

PRAAGUE MEDIA POINT

December 1, 2023

Goethe Institut, Prague, Czechia

**WHAT'S WORKING:
SUSTAINABLE MEDIA SYSTEM
FOR A VIABLE DEMOCRACY**

The conference is organized by



The project is co-financed by the Governments of Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia through Visegrad Grants from International Visegrad Fund. The mission of the fund is to advance ideas for sustainable regional cooperation in Central Europe.

This conference has been financially supported also by the Czech-German Future Fund (Česko-německý fond budoucnosti), Prague Civil Society Center, Embassy of Sweden in Prague and OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

This program is as of November 30, 2023 and may be subject to change.

By participating in this conference, you agree to being photographed and/or captured on the video. Such materials will only be used for the conference and promotion purposes.

We encourage you to promote your participation at the conference via your dedicated social media. When referencing Prague Media Point, kindly use the following:

Twitter: @MediaPrague

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#whatsworking

Program as of November 29, 2023

All conference events will be held in English.

Friday, December 01, 2023

09:00 - 09:15 **Opening** (Goethe-Institut, Conference Room)

WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Welcome:

Alice Němcová Tejkalová, Charles University, Head of the Department of Journalism/Prague Media Point Steering Committee Member, Czechia

Opening remarks:

Maja Sever, European Federation of Journalists, President, Croatia

09:15 - 10:30 **Panel Discussion** (Goethe-Institut, Conference Room)

THE DEVELOPING FRAMEWORK OF MEDIA REGULATION IN EUROPE

In cooperation with Prague Civil Society Center

As the digital landscape continues to reshape the way we consume and disseminate information, European countries have been adapting their regulatory frameworks to maintain a balance between preserving freedom of expression, ensuring media diversity, and safeguarding against misinformation and hate speech. What have been the main focal points of the discussions about EMFA on the European and national level? Which areas attract the greatest discord? Is there realistically a one-size-fits-all framework that can effectively enhance the media safeguards in Europe, notwithstanding the region? How can we make the changes most effective?

Moderator:

Dominika Bychawska-Siniarska, Prague Civil Society Center, Senior Advisor, Central Europe Programme, Poland

Speakers:

Tadeusz Kowalski, Broadcasting Council/Warsaw University, Member/Ass. Professor, Poland

Lucie Sýkorová, European Centre for Press & Media Freedom, Supervisory Board Chair, Czechia

Maja Sever, European Federation of Journalists, President, Croatia

Theresa Josephine Seipp, University of Amsterdam, Researcher at AI, Media, and Democracy Lab, Germany/Netherlands

10:35 - 11:45 **Presentation** (Goethe-Institut, Foyer)

DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Moderator:

Alice Němcová Tejkalová, Charles University, Head of the Department of Journalism/Prague Media Point Steering Committee Member, Czechia

Engaging with the Audience, Considering Engaged Journalism: an Analysis of the Twitch live-streaming of the 2022 French Presidential TV Debate

Nina Barbaroux-Pagonis, École de journalisme et de communication d'Aix-Marseille, PhD Candidate, France

This research analyses the modalities of audience participation on Twitch, a platform that allows journalists to interact with viewers during streams. To measure audience participation, a major political event that is likely to divide viewers' opinions was chosen, namely the televised debate between the two French presidential candidates during the recent elections. Three different Twitch channels streamed and commented live on this debate. How do these three streamers manage to connect with young audiences at a time when they are generally uninterested in current news? And how can Twitch be an interesting new place to renew the dialogue between journalists and citizens?

Media-Political Dynamics in Egypt: Unveiling the Role of Social Media Before and After the 2011 Revolution

Hamza Saad, Zayed University, Associate Professor, U. A. E.

This study investigates the transformative Egyptian media landscape that shaped and reflected the equally transformative political landscape that led to Egypt's historical revolution. It analyzes media systems and development in Egypt in relationship to the changing political systems. How have these changes affected the news media landscape? What challenges do they present to the new and established media and to the government?

Tech Company Algorithms Changing Serbia's Media for Worse

Tanja Maksić, BIRN, Programme Coordinator, Serbia

This research focuses on the media system of Serbia and its capacity to adapt to the digital and platform environment. In countries with low levels of democracy and constant backsliding in the media freedoms, online platforms are often described as information spaces that can bypass the limitations of traditional media and direct government control or censorship practices. Our research argues that, in spite of initial "techno-positivism", the digital environment which is managed by a small number of global tech companies, is a source of various negative phenomena in the Serbian media landscape. As the media are in constant struggle for economic sustainability, the quality of public information is declining.

10:35 - 11:45

Presentation (Goethe-Institut, Lecture Room)

FORMAT DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUNG AUDIENCE CONTENT

In cooperation with Czech-German Future Fund

In this session, the presenter will talk you through a design sprint process employed at the ENTR, a pan-European youth-oriented project. It will be followed by a short, interactive version of such design and content creation through collaboration. Participants will learn about the method and improve their ability to create stories from (collective) ideas.

Speaker:

Lukas Hansen, Deutsche Welle, ENTR Editorial Lead, Germany

10:35 - 11:45

Panel Discussion (Goethe-Institut, Conference Room)

IMPACT OF PROPAGANDA ON DISINFORMATION SCENE IN CENTRAL EUROPE AND THE WESTERN BALKANS

In cooperation with the International Visegrad Fund

This panel aims to shed light on the multifaceted challenges posed by these phenomena and foster a deeper understanding of the strategies needed to combat the manipulation of information in these regions. How can we better face misinformation vis-a-vis the environment of war and polarizing elections? How to enhance the efficacy of journalism and adapt the work of media with regards to tackling these disruptive influences?

Moderator:

Jeremy Bransten, RFE/RL, Regional Director for Eastern Europe, USA/Czechia

Speakers:

Lutfi Dervishi, Investigative Journalism Lab, Trainer, Albania

Tomáš Kriššák, Gerulata Technologies, Senior Stratcom Consultant, Slovakia

Blanka Zöldi, Lakmusz, Editor-in-chief, Hungary

11:45 - 12:00

Other (Goethe-Institut, Foyer)

SMALL COFFEE BREAK

12:00 - 13:15

Panel Discussion (Goethe-Institut, Conference Room)

EXAMPLES OF REPLICABLE AND IMPACTFUL INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN THE V4 AND WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

In cooperation with the International Visegrad Fund

Presentation of successful investigative, cross-border or cross-sectoral journalism projects with special focus on uncovering corruption, kleptocratic networks and organized crime in CEE and WB. What are the benefits and challenges of this growing trend in investigations? Should it be promoted more and should we perhaps aim for an increasingly more structural cooperation, or does it interfere with independence too much?

Moderator:

Anna Gielewska, Fundacja Reporterow/VSquare.org, Deputy Director/Head, Poland

Speakers:

Bojana Jovanović, KRIK, Deputy Editor, Serbia

Jovo Martinović, Lupa, Director, Montenegro

Márton Sarkadi Nagy, Freelance/RFE Hungary, Investigative Reporter, Hungary

Tomáš Madleňák, Investigatívne centrum Jána Kuciaka, Investigative Reporter, Slovakia

12:00 - 13:15

Presentation (Goethe-Institut, Lecture Room)

MEDIA DIGITALIZATION AND OTHER BUSINESS ISSUES

Moderator:

Graham Griffith, Center for the Study of Democracy, Senior Fellow/Prague Media Point Steering Committee Member, USA

From Print-first to Digital: The Bold Transformation of a Monthly Magazine Reportér to Win Over Digital Readers

Martina Klárová, FatChilli for Publishers, Research & Development Manager, Slovakia

Robert Čásenský, Reportér Magazin, Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Czechia

The rapid technological changes in the digital era have disrupted traditional journalism, creating new opportunities and challenges for media organizations. This session proposal presents the case of Reporter Magazin, a leading Czech monthly magazine that underwent a comprehensive digital transformation with the help of FatChilli for Publishers. Our collaboration has led to significant enhancements in the reader experience, website functionality, visual identity, and monetization strategy. This session will explore the process, outcomes, and lessons learned from the project, providing valuable insights for other media organizations seeking to navigate the digital landscape.

Lessons from TommieMedia: An AI-Digital University Newsroom Pioneer

Mark Neužil, University of St. Thomas, Professor of Journalism, USA

TommieMedia is a student-run multi-award-winning website that features text stories, video packages, daily news updates, advertisements, photo slide shows, information graphics and links to the campus radio station and elsewhere. It was the first college member of the Associated Press to convert to an all-online format in the United States. The presentation will cover the history of journalism at St. Thomas University, the early development of TommieMedia, the standards and practices of the website, trends in audience use and interaction over time, successes and failures in social media efforts, the current structure of TommieMedia, and longer-term plans.

Fighting Disinformation Effectively: Shared Experiences from Business

Jindřich Oukropec, Charles University, PhD Candidate, Czechia

The proliferation of disinformation has become a growing concern in today's society, as it can significantly impact public perception and behaviour. Commercial companies are not immune to this phenomenon, as they often find themselves the targets of false information that could damage their reputation. In response, companies have developed various strategies to combat disinformation and preserve their image. This presentation discusses the effective communication tactics used by companies' brands in debunking disinformation that damages their reputation.

13:15 - 14:15

Networking Lunch (Goethe-Institut, Foyer)

LUNCH

14:10 - 15:15

Panel Discussion (Goethe-Institut, Lecture Room)

A PUBLIC INTEREST FRAMEWORK – TOWARDS A HEALTHY ONLINE INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM

In cooperation with OSCE RFoM

While journalists were traditionally known to be the most important editors of public interest information, nowadays they share this position with a growing number of other actors in the media and information space. Large online platforms have become a dominant source for news consumption, and they undertake many functions of information management that was previously carried out by more traditional media actors, such as editors and publishers. Their content governance

processes therefore tremendously influence media freedom. This session aims to explore the possibilities of superimposing a public interest framework, in other words, a scheme for recognizing and prioritizing media content that serves the public interest; and deliberate the opportunities and challenges of such an approach.

Moderator:

Julia Haas, OSCE, RFoM Project Officer, Austria

Speakers:

Katarzyna Szymielewicz, Panoptykon Foundation, President, Poland
Barbora Bukovská, Article 19, Senior Director for Law and Policy, Czechia
Amy Brouillette, IPI, Director of Advocacy, Hungary

14:15 - 15:25

Panel Discussion (Goethe-Institut, Conference Room)

CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION BASED MEDIA IN EUROPE

In cooperation with Czech-German Future Fund

Exchanging perspectives across national and societal borders is vital to nurture understanding and bridge differences. Cross-border journalism plays an important role not just in bringing audiences together, but also journalists working in cross-border editorial teams. What does collaboration look like in practice? How difficult is it to identify topics relevant to different audiences? What are the opportunities of connecting different experiences and values? This session focuses on two such projects - ENTR and JADU.

Moderator:

Patrick Leusch, Deutsche Welle, Head of European Affairs, Germany

Speakers:

Dominika Michalak, Onet.pl, Journalist and Editor, ENTR, Poland
Reneta Veselinova, Dir.bg, Video and Content Producer, ENTR, Bulgaria
Tereza Semotamová, JADU, Editor, Czechia

15:20 - 16:20

Panel Discussion (Goethe-Institut, Foyer)

COMING TOGETHER: CULTIVATION OF AN ENGAGED JOURNALISTIC PROFESSION

Between losing public trust, financial austerity, disinformation, decrease of personal safety, platformization, and the rise of AI, the profession is quite unlike what it was some 20, 10, maybe even three years ago. Currently, difficult discussions are being held about how to protect what lies at its heart without rendering it immobile and dysfunctional. In what ways can journalists effectively come together to ensure their mission, and livelihood, is more sustainable? What helps journalists cross over the competitive divides and defend not just individual interests, but their collective? How can we induce more mutually supportive environment? How can we build on top of the already spreading day-to-day collaborations?

Moderator:

Christian Christensen, University of Stockholm, Professor of Journalism/Prague Media Point Steering Committee Member, USA/Sweden

Speakers:

David Klimeš, Endowment Fund for Independent Journalism, Director, Czechia
Dorota Nygren, Poland's Association of Journalists and Authors of the Public Radio, Board Member, Poland
Maja Sever, European Federation of Journalists, President, Croatia

15:20 - 16:30

Presentation (Goethe-Institut, Lecture Room)

INTERNAL ISSUES OF THE JOURNALISTIC PROFESSION

Moderator:

Graham Griffith, Center for the Study of Democracy, Senior Fellow/Prague Media Point Steering Committee Member, USA

Empowering Quality Journalism Amidst Adversity: Insights from Arab Journalists' Role Transformation

Elsayed Bekhit Darwish, Zayed University, Journalism and Media Professor, U. A. E.

This study aims to understand the changes that are taking place in Arab journalists' perceptions of the levels and sources of uncertainty and ways of coping with uncertainty at a time of dramatic change within the institution of media. Given the upheaval in Arab media, it is important to re-examine how regional journalists are narrating their roles in a time of uncertainty. The study investigates the Arab journalists' insights and trends related to the impact of digital platforms on news, journalistic content, the challenge of news avoidance, and the need for innovation and adaptation within journalism in response to evolving uncertainties.

The Black Sheep of Europe: Press Freedom Decay - Bulgaria and Beyond

Darina Sarelska, American University in Bulgaria, Assistant Professor, Bulgaria

This study examines the decline of press freedom in Bulgaria over the past two decades. In 2021, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) designated Bulgaria as "the black sheep of Europe" and "the worst place for press freedom, where it can prove dangerous to be a journalist". The annual press freedom index developed by the same organization features Bulgaria's media system collapsing from the 35th to 112th position over the course of two decades. The continuous steep decline raises questions about how and why it is happening, and whether it can be countered. This study aims to explore the implications of regressive media systems in the broader social framework and on civic participation. Using Bulgaria as a model country, this research line aims to expand existing theory on the democratic decay and the shift to neo-authoritarianism in Eastern Europe.

Parenting Strategies of Czech Women Journalists in the Context of Precarity

Hana Řiřicová, Charles University, PhD Candidate, Czechia

Karolína Hájková, Charles University, PhD Candidate, Czechia

The topic of precarious journalists is just beginning to be discussed in the Czech Republic. Editorial offices do not formally employ them, thus relieving themselves of the costs associated with employment. In exchange for zero security, a feeling of powerlessness and the transfer of all risks to the individual, the ideal of self-fulfilment through meaningful creative work is supposed to be the reward. Precarious contract work carries with it various risks, such as paying less or flat-rate health insurance. As a result, this has a more drastic impact on women, as it is associated with lower maternity and parental benefits. This study focuses on whether and how women journalists' parenting strategies are affected by precarity, and how they influence their combining journalistic job with parenthood.

15:30 - 16:45

Panel Discussion (Goethe-Institut, Conference Room)

IN SEARCH OF SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR INVESTIGATIVE AND OTHER FACT-CHECKING JOURNALISM

In cooperation with the International Visegrad Fund

This panel focuses on successful examples and strategies of finding the resources for investigative and other kinds of fact-checking journalist work in order to ensure stability of journalistic platforms, so that such media can fulfil their role of fomenting transparency and backing democratic processes. What are the recent developments in grant-making and funding-obtaining in Europe? Is there a growing understanding of regional specificities on the side of the funders? What can investigative and other kinds of fact-checking, focused media do to make their financial foothold more stable?

Moderator:

Tarik Jusić, Prague Civil Society Centre, Head of Central Europe Programme, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Speakers:

Florjan Skrabal, Dossier, Editor-in-Chief, Austria

Zlatina Siderova, EJC, Programme Lead Grants, Netherlands

Leila Bičakčić, Center for Investigative Reporting, Director, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Peter Erdelyi, Center for Sustainable Media, Director, Hungary

16:45 - 17:15

Other (Goethe-Institut, Foyer)

COFFEE BREAK

16:50 - 18:50

Workshop (Goethe-Institut, Lecture Room)

WORKSHOP ON DIGITAL SAFETY FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS

In cooperation with the International Visegrad Fund
Capacity limited - registration required (contact project coordinator).

This workshop focuses on capacity-building enhancing safe digital practices and data protection whilst conducting investigative or any other sensitive reporting. It will be open to anyone interested, be that journalists themselves or other professionals who collaborate with and support investigators, watchdogs etc. Limited capacity.

Speaker:

Aleksa Tešić, BIRN, Investigative Journalist and Trainer, Serbia

17:15 - 18:30

Panel Discussion (Goethe-Institut, Conference Room)

SOUND STRATEGIES FOR SMALL MEDIA IN HIGHLY CONCENTRATED MARKETS

In an era marked by technological advances, the proliferation of digital platforms and the democratization of content creation have opened up new avenues for small media to reach wider audiences and find their niche. However, the landscape is not without its challenges. In many markets, a few dominant players wield enormous influence, making it increasingly challenging for smaller media organizations to thrive and compete. This panel explores the innovative approaches and best practices that can help small media outlets steadily navigate, find their foothold, adapt, and prosper in highly concentrated markets.

Moderator:

Slawek Blich, Krytyka Polityczna, Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Poland

Speakers:

Lela Vujanić, Sembra Media, Project Oasis Research Manager CEE, Croatia

Danuta Breguła, MDIF, Expert-in-Residence, Poland

Jan Bělíček, Alarm, Editor-in-Chief, Czechia

17:20 - 18:30

Presentation (Goethe-Institut, Foyer)

THE COMMUNICATION-TRUST INTERPLAY IN THE MEDIA

Moderator:

Christian Christensen, University of Stockholm, Professor of Journalism/Prague Media Point Steering Committee Member, USA/Sweden

Communication of Public Institutions in the Digital Era - Or Happy Birthday, Putin!

Tereza Klabíková Rábová, Charles University, Vice-Dean for Public Relations of Faculty of Social Sciences, Czechia
Barbora Stěpánová, Charles University, PhD Candidate, Czechia

In view of the changes taking place in the digital context of social media, it is highly necessary to rethink the style of communication through the official profiles of public institutions. The verbal and non-verbal nature of such statements is extremely relevant as they continue to circulate through the media space. The hypothesis is that, nowadays, in time of multiple crises, more or less informal form of communication based on the logic of digital media functioning do not always correspond with the desired and unambiguous reception of the communicated information by the public. This study is an analysis of a model statement on the social network Twitter, with a subsequent analysis of the expectations of the audience (citizens and media professionals).

Altruistic and Self-serving Motives for Sharing Alternative Information about the Covid 19 virus on Social Media

Thomas Wold, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Associate Professor, Norway

During the Covid-19 crisis, updates on scientific findings and political debate regarding the virus were presented continuously through traditional news media. Some of the updates were conflicting and confusing. At the same time, contradictory information was spread through other channels, like alternative media and social media. In this study, alternative information is understood as news material that is framed in a way that contradicts the government's Covid-19 recommendations, whether or not the intention was to be misleading. This study aims to contribute to the research on motives for news sharing on social media.

Critical Discourse Analysis of TV News Media on Democracy – Pakistan Case Study

Sadia Zamir, Charles University, PhD Candidate, Czechia

The development of a democratic culture in each country depends largely on the media. It is thus essential to research the processes by which media discourse represents a nation's democracy. This research focuses on the role of television (TV) news media in the discursive construction of democracy in Pakistan. The study aims to draw attention to the nuances of the news media's construction of discourse on democracy internally, by Pakistani media's and also externally by "the other" media, i. e. from India.

18:35 - 19:30

Closing (Goethe-Institut, Foyer)

GLASS OF WINE

Speakers:

Christian Christensen, University of Stockholm, Professor of Journalism/Prague Media Point Steering Committee Member, USA/Sweden

Graham Griffith, Center for the Study of Democracy, Senior Fellow/Prague Media Point Steering Committee Member, USA

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