

In the Borderline of the Traditional and Social Media

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The goal of the project is to study the views of the public (both as users and readers/viewers) towards the web contents and services created in the social media and the traditional media. Traditional media means journalistic web services whose contents are produced mainly by professionals and whose users can be best described as consumers. By contrast, social media represent such web services whose form and contents are produced for a major part by the users.

The study focuses on trust and the motives of use in both traditional media and social media. The ultimate goal is to elucidate the relationship between the future of (mass) media and the model of social media. Research questions in this comparative combination are: How are traditional and social media consumed? What motivates people to use traditional and social media and what motivates users to generate content? How do people trust traditional and social media web-services?

There are many empirical data in the study. Qualitative data is collected by interviewing ten web-actives. Main data is a broad survey (1065 respondents), which represents Finnish web-users quite well. There is also a weblog survey in the study.

The main motives to use traditional media are reliability, quickness and familiarity. The most important reasons to use social media relate to social interaction. These motives reveal that traditional media web-services are expected to produce news fast and reliably. On the other hand, in social media conversation and social interaction are more important.

About half of the respondents (526) have produced content on the web, for example discussion, blogs, pictures or videos. On the basis of the analysis, there are three motives to produce content: (1) Development of web-ideology and self: People want to accompany the development of the internet and also want to learn her or himself. (2) Self-expression: People, especially young people, want to act independently and freely on the web and tell about their lives. (3) Social interaction and content sharing: people want to swap opinions, compare notes and share all kinds of content.

Survey clearly highlights that trust towards traditional media is very strong. The young people trust most of all Finnish traditional media web-services. Trust to the traditional media is also a very evident factor in the other part of the study. The Most important trust factor is the traditional media and the second is content.

The research concludes that the traditional media on the web has a strong position. The social media is based on social interaction. Traditional and social media are like companions, that operate on separate levels and have different functions in the users' lives.