as a phenomenon, with a focus on deliberate, willful non-use. The aim is to investigate whether the relatively new field of digital non-use studies could inform the domain of educational policy. The first corpus being prescriptive, and the second analytical, our method is also a normative attempt to confront prescriptive attitudes with analytic knowledge in an area where the non-significance, and the risky side of digital interventions could benefit from being addressed. No connections have been made between these two bodies of thought before, and the experiment is to develop novel ways of thinking about technology in education.

We have chosen to structure the paper in the following way:

- A documentation of the perception of the use (and non-use) of ICT in education from a policy point of view (section 2).
- A documentation of major themes in academic literature on digital disconnection (section 3)
- Analysis of the salience of digital disconnection theory to educational policy (section 4)
- Discussion and analysis (section 5)

2. The political perception of the benefits of ICT in education and their interpretation of digital disconnection

The amount of policy papers published in the domain of ICT and education in Denmark exceeds what is possible to count. For the sake of this article, we will restrict ourselves to five political reports on the digitization of education, one from each decade, going back to 1983 (Qvortrup, 1983), (Forskningsministeriet, 1994), (Regeringen, 2003), (Regeringen, 2011), (Snabe, 2021). Together they represent the higest rungs of institutional power in Denmark. They are published by the ministry of education, the ministry of research, by the government (twice), and by a government-formed "partnership" respectively. Many more reports have been published by other institutions of course, but for the sake of brevity we will stick to the five reports, to portray typical characteristics of how the value of IT in education is described. Despite the many years that separate them, they share some remarkably stable characteristics:

- Great optimism about the potential of digital technologies to motivate children and students.
- Optimism about the potentials of educational technology to enhance learning (mainly through IT's capability to differentiate learning).
- Tautologies such as: The future is digital therefore we should create digital classrooms.
- Ontological arguments about the increasingly digital aspects of reality and a belief that this trend will inevitably intensify in the future.
- A sense of urgency: it is important to digitize (more) to avoid losing terrain in the global competition

They stress the importance of equal and broad access to technology, in the form of access to the internet, to tablets or to laptop computers.
The potential benefits of digitization extend across all aspects of education: teaching, management, communication between the school and parents etc.

The one report that sticks out in this selection, is published in 1983 and the author Lars Qvortrup raises doubts about whether ICT ever will be useful in a small country like Denmark – for him the primary value of ICT is to overcome large distances. Otherwise, comments, advice, or speculation on potential benefits associated with digital non-use is not a concept that is visible in this corpus. It is not possible to detect instances of advice related to the benefits of using ICT to a *lesser* degree, *not* using ICT in some situations, *forbidding* the use, or *regulating* the use. It seems safe to say that strategic, future-oriented, and speculative institutional reports on the potentials of ICT in education are heavily skewed towards a positive perception of ICT in education. *The more the better.*
In the collection of governmental strategies, references to digital literacy or media literacy are mentioned only in the latest report (Regeringen, 2021). It is described that it is important to equip our children with competences to deal "constructively and critically with IT". What this means is unclear, but could allude to public discussions about fake news, hackers, phishing e.g. But these risks are not mentioned directly (as is done in Digcomp 2.0. to name one example

(Vuorikari et al., 2022)), and non-use is not present as a distinct competence to deal constructively and critically with IT. This again warrants the question: could digital disconnection studies inform or develop the concept of "critical competences"?

Digital non-use

When rare instances of digital non-use (or synonyms thereof) are mentioned, it is mostly in the context of a "digital divide"-analytical lens where digital non-use is understood as the result of structural problems caused by less-than-optimal infrastructure, and lack of funding thereof. This manifests itself in lack of access to hardware, software and/ or internet. Digital non-use is essentially described as a negative problem to be amended. Moreover, teachers' unwillingness to adopt ICT (caused by their insecurity about putting new technological teaching methods to use) is occasionally mentioned as a factor that is problematic, as it can cut children and youngsters off from an increasingly global world and a future, where ICT plays a crucial role. Other examples of why digital non-use is perceived as problematic, is asymmetry of IT-use. For example, when older students use ICT more than their younger counterparts e.g. Other perceived problems are teachers' lack of knowledge and their insecurity which is said to result in the less-than-optimal "harvesting" of the potentials of ICT. Indicative of this problem according to the government, Regeringen (2011), is that only 20% of the teachers claim they understand how different programs can supplement each other. A lack of teaching in digital literacy and "understanding technology" (teknologiforståelse) is another perceived problem (Snabe, 2021). In one case, teachers' resistance against ICT is described:

> *"There is a great deal of resistance among some teachers to getting started, and it is a practical problem that there is such a marked difference in the teachers' competence in the field, a difference that many times exceeds the students' different competences."*

Sometimes 'cultural barriers' are mentioned as a reason for problematic non-use. This is the case when e.g., teachers and leaders assess that there are significant cultural barriers to an increased systematic use of digital tools in teaching. And it is claimed that:

> *"the cultural barriers are linked to the teachers' insecurity towards new digital tools, shyness in relation to publishing and sharing teaching materials and – courses and not least habits – (sic) the teachers prepare and carry out the teaching as they usually do." (Deloitte, 2014)*

This is a rare example as reasons for teacher resistance are seldomly given. In the 2018-Rambøll mentioned before, a possible explanation is a "perceived lack of pedagogical effects" among teachers, i.e., they don't think technology contributes to pedagogic goals. The perceived pedagogical effects in 2018 are on average lower than they were in 2014. And as Rambøll concludes: the negative development is significant for three of the four effects experienced (not for student-to-student learning). In the same document, a possible (slightly patronizing) explanation offered is that teachers have been negatively influenced by a national debate in the media: "at the time of the study, there was a general debate about whether digital resources have positive effects."

Since 1983 concerns have been relatively constant, but at the same time ICT adoption has become quasi-total, as mentioned in the introduction. Or in other words: there seems to be no adequate relationship between distribution of ICT in education, and a political unease about the lack of distribution, tempo of adoption, and preparedness for the future. Concerns are focused on risks associated with some actors' digital non-use, instead of the project itself, and emphasis is continuously on introducing ICT to the segments of the population that are digitally underserved. One example of this effort (outside our corpus) is a report from 2017, where the association of municipalities (Kommunernes Landsforening (KL)), argue for the potential benefits of introducing ICT earlier in life to preschoolers. Some positive effects quoted are the social skills acquired when children must wait for their turn to use the device, and that children learn from seeing the other children's' competences. (KL/ Implement, 2017)

To sum up, Danish policy in this domain seems to be characterized by a unidirectional drive towards more use. And non-use is a problem to be overcome – through investments and through persuading teachers to learn or to appreciate the potentials of IT in education.

3. Positive disconnection in academic non-use literature

Recent scholarship on what we have called "digital non-use", uses a variety of article-keywords that help us find literature and understanding the phenomenon better. As Christina Ghita expresses it, there is a "diversity of concepts regarding the volitional non-use of digital devices, services and media" (Ghita, 2022). Not using digital technology can be part of a "digital detox" in reference to the term "detoxification" used in the treatment of drug addicts, part of a "digital diet" in reference to concerns related to health and eating habits, or as part of "digital minimalism" in reference to architecture or interior design – for the sake of decluttered spaces that create peace of mind in the dwelling space. Other keywords often used are "disconnectivity", "media refusal", "right to disconnect", "communicative freedom", or "digital disconnection", "unplugging" – among others.

We mention this, to point to the diversity of approaches to and the domains of non-use, with differing foci on rights; on critique of technology; on organizational practices in corporations etc. The diversity is also reflected by the diversity of different academic positions that deal with non-use: communication studies, media studies, sociology, culture studies, physical and mental health-studies etc. As it was the case in our sampling of policy papers, we don't offer a complete overview of the literature. What we do, however, is to identify overarching themes from the literature, and convey central concerns from a sample. The aim is to use frameworks, terminology, and thematic concerns to fill the gap in digital policy in education, as discussed in the previous chapter. Based on extensive reading, we have sampled articles that share an intention to advance digital disconnection studies as such, focusing on digital disconnection at a general level – as opposed to empirical studies of specific non-use cases.

From our review of non-use literature, we have selected 6 articles as the basis for mapping the major themes in non-use (Hartmann, 2021), (Hesselberth, 2018), (Kaun, 2021), (Miyake, 2019), (Moe & Madsen, 2021), (Treré et al., 2020). We will adopt Moe and Madsen's "Five positions on digital disconnection" (Moe & Madsen, 2021, 7) to structure our presentation. The five positions are: Physical and mental health followed by productivity, existential perspectives, freedom perspectives and finally with a focus on sustainability. The framework put forth by Moe and Madsen covers the most ground and captures the diversity of digital disconnection studies most succinctly in our view.

Physical and mental health

In recent years there has been a surge in academic interest in the perceived health benefits related to digital disconnection. One expression of this renewed health focused interest in the analogue, is the phenomenon of "digital detoxing". Digital detox has been picked up by the tourism and wellness industry, offering "unplugged" products, silent retreats, WIFI-free zones in resorts and hotels etc. Urs Stäheli and Louise Stoltenberg point out that (Stäheli & Stoltenberg, 2022), "this touristic interest in digital disconnection is embedded within a wider discourse that problematizes the effects of permanent connectivity." Permanent connectivity is reported as a contributing factor to stress, burnout, and the opposite – digital detoxing – recharges the batteries, connects the individual with itself, shepherding the body back to a healthier, more natural state. Miyake & Kuntsman (Miyake, 2019), also observe a discourse on the impact of our hyperconnected society "on emotional, psychological, physical, mental and spiritual health" (on a continuum of motivations for disengagement that comprise concerns about surveillance, environmental concerns etc.). In "Disconnect to Reconnect", Theodora Sutton (2017) analyses how technology usage is described in terms of food metaphors. She describes how Danah Boyd equates psychological cravings in the attention economy as the "equivalent of obesity", and quotes Daniel Sieberg who advises us to design our media habits along the lines of healthy food habits using "good foods and mealtimes". Within the same metaphor, Maren Hartmann (2021) describes how she participated in a workshop for a "digital diet" at her employers' workplace. The workshop was part of a health awareness program offered to all employees. The anecdote serves as an illustration of Hartmann's exploration of how corporations introduce digital non-use measures for the sake of their employees' health and a healthy workplace in general. All these examples, according to Hartmann, align with Karppi (et al.) thesis that the needs and desires to disconnect, detox, and log out have been "turned into commodities and found their expressions in detox camps, self-help books, and "offline" branded apparel". In line with this, Moe and Madsen's article "Understanding digital disconnection beyond media studies" (2021) casts light on different actors in this field including health entrepreneurs like Tanya Gooding, who advocate for "Digital Detox", for the sake of mental health.

Productivity

Moe and Madsen identify self-help literature as a primary locus for reflection on the benefits of non-use for the sake of productivity. Outside academia, self-control has emerged as an important theme in this genre of literature, and in best-selling books like "Deep Work" and "Digital Minimalism" e.g. (both written by Cal Newport) (as quoted in Moe & Madsen) advice is given on how to use time-management and productivity tools to achieve ideals of "deep work". In this digital nonacademic literature *deep work* is defined as "Professional activities performed in a state of distraction-free concentration that push your cognitive capabilities to their limit. These efforts create new value, improve your skill, and are hard to replicate". An enemy of deep work are all the distracting elements online and social media a key distraction machine. Countertactics can be the decluttering or the disconnection of digital media. Kuntsman's and Miyake's academic work on "life-coaching" services in self-help literature and off-line (Kuntsman & Miyake, 2019), observes the technological offerings to enhance productivity: "there is now a plenitude of apps for everyday management of technology. Specific settings and timers enable users to control, regulate, manage and monitor their screen time and information overload". In her article, Hartmann also investigates productivity benefits of digital non-use and identifies several corporate manifestations of the productivity endeavor. She describes how private sector companies ask their employees not to use email at certain times as a common example of corporate non-use. Examples include CitiGroup or HSBC, both of which have introduced trials of "Zoom-free Fridays" in the spring of 2021, to alleviate "burnout during the pandemic." Another example of corporate non-use that Hartmann refers to is the "workfulness" concept from Norwegian Telenor. It consists of a series of tips to avoid stress:

> *"Disable pop-up windows and push notifications on the mobile phone and computer; Have technology-free meetings; Introduce muted phones as a standard at the office; [...] Define clear time frames and expectations at the workplace for communication via email, text messages, and phone calls; Introduce focus time, adapted to the personal energy curve [...]".*

Workfulness is about making employees aware of their technology use and reducing it in favor of creativity and productivity.

Systematic guidelines in this respect are not new: they were discussed more widely at the turn of the 21st century and became more common from around 2013. For example, bans on emailing at certain times have had the function of reducing stress caused by too much work outside official working hours. In 2014, Daimler implemented the "Work on Holiday" initiative, which aimed to solve the problem that employees were dreading emails that were waiting for them in the inbox once the holiday was over, i.e., not being able to fully relax on holiday. It introduced the technological solution of deleting emails sent to people on holiday. In Hartman's conversation with Volkswagen, similar initiatives were pointed out, as part of a larger strategy to be an "excellent employer", by creating good conditions for maternity leave, well-being, and thus raising awareness of methods to reduce stress – including local agreements on non-use conditions with one's immediate boss and employees. In the same vein, Carina Guyard and Anne Kaun (Guyard & Kaun, 2018) argue that digital disconnection – although it is an essentially negative act, has positive effects that can help us "make sense of choices that contribute to both the sustenance and the dissolution of social relationships while being based on ideas of self-optimization and maximization of productivity and efficiency." Kuntsman and Miyake point out, that the technological means to reduce digitality are in fact "tools of disciplining a productively laboring subject, one that manages their time effectively, works without distraction and rests well in order to return to an even higher productivity – all with the help of the latest digital solution." So, in the non-use literature and in private sector companies a productivity loss has been identified in relation to media distractions and the benefit of disconnection is said to strengthen the ability to concentrate and access to "deep work"-aptitudes.

Digital disconnection as existential value

Where digital non-use for the sake of productivity aligns well with the demands of the modern workplace and its capitalistic logics, the existential position emphasizes individual freedom that transcends instrumental values. The existential position wants to carve out *rights*: "Opting and missing out here becomes a necessary life-principle for resisting the attention economy that put it's tempting spells on us through the lure of the small screen and Facebook's iconic red push notifications" (Moe & Madsen, 2021). Moe and Madsen describe how existential counter-movements enroll the Greek stoics and forge acronyms like "JOMO" (Joy of Missing Out).

Hartmann points to professor of sociology, Urs Stäheli, as a representative of this position. He argues for the right to de-network, disconnect, and to unfollow (Stäheli, n.d.). Urs Stäheli wants to help us gain a nuanced understanding of when "too much" networking activity is taking place, and where demands to be online are potentially unjustified. Urs Stäheli suggests that individuals should exercise their right to "misbehave", to "miss" the right moment, not to be in the right place at the right time. We must learn to respond, "not fast enough", or respond "too early". The intention is not to step completely out of the digital media environment, but to fall out of rhythm at certain times or in relation to certain tasks. For Stäheli, the point of these exercises is to gain understanding of how fierce the demands to always be online have become; to make us aware of how we as individuals might be losing existential rights to refrain from digital communication.

Maren Hartmann points out that the choice not to communicate – or rather, not to use media, at least temporarily – is a choice that in the past has been granted to subjects in any liberal democracy. Hartmann writes that

> *"Connectivity is framed as a necessity, a precondition for participation in society. It therefore is in the process of becoming a right—but it is also turning into an obligation. At the same time, this question of choice is in the process of increasingly turning into a question of power(lessness)".*

Wanting to protest this situation is described by Natalé and Trére as kind of "disconnective escapism connected to the obsession for rediscovering and experiencing authenticity" (Treré et al., 2020)

Digital disconnection as freedom

This position is aligned with the above-mentioned category and is the most political of the five categories. It has to do with the individual being free to control its attention. Moe and Madsen quote James Williams: "The liberation of human attention may be the defining moral and political struggle of our time (2018)." The success or failure of freeing our attention from digital distractions is a prerequisite for all other struggles in contemporary society is Williams' sweeping postulate. From this position non-use is described in more activist terms: media resistance or media refusal. Media refusal is defined as

> *"a performative mode of resistance, which must be understood within the context of a neoliberal consumer culture, in which subjects are empowered to act through consumption choices—or in this case non-consumption choices—and through the public display of those choices." (Portwood-Stacer, 2012)*

as referenced in Pepita Hesselberth's article. For Natale and Trére this means that the term "digital disconnection" should be understood as a critique of digital capitalism. Referencing Karppi (Karppi, 2018), they equate "active non-participation, and especially deliberate departure" to "resistance and refusal – akin to Facebook suicide as a form of protest.

Digital disconnection as sustainability
From this fifth and last position, digital disconnection is connected to positive action for climate and the environment. Moe and Madsen shed light on the emerging literature concerned with the environmental problems caused by our use of digital technology e.g., the environmental problems with smartphone production, use and disposal (see the "Discussion"-part for more on this topic). Hesselberth also briefly touches upon the prototypical hipster's desire for more sustainable forms (simple) of living, through disconnection. Maren Hartmann mentions sustainability in a corporate sense but doesn't include environmental sustainability in her analysis.

4. Relating digital disconnection studies to educational policy

Are digital disconnection studies relevant to education? In the following we will gauge whether it is relevant to include the insights from non-use studies to expand, nuance and enrich mainstream theory about digital technology in education – as expressed in policy papers. To repeat central points from the former sections: policy perceptions of the value of ICT in education (in Denmark) are remarkably constant in their drive to increase levels of digitization. To the extent that non-use is acknowledged, it is interpreted from predominantly a "digital divide" position, i.e., cast as a negative phenomenon.
In the preceding section we described how volitional non-use is motivated by goals to ameliorate mental and physical health, to increase productivity, to support notions of existential freedom and freedom, and to mitigate problems associated with the climate impact of digital technology. At a first glance, those concerns do not clash with educational interests. Healthy, productive children, who are free to exert existential values, concerned with their ecological future are not in contradiction with the purpose of education. There is no immediate hindrance to develop a framework for local and temporary disconnectivity and non-use in Danish schools. One could argue that disconnectivity and non-use ought to be regarded as a valid strategic parameter in the effort to design and develop future classrooms in accordance with the purpose of the Danish public school system, as explicitly stated in the Danish law.
The purpose clause of the Danish public school is formulated as follows (our translation):

> *§ 1. The primary school, in collaboration with the parents, must provide the students with knowledge and skills that: prepare them for further education and make them want to learn more, make them familiar with Danish culture and history, give them an understanding of other countries and cultures, contribute to their understanding for human interaction with nature and promotes the individual student›s versatile development.*
>
> *§ 2. The primary school must develop working methods and create a framework for experience, immersion, and desire for action, so that the students develop cognition and imagination and gain confidence in their own opportunities and background for taking a stand and acting.*
>
> *§ 3. The primary school must prepare the students for participation, co-responsibility, rights, and duties in a society with freedom and democracy. The work of the school must therefore be characterized by intellectual freedom, equality, and democracy.*

The purpose clause does not mention ICT, but ICT can of course be instrumental in making children want to learn more, to make them familiar with Danish culture and history, give them an understanding of other countries and cultures, contribute to their understanding for human interaction with nature – on the other hand, digital disconnection could support

the same goals, and in some instances maybe even strengthen them.
With the purpose-clause in mind, digital disconnectivity-discussions could inspire reflection on the following points, emphasized words relate to the purpose clause:

- Mental health: Restricting the use of ICT to the extent it does not deteriorate mental and physical health. Disconnecting from ICT if it affects sleep, social well-being, peer pressure etc. especially if these impact on *desires to learn more*.

- Productivity: Considering the productive aspects of analogue reading, writing, group work – a *versatile* education should support online and offline methods of learning.

- Existential values: Considering supporting the right to opt out as an expression of intellectual freedom or as an expression of "taking *a stand and acting*".

- Freedom: Supporting parents' or childrens' rights to disconnect for political purposes, especially if these support *intellectual freedom, equality, and democracy*.

- Sustainability: Considering the environmental impacts of always on, 1:1 models.

5. Discussion & Analysis

In the former section we concluded that disconnective approaches to education are indeed relevant to education. But how would non-use fit into a) the legal framework for Danish public schools or more pertinently into the Danish association of municipalities (Kommunernes Landsforening) and their strategies? They are two of the central documents in Danish policy; they define and direct educational actors nationally – the first setting up the framework for education, the second proposing concrete actions.
Are there obstacles to integrating digital non-use into current political practice? Are there any reasons why non-use concerns shouldn't be included in current policy?
There is no immediate hindrance to develop a framework for local and temporary disconnectivity and digital non-use in Danish schools. One could argue that they could be seen as an important strategic parameter in the effort to design and develop future classrooms in accordance with the purpose as explicitly stated in the Danish law.
Paradoxically, as documented in section 3, some scholars point to the immersive digitization of society and immersive IT as posing a risk to important faculties such as cognition; imagination; intellectual freedom; equality; democracy – some of the exact phenomena and faculties that are the actual purpose of the Danish school. The question is then, shouldn't this be addressed by the actors that determine the strategic path forward for Danish schools pointing to ever more digital use? This is not the case in recent strategies where Danish schools have been guided by 'the joint municipal digitization strategy' published by KL (*Lokal Og Digital – Et Sammenhængende Danmark* – Fælleskommunal Digitaliseringsstrategi 2016-2020, 2016) – according to which the municipalities in the day-care and school sectors should:

- Work to ensure that children's digital education and learning begins early by expanding the use of digital tools in day care

- Ensure that pupils, teachers, educators, and parents experience easy and coherent communication and access to digitally supported learning by implementing the BPI for primary schools

- Provide greater coherence for citizens across the 0-18 age range by extending the BPI to the day-care sector and other relevant areas of the child and youth field

- Ensure that technical hassle does not become a barrier to the digital everyday life of primary schools by continuously adapting schools' IT infrastructure (e.g., wireless networks and internet connectivity) to growing needs

- Maximize pupils' learning and facilitate teachers' and educators' preparation and follow-up by developing and sharing knowledge and experience (best practice) on digital learning

- Enable more flexible use of digital learning materials at attractive prices by developing new business and procurement models for digital learning materials in dialogue with the market

- Ensure cross-use of digital solutions and competences by focusing on cooperation between public libraries and primary schools

It is not clear to us which interests have motivated this strategy. In background documents to the strategy, we find claims such as: "Digital developments mean that schools have more opportunities than before to use digital learning tools, which helps to improve the quality of teaching". And: "One of the most important prerequisites for the success of the digital transformation of primary schools is that wireless networks, internet capacity and other digital infrastructure work well in all schools." Where is the evidence behind such claims and how is the strategy aligned with the purpose as described in the law, one might ask?

In relation to this it can be relevant to point to the coincidence between the economic size of the educational tech sector and its aim to bridge the digital divide. Lucas Cone et al observe that the rise of markets for teaching and learning has turned education into one of the fastest growing markets worldwide: "with recent prophecies suggesting a staggering $10 Trillion education industry in 2030 [...] Investments in European education start-ups grew from 140 million USD in 2014 to 2.5 billion USD in 2021".This tendency has also impacted the Nordic countries and it has been enhanced by Covid19, "Boosted by the Covid-19 pandemic, institutions, municipalities, and governments across the Nordic region have invested heavily in commercially driven infrastructures and services promising to create more diverse, modern, coherent, and data-based educational systems"(Cone & Moos, 2022).

The Edtech sector has a clear for-profit motive that potentially collides with the Danish schools' purposes as described in the law and risk eclipsing potential benefits associated with digital disconnection. This is not mentioned in the political papers either.

Domain specific characteristics

Another question that has emerged, is whether education – as a domain – is particularly immune to digital non-use findings or is less concerned with potential values of digital non-use - in the form of rejecting new technologies, reviving old technologies, disconnecting some aspects of digitization – than other domains, e.g. medicine, engineering, law etc. It could be interesting to carry out a cross-domain comparative analysis of the status of non-use. This might shed light on whether education as a domain is uniquely constituted, especially controlled by digital actors, or described in policy papers by certain professions in a manner that excludes potential benefits of digital non-use.

Corroboration with other health concerns

From the characterization in section 3, it is tempting to draw the conclusion that digital non-use is invented by populist authors, wellness professionals and consultants – but the health concerns related to use of digital devices is backed by health organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO), among others. They recommend limiting the use of screens for children under the age of five. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (Hale et al., 2018) recommends turning off all screens during family meals and outings; turning off screens and removing them from bedrooms 30-60 minutes before bedtime; recommends avoiding screens as pacifiers, babysitters, or to stop tantrums. In March 2022 Jama Psychiatry (Eirich et al., 2022) published a meta-study about the effects of children's screen time and the conclusion across studies is a link between increased screen time in children under 12 and a range of mental health problems, including aggression, attention deficit disorder, depressive symptoms, and anxiety. There is also growing evidence that excessive screen time is contributing to rising rates of myopia in children (Wong et al., 2021).

Digital Disconnection vs surveillance capitalism

In the article "Big other - Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilization" (Zuboff, 2015) and "The Age of Surveillance Capitalism" (Zuboff, 2019)

Shoshana Zuboff identifies at least one defining factor in the difference between 'old' media formats formerly used in schools and the 'new' media formats. It is the defining business model – and she calls it surveillance capitalism. This is what bids digital technology into action. Surveillance capitalism is according to Zuboff a power so strong that it interferes with the self-other balance in profound psychological ways. Because of this, Zuboff claims, we need sanctuaries of disconnected time and space: "the crucial developmental challenges of the self-other balance cannot be negotiated adequately without the sanctity of 'disconnected' time and space for the ripening of inward awareness and the possibility of reflexity: reflexion on and by oneself" (Zuboff, 2019, 479). Zuboff writes that even in ancient societies where tyranny prevailed there was a right to sanctuary as an exit from the totalizing power. And the premise of surveillance capitalism is thus understood as an encompassing totalizing power ('instrumentarian power' in her words) threatening to destroy humanity. Digital disconnection as existential value is thus not just about a mere feeling of loss of meaning that digital non-use can mend by connecting to a more authentic self. Seen through the lens of Zuboff it is also about resistance against a power that fundamentally wants to strip us from our humanity.

Digital Disconnection vs sustainability

The impact of digital technology use on sustainability and climate issues seems to be gaining momentum: Streaming, online gaming and social media and other internet services account for about 9% of the world's electricity consumption, equivalent to about 2% of man-made CO2 emissions. This is as much as the fuel consumed by all the world's air traffic. Watching two hours of Netflix every day of the year would emit the equivalent of flying 384 kilometers in an airplane, eating 6 kilograms of beef, or driving just under 1,000 kilometers in a new car – all according to Torsten Hasforth, Senior Economist, in the Danish organization, Danish Energy (Hasforth, 2018). In this sense, non-use could contribute to positive climate action. So, if the use of digital technology contributes to the climate crisis, then the benefit of digital non-use is contribution to positive climate actions. This aligns with Neil Selwyn's claim that:

> *"The next 30 years will be a period when we will be forced to confront the imperative to establish sustainability and ecological responsibility as central elements of educational provision and practice. One key aspect of this will be facing up fully to the ways in which digital technologies have been excessively consumed and discarded over the past 30 years in the name of educational 'innovation'."*
>
> (Selwyn, 2021)

6. Conclusion

In this paper we have attempted to apply findings in recent digital non-use research to the field of digital education. We made the argument that the political project to increase digital use has been remarkably stable for over 50 years. We also made the argument that discussions about the problems that screens, ICT, social media etc. have created for children and students are still relatively absent from Danish policy documents. Despite a lack of evidence of positive outcomes of ICT, the political project is still to increase use, and to bridge the digital divide, i.e., supplying the" not-haves" or the "not-want-to" with technology so that they can be included in the "digital society". This means that digital non-use in policy papers is either described as something that should be fixed/bridged – or that it is simply not described at all. In our chapter on digital disconnection studies, it became clear that different actors pursue (voluntary) disconnection, motivated by positive values: productivity, environmental concerns etc. We then reflected on the potential value of digital non-use for education and made the point that the themes raised by non-use researchers are salient to education.

In the discussion, we asked whether there were any systemic impediments to applying digital non-use principles in education, increased our scope, and it seemed that in many instances non-use could in fact support the intentions of Danish legislation. Finally, we made perspectives to current debates about surveillance capitalism, sustainability and we wondered whether policy papers about education as a domain are especially resistant to reflection on the potential value of digital disconnection, non-use, digital minimalism, digital detoxing, unplugging etc.

Methodological conclusions

First, our adoption of Moe and Madsen's framework has been helpful in raising important points. Ideally it would need to be refined and expanded to address the realities of education. It is obvious that digital disconnection for the sake of increased productivity and a better mental health deserve to be analyzed in educational settings. The fuzzy area that Moe and Madsen spotlight, is how the freedom to be analogue, and political resistance to Silicon Valley monopolies should be formalized in educational frameworks.

Secondly, as described in the section about choice of methodology, we hopefully made it clear that document analysis as a method of hermeneutic inquiry can say something about recurrent themes, points of view, attitudes in *documents*. It is a method that leaves the object of study unaffected by the research process. Documents are unobtrusive and non-reactive, and they are stable – the investigator's presence does not alter what is being studied. (Bowen, 2009). But as a method it says very little about messy practices in local contexts. Our method describes political institutions and their intentions as uniform, unidirectional, nearly activistic. This might give the impression that digital non-use in practice is non-existent. But the fact that political institutions advocate for a situation, does not cause reality to be so, and studies like ours should be corroborated by ethnographic observation: just because political institutions provide the means to use digital technology, doesn't mean that technology is being used – it might just as well gather dust in cupboards. Just like people at digital detox camps might be using devices secretly, hidden in a cupboard at the ashram…

One methodological weakness is the size of our corpus 1. We found less digital non-use interpretation than expected. Experience tells us that the historical account could be strengthened by enlarging the corpus. It would provide a wider array of policy-interpretations to explain why some actors deselect technology – and some of them would probably acknowledge the positive aspects of non-use and would perhaps nuance the picture of authors who blame the lack of progress and the lack of evidence on teachers who resist technology or similar reductionist or pejorative discussions.

References

Ames, M. G. (2019). OLPC's Charismatic Roots: Constructionism, MIT's Hacker Culture And the Technically Precocious boy. In *The Charisma Machine*. MIT Press.

An introduction to connective knowledge. (2005).

Ball, S. J. (2012). *Global Education Inc.* Routledge.

Balslev, J. (2020). *Evidence of a potential. The political arguments for digitizing education 1983-2015*. Roskilde Universite.

Beland, L.-P., & Murphy, R. (2015). *Communication: Technology, Distraction & Student Performance. 1350.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2016.04.004

Bowen, G. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *J Qual Res*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027

Bulman, G., & Fairlie, R. W. (2016). Technology and Education: Computers, Software, and the Internet. In *Handbook of the Economics of Education*. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-444-63459-7.00005-1

Cone, L., & Moos, L. (2022). Introduction: mapping commercial interests and imaginaries in Nordic education. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, *8*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2022.2045164

Cuban, L. (2003). *Oversold and underused - computers in the classroom*. Harvard University Press.

Eirich, R., McArthur, B. A., Anhorn, C., McGuinness, C., Christakis, D. A., & Madigan, S. (2022). Association of Screen Time With Internalizing and Externalizing Behavior Problems in Children 12 Years or Younger: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *JAMA Psychiatry*, *79*(5), 393–405. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.0155

Forskningsministeriet. (1994). *Info-samfundet år 2000.*

Ghita, C. (2022). *Technology in Absentia – A New Materialist Study of Digital Disengagement* [Uppsala University]. http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-473448
Godin, B. (2020). *The Idea of Technological Innovation*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
Guyard, C., & Kaun, A. (2018). Workfulness: governing the disobedient brain. *Journal of Cultural Economy*, *11*(6), 535–548. https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2018.1481877
Hale, L., Kirschen, G. W., LeBourgeois, M. K., Gradisar, M., Garrison, M. M., Montgomery-Downs, H., Kirschen, H., McHale, S. M., Chang, A. M., & Buxton, O. M. (2018). Youth Screen Media Habits and Sleep: Sleep-Friendly Screen Behavior Recommendations for Clinicians, Educators, and Parents. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, *27*(2), 229–245. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2017.11.014
Hartmann, M. (2021). "Install Freedom Now!" Choosing Not to Communicate with Digital Media at Work and Home. *Javnost - The Public*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2021.1889831
Hasforth, T. (2018). *Streaming af film er en overset synder*. Politiken.
Hesselberth, P. (2018). Discourses on disconnectivity and the right to disconnect. *New Media and Society*, *20*(5), 1994–2010. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817711449
Karppi, T. (2018). *Disconnect: Facebook's affective bonds*. University of Minnesota Press.
Kaun, A. (2021). Ways of seeing digital disconnection: A negative sociology of digital culture. *Convergence*, *0*(0), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565211045535
KL / Implement. (2017). *Anvendelse af digitale redskaber i dagtilbud*.
Lokal og digital – Et sammenhængende Danmark – Fælleskommunal Digitaliseringsstrategi 2016-2020. (2016). https://www.kl.dk/media/10582/lokal-og-digital-et-sammenhaengende-danmark.pdf
Miyake, A. K. E. (2019). The Paradox and Continuum of Digital Disengagement : Denaturalising Digital Sociality and Technological Connection. *Media, Culture and Society*, *41*(6), 901–913.
Moe, H., & Madsen, O. J. (2021). Understanding digital disconnection beyond media studies. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, *0*(0), 135485652110489. https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565211048969
Nelson, M. (2017). *Policy Paper*. Political Science Guide. https://politicalscienceguide.com/home/policy-paper/
OECD. (2015). *Students, Computers and Learning*. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264239555-en
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2020). ICT resources in school education: What do we know from OECD work? *European University Institute*, *2*, 2–5. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016R0679&-from=PT%0Ahttp://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52012P-C0011:pt:NOT
Portwood-Stacer, L. (2012). Media refusal and conspicuous non-consumption: The performative and political dimensions of Facebook abstention. *New Media & Society*, *15*(7), 1041–1057. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812465139
Qvortrup, L. (1983). *Statusrapport – de nye teknologiers anvendelse i undervisning og uddannelse i danmark*.
Rambøll. (2014). *Anvendelse Af Digitale Lærermidler* (Issue September).
Rambøll. (2018). *Indsatsen for IT i folkeskolen - Evaluering*. https://uvm.dk/folkeskolen/laering-og-laeringsmiljoe/it-i-undervisningen/it-i-folkeskolen
Regeringen. (2003). *IT i folkeskolen*.
Regeringen. (2011). *En digital folkeskole* (Issue august).
Selwyn, N. (2010). Does technology improve learning? *Education and Technology: Key Issues and Debates*, *1997*, 64–91. https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9781441108890
Selwyn, N. (2011). *Education and technology*. Bloomsbury.
Selwyn, N. (2021). *(Re) imagining the futures of lifelong learning: Some sociotechnical tensions*. 1–11. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377821
Selwyn, N., & Facer, K. (2013). *The Politics of education and technology* (N. Selwyn & K. Facer (Eds.); 1st ed.). Palgrave Macmillan. http://rub.ruc.dk/soeg/kviksoeg/?query=EBL1431312

Sims, C. (2017). *Disruptive Fixation*. Princeton University Press.
Snabe, J. H. (2021). *Visioner og anbefalinger til Danmark som digitalt foregangsland*.
Spitzer, M. (2018). *Digital Demens*. Fokal.
Stäheli, U. (n.d.). Aus Dem Rhythmus Fallen. Zur Öffentlichen Entnetzung. In A. Nassehi (Ed.), *Kursbuch 177. Privat 2.0*. (66–77).
Sutton, T. (2017). Disconnect to reconnect: The food/technology metaphor in digital detoxing. *First Monday*, *22*(6), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v22i6.7561
Togo, F. (2019). *Development of digitalization in the schools - insights from Denmark*.
Treré, E., Natale, S., Keightley, E., & Punathambekar, A. (2020). The limits and boundaries of digital disconnection. *Media, Culture and Society*, *42*(4), 605–609. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720922054
Vuorikari, R., Kluzer, S., & Punie, Y. (2022). *DigComp 2.2. The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens. With new examples of knowledge, skills and attitudes*. https://doi.org/10.2760/115376
Wacks, Y., & Weinstein, A. M. (2021). Excessive Smartphone Use Is Associated With Health Problems in Adolescents and Young Adults. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *12*(February), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2021.669042
Watters, A. (2021). *Teaching Machines*. MIT Press.
Williams, J. (2018). *Stand Out of Our Light: Freedom and Resistance in the Attention Economy*. Cambridge University Press.
Williamson, B. (2017). *Big data in education*. Sage Publications.
Wolf, M. (2019). *Reader, come home*. Harper.
Wong, C. W., Tsai, A., Jonas, J. B., Ohno-Matsui, K., Chen, J., Ang, M., & Ting, D. S. W. (2021). Digital Screen Time During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Risk for a Further Myopia Boom? *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, *223*, 333–337. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajo.2020.07.034
Zuboff, S. (2015). Big other: surveillance capitalism and the prospects of an information civilization. *Journal of Information Technology*, *30*(1), 75–89. https://doi.org/10.1057/jit.2015.5
Zuboff, S. (2019). *Surveillance Capitalism*. Profile books.

Jesper Balslev,
Ph.D., research consultant at the Copenhagen School of Design and Technology. Research interests: digital disconnection studies, philosophy of technology and global educational policy.

Mie Oehlenschläger,
Independent researcher. Member of the Danish Ethical Council and the Danish expert group on Big Tech. Part time Lecturer. Research interests: Tech, AI, ethics and public policy.

Rezensionen

Simon Ganahl (2022).

Campus Medius.

Digitales Kartografieren in den Kultur- und Medienwissenschaften.
Bielefeld: transcript Verlag. 356 Seiten.

Auf 360 Seiten breitet der Literatur- und Medienwissenschaftler Simon Ganahl sein Internet-Projekt „Campus Medius" aus, das, wie er schreibt, „die Möglichkeiten der digitalen Kartografie in den Kultur- und Medienwissenschaften" erweitern soll. Tatsächlich eröffnet die digitale Form der Geschichtsforschung neue Dimensionen wie Multimedialität der Darstellung und Multiperspektivität auf den Gegenstand. Genau das steht im Fokus von Ganahls Projekt – eine neue, die strenge und sehr einschränkende Linearität des schriftlichen, gedruckten Texts hinter sich lassende Form zu finden. Es soll eine Form sein, die verschiedene relevante Facetten eines Gegenstands erfasst und für ein In-Beziehung-Setzen darbietet. Nicht zuletzt geht es dabei auch um die Möglichkeit, die Darstellung jederzeit aktualisieren und dadurch dynamisch weiterentwickeln zu können. Alles Vorzüge der digitalen Form, Vorzüge, die klassische Texte nicht bieten können. Geschichtsschreibung 2.0.

Was bringt die fortschreitende Digitalisierung von Quellen, „wenn sie nicht sinnvoll verknüpft werden" (28), fragt Ganahl zurecht. Um die Potenziale der Digitalisierung für die Geschichtsforschung fruchtbar zu machen, konzipiert er einen Ansatz einer digitalen Plattform, die er exemplarisch bespielt. Er verwendet dazu ein bedeutendes historisches Ereignis, nämlich die so genannte „Türkenbefreiungsfeier", veranstaltet von der Regierung Dollfuß am 14. Mai 1933 in Wien. Unter dem Titel „Topografie" (55-96) versammelt er auf einem animierten Stadtplan, durch Icons repräsentiert, verschiedene Schauplätze des untersuchten Ereignisses; es sind Örtlichkeiten wie das Flugfeld Aspern oder der Schlosspark Schönbrunn. Die „Topologie" versammelt Personen wie den Heimwehrführer Ernst Rüdiger (von) Starhemberg, Themen wie den protokollarischen Inszenierungsraum des Schönbrunner Schlosses, aber auch Medienapparate wie die Wochenschaukamera Bell & Howell, mit der das Ereignis gefilmt wurde. Ganahl leitet zahlreiche derartige Themenfacetten kulturhistorisch her und richtet sie am Tableau seines Stadtplans nebeneinander an. Das Tableau lädt ein, sich durch die historische Landschaft zu bewegen und dabei Themenfacetten aufzusuchen und die zwischen ihnen bestehenden Zusammenhänge zu erkennen. Dahinter steht die Annahme, dass die bestehenden Beziehungen aus sich heraus sichtbar werden.

Basierend auf theoretischen Fundamenten wie Foucaults Dispositiv und Latours Akteur-Netzwerk (9), formt Ganahl einen integrativen Forschungsansatz. Dieser baut darauf auf, dass die Interdependenz der Akteure, Artefakte und Institutionen zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt an einem bestimmten Ort den Charakter eines Ereignisses ausmachen. Eine Annahme, die zweifellos stimmt, die aber in der Wissenschaftspraxis oft an der Unmöglichkeit einer adäquaten Bearbeitung und Darstellung scheitert. Die schriftdominierte Historiografie sieht sich bislang weitgehend auf den (wenn auch illustrierten) Text als Mittel der Erkenntnisvermittlung reduziert, mit all seinen Einschränkungen. Der Text folgt einer Linie, einer Argumentationslinie; zwar können mehrere Linien nebeneinandergestellt und in Beziehung zueinander gesetzt werden, doch lässt sich ein Gegenstand, der aus einer Vielzahl von Facetten besteht, die alle miteinander in Beziehung stehen, in der vollen Komplexität textlich kaum fassen. Genau das aber schwebt Ganahl mit seinem digitalen Projekt vor.

Gerade weil es so schwierig ist, zur selben Zeit unterschiedlichste Facetten eines Gegenstands in ihren Wechselwirkungen zu rekonstruieren und zu präsentieren, gehört es zum unbestreitbaren Verdienst dieses Ansatzes, dem historischen Gegenstand seine Multidimensionalität zuzugestehen, ihn nicht auf eindimensionale Perspektiven zu reduzieren. So wird das von der Dollfuß-Regierung und der Heimwehrbewegung veranstaltete Großereignis in Beziehung gesetzt zum Ort Schönbrunn, an dem es stattfindet, aber auch zu den Massenmedien, die es auf einer Inszenierungsebene zweiter Ordnung ein weiteres Mal dramatisieren und in dieser Form ins öffentliche Bewusstsein transportieren, aber auch zu Phänomenen, die auf den ersten Blick als nicht damit in Zusammenhang stehend erscheinen. Bezeichnend dafür ist die Hymnendebatte, im Zuge derer Ganahl einen Diskurs rund um die verschiedenen Hymnentexte führt, die zu dieser Zeit zur gleichen Melodie – der berühmten Melodie von Haydn – gesungen werden. Hinter dem Kuriosum, dass erbitterte ideologische Gegner wie Monarchisten, Nationalsozialisten und Christlichsoziale zur selben Melodie verschiedene Texte singen, steckt die Realität einer tief gespaltenen Gesellschaft, die sich ihrer Identität nicht mehr sicher ist.

Zum Thema Kino kommt Ganahl unter anderem auf die russischen Filme *Panzerkreuzer Potemkin* und *Turksib* zu sprechen, die an diesem 14. Mai 1933 in Wiener Kinos gezeigt wurden. Das aktuelle Kinoprogramm zählt zum Hintergrundgeschehen des untersuchten Ereignisses und bildet doch ein wesentliches Element. Es sind Filme, die in ihren Geschichten die Revolution, die in der sowjetischen Gesellschaft stattfindet, stilisieren, und als Vehikel der Filmpropaganda auch aus ihr resultieren. Sie sind gedacht als Aufrufe an das internationale Proletariat, sich zu vereinigen und die alte Ordnung zu stürzen. Die bolschewistische Revolution repräsentiert deshalb auch das große Feindbild der austrofaschistischen Ideologie, die ihren kalten Putsch gegen die Republik mit der drohenden revolutionären „Gefahr" begründet. Eben diese Gefahr will sie durch ihre Massenmobilisierung bekämpfen, um ihre Machtposition gegen die radikalisierte Arbeiterschaft zu zementieren. Dagegen setzt sie unter anderem faschistoid anmutende Wochenschaubilder von der „Türkenbefreiungsfeier" in Wien, wie sie auf Ganahls Tableau erscheinen.

Die angeführten Beispiele machen deutlich, dass es in allen Gegenstandsfacetten einer maximal intensiven Herausarbeitung der im Dispositiv angelegten Beziehungen bedarf, damit der Ansatz funktioniert und die Beziehungen zwischen den einzelnen Facetten erkannt werden können. Das ist ein überaus ambitioniertes Vorhaben. Um Einschränkungen wie die lineare Abfolge in der Darstellung, wie sie gedruckte Buchversionen aufweisen, zu überwinden, müssten wohl Bestrebungen in Richtung Hypertext gesetzt werden, die multimediale Perspektivität ermöglichen, wobei Projekte wie die Online-Enzyklopädie Wikipedia deutlich auch die Grenzen der digitalen Form aufzeigen: die stetig fortschreitende Fragmentierung eines Gegenstands. Im Zuge fortgesetzter Überarbeitung eines Artikels wird immer wieder eine Gegenstandsfacette herausgehoben und zum eigenen Artikel gemacht. Am Ende steht eine vielfach verlinkte, aus zahlreichen spezialisierten Artikeln bestehende Enzyklopädie, in der die übergeordnete Kontextualisierung mehr und mehr verlorengeht. Ganahls digitales Projekt will genau das Gegenteil bewirken, will zahlreiche Fragmente zusammentragen, um Kontext herzustellen.

Zweifellos weist das Projekt den Weg, der im neuen historiografischen Zeitalter (auch) zu gehen sein wird. Vor allem die Unmengen an digitalen Kulturerbe-Daten, die bereits entstanden sind und in Zukunft in noch umfassenderer Form entstehen werden, lassen es zwingend erscheinen, digitale Ansätze zu entwickeln, die helfen, die Datenflut zu bändigen und den Blick je nach Fragestellung auf die wesentlichen Daten zu reduzieren. Es wird sich erweisen, ob dadurch ein deutlicher Zugewinn an Forschungsqualität, ja ein neuer digitaler Forschungsprozess resultiert, der aus sich heraus neue Erkenntnisdynamik generiert, oder nur eine multimedial aufbereitete, historische Enzyklopädie.

Lineare Texte – ob auf Papier oder digital – wird es aber in jedem Fall weiterhin geben müssen, will man die sinngeleitete Ausformulierung und Kontextualisierung eines Gegenstands und vor allem die Schlussfolgerungen nicht Künstlicher Intelligenz überlassen, die letzten Endes immer nur bestehende Muster zu reproduzieren erlaubt. Erkenntnisfortschritt würde unter diesen Umständen grundsätzlich schwierig, wenn nicht fragwürdig. In dieser Hinsicht könnte man es als Defizit von Ganahls Buchversion ansehen, dass sie nicht die Gelegenheit genutzt hat, ein kompaktes Resümee über die präsentierten Themenfacetten zu ziehen, das über die Texte auf der digitalen Plattform hinausweist. Vielleicht zeichnet sich darin eine künftige kombinierte Vorgansweisen ab: eine digitale Plattform, die die thematische Segmentierung großer Datenbestände erfüllt, und eine linear formulierte Begleitpublikation, die die aktuelle Forschungsfrage beantwortet?

Formal bleibt anzumerken, dass der Text trotz der mitunter recht komplexen Materie ausgesprochen verständlich formuliert ist, dabei hohe fachliche Kompetenz und sprachliche Meisterschaft ausstrahlt. Ein wenig aufgesetzt wirkt dabei das Gendering, obgleich sich Ganahl zur Entlastung des Textes ohnehin schon einer Mischform bedient, zwischen der Nennung beider Geschlechter und der Verwendung des Binnen-I wechselt. Bei allem Verständnis für die Sache muss man anmerken, dass beide Varianten problematisch sind. Konsequent durchgehaltene Doppelnennung bedeutet das generische Maskulinum unbrauchbar zu machen, weil seine verallgemeinernde Qualität untergraben wird. Dadurch geht sprachliche Differenzierungsmöglichkeit verloren. Nicht weniger problematisch ist das Binnen-I. Auch hier führt der Hang zum Dogmatismus zu inhaltlicher Unschärfe. Ganahls Formulierung „RadiobastlerInnen" (312) suggeriert die Existenz weiblicher Radiobastler, die es zu dieser Zeit, wenn überhaupt, wohl höchstens als Ausnahmen der Regel gegeben hat. Gerade dann aber wären sie besonders hervorzuheben und nicht sprachlich zu neutralisieren. Das Gendern hat hier keinen aufklärenden, sondern, im Gegenteil, einen verschleiernden Effekt. Es baut mit am Mythos, dass Männer und Frauen im historischen Prozess immer gleichermaßen beteiligt gewesen seien – was in vielen Fällen eben nicht der Fall ist und deshalb besonders betont werden sollte. Gänzlich unpassend erscheint das Binnen-I beim Begriff „BleckerInnen" (243), um der Geschlechtlichkeit von steinernen Wasserspeiern an Fassaden gerecht zu werden. Diese Kritik gilt wohl vor allem dem Verlag, der dieserart politische Korrektheit einfordert, und an einen Zeitgeist, der sich leider von wissenschaftlicher Sachlichkeit ab- und dem politischen Aktionismus zugewendet hat. Die Folgen sind neben Unschärfen im sprachlichen Ausdruck vor allem die Verhinderung echter qualitativer Entwicklung der Sprache. In Bezug auf Letzteres existiert ein weites Spektrum an Möglichkeiten – von einer Erweiterung des aktiven Wortschatzes an nichtgeschlechtlichen Begriffen, die gegenderte Texte ein Stück weit von ihrer Zwanghaftigkeit befreien und auch deutlich mehr Aussagequalität bieten würden, bis zur Forderung an die Forschung, bei der Identifizierung von Akteuren im historischen Prozess einfach immer zu verifizieren, ob und in welchem Umfang es sich um Männer und/oder Frauen gehandelt hat. Dann wird jede neutralisierende Formulierung obsolet. Es geht darum, Gendering zu einer echten Qualität des Forschungsansatzes zu machen, anstatt es auf oberflächliche Symbolik an der Sprachsyntax zu reduzieren. Es geht weniger um Geschlechtsneutralität als um Geschlechtssensibilität.

Wolfgang Pensold, Wien

medien & zeit
Kommunikation in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart
1/2023

Verein: Arbeitskreis für historische Kommunikationsforschung
(AHK)
Währinger Straße 29, 1090 Wien
redaktion@medienundzeit.at
https://medienundzeit.at