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Inside – Outside.
Web History and the Ambivalent Relationship between Old and New Media

Christian Oggolder [*]

Abstract: *»Drinnen und Draußen. Web History als Geschichte eines ambivalenten Verhältnisses«.* This paper argues that the societal perception of the web and of changes to it over the course of time forms a relevant part of web history. Moreover, the particular perception of the web is to a large extent affected by the traditional media. Against this background the study analyses on a historical basis the content of the traditional media, i.e. newspapers and journals, dealing with topics related to the web. The results of the study foster the assumption that – at least in Germany – traditional media coverage on the Internet and digital media and today social media as well is strongly influenced by a competition between the old and the new media. At the same time the results of the Austrian data show a more neutral attitude toward the web. In order to assess these differences, further international comparative studies are needed.

Keywords: web history, media history, media systems, internet, social media, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Der Standard, Die Presse, Der Spiegel, Profil.

1. Introduction

Recently on the white background cover of the German weekly *Der Spiegel* (2012/19) big black letters informed its readers that '*901 million like this:*' – followed by the logo of Facebook and the small but essential question in blue: '*But why?*' Blue is not only the color of *Facebook*: blue seems also to be the mood of the traditional media companies. Moreover, this *why-question* can be posed not only in the sense that the weekly might have meant it, asking – while simultaneously not really appreciating the fact – why so many people actually like the social network *Facebook.* We also may ask ourselves in a media scientific sense, why this cover was designed this way and why this topic was chosen – again.

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Digital media have turned the traditional media landscape inside out and at the same time the web, the Internet, and social media platforms have become subjects discussed in the traditional media as well. Beginning as an elitist technological innovation which was limited to transmission tasks only, the web has since emerged as a self-contained medium (cf. Röser and Peil 2010). Due to its obvious news value, this evolution of the web has been constantly perceived and reported by the traditional media.

This article explores the evolution of the web and its public perception by analyzing the media coverage devoted to this topic between 1995 and 2011. The analysis is based on digitally available content such as covers of printed editions of the German *Der Spiegel* and the Austrian *Profil* as well as online resources of *Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Der Standard* and *Die Presse.* The findings will be embedded into theoretical reflections on web history specifically and media history generally.

2. Media, History, and the Web

2.1 Researching the Web

In keeping with their importance to society, the Internet and digital media have become vital objects of research today. In the early days of these technologies, however, the humanities and social sciences showed only minor interest in this topic (Hartmann and Wimmer 2011). Slightly differing approaches dependent on different national cultures in research are also apparent (cf. Hartmann and Wimmer 2011, 11; Berker 2001, 72), thus discussions of the term and phenomenon *Cyberspace,* for instance, have been central especially in the Anglo-Saxon research. From the late 1990s onwards interest has shifted to audiences and users, and questions concerning the concrete embedding of new technologies into people's everyday lives (cf. Berners-Lee 2000; Castells 2001) have become increasingly important for scientific research (cf. Hartmann and Wimmer 2011, 13).

Apart from that, digital media previously were discussed under the aspects of technological inventions (cf. Abbate 1999; Naughton 2001; Carr 2008) and improvements as well as providing new channels of distribution for traditional media (cf. Heinrich 2001; Seufert 2004). Using the term 'convergence' (cf. Killebrew 2005; Jenkins 2006; Hess 2007) from the middle of the last decade onwards, both the traditional media industry and mainstream communication science have held on to the idea of simply adapting old media systems through the use of new technology in order to combat the erosion of traditional media. Since becoming the new mainstream buzzword, 'Web 2.0' (O'Reilly 2005; Alpar and Blaschke 2008; Allen 2012) and the following techniques and modes of use of the so-called *Social Web* have developed a broad new field of

communication research (cf. Michelis and Schildhauer 2010; Ebersbach et al. 2008; Zerfaß et al. 2008). Most recently with the phenomenon of *user generated content* (Bruns 2005, 2008) entering traditional journalism, the web – usually simply named 'the Internet' – has become central in media and communication studies (cf. Schmidt 2006, 2009; Neuberger et al. 2009; Engesser and Wimmer 2009; Neuberger and Quandt 2010). The seemingly boundless success of Facebook (cf. Kneidinger 2010) and Twitter (Anastasiadis and Thimm 2011) acts as a vital supporter within this process.

Without any doubt, media and communication research cannot ignore digital media, the web, and social networks sites; at the same time, however, we have to face an absence of historical awareness in the academic discourse of media developments in general and the web in particular. Dealing with the history of the web may remind us of problems within 'traditional' media and communication history which confront us with questions concerning both responsibility and competence in doing media history. Not recognized as interdisciplinary research per se, media history has to somehow manage its existence between history and media and communication research (cf. Arnold et al. 2008). Concerning web history, the situation is even worse (cf. Brügger 2010).

Although web history takes up only a little space within the current scientific research on the Internet, Niels Brügger has detected an increasing interest in this topic (Brügger 2010, 8). At the same time he also claims that the little which has been written until now may not be seen within a research tradition which provides consistent theories and methods. What is missing is a self-confident approach towards web history as an independent field of research, contrary to already-established sub-disciplines like political communication or media research (Brügger 2010, 8; see also Brügger in this volume).

As a part of media and communication research, web history focuses on those media which are based on the development of the Internet and have ultimately become part of the entire media system. In order to understand current phenomena in digital communication and in order to be able to adequately assess their societal consequences, the *web sphere* (Brügger 2010, 54) and its history must not be viewed as separate from the whole media system. Instead, the history and the conditions of those media which already existed prior to the Internet must be taken into account. What is important in this case is the dual nature of the methodological approach, which links the diachronic path of historical analysis with the synchronic track of inter-media comparisons. The central aim of web history, therefore, might be to find an answer concerning the functional embedding of web media within the development of the entire media system.

2.2 The Spatial Dimension of the Web

In order to be able to locate the digital media within the entire media system, as well as to locate web history within media and communication research, the notion of the spatial may be useful. As a consequence web history will be examined from the perspective of spaces.

From the beginning the relationship between the traditional media and digital media has been expressed by the words *old* versus *new* (cf. Arnold and Neuberger 2005). In addition to these commonly used expressions we are also confronted with spatial metaphors like *net* or *web*. We are invited to enter websites or to visit a company in the Internet; passwords prevent entrance to forbidden territories, crackers break into apparently protected rooms.

Beyond that, the history of the web is also of course a history of technical innovations. But in contrast to former technology-based media such as radio or television, using the Internet requires certain technical skills which deserve closer attention than simply pressing the on-off button. The digital immigrants (Prensky 2001; Palfrey and Gasser 2008) virtually get their residence permit within the digital territory by the acquisition or the confirmation of their digital competence. Only those who know how to get into and who hold all the necessary requirements – both intellectual and financial – may stay inside (cf. Norris 2001). Needless to say, even digital natives must acquire these abilities, and of course one's date of birth does not automatically ensure the appropriate qualifications.

In the early days of the web, however, these preconditions of internet use made it something special, something almost elitist. The banality of watching TV contrasted with the complexity of the web. The TV once was perceived as the 'window to the world'; now the web has become a completely new world on its own. The Internet has been considered as a new spatial dimension, separated from the real old analogue world, almost being a new, seventh continent. To quote the *Spiegel* in 1998: "The society of mobile phones was only the beginning: Within the spheres of the Internet experts see a new continent rising. Here live the info-elite, surrounded by PCs, pagers, and PowerBooks. The multimedia-industry will be the key-business of the 21st century – with serious consequences for the society." (*Der Spiegel* 51/1998) At the same time journalists were also enthusiastic because of the fact that entering cyberspace enables the user to leave behind the distances that exist within the real world.

3. Internet Making Headlines

According to Berker (2001, 13) the Internet 'happened' between 1993 and 1996. During those years it made its first steps into the lives of many early

users as a medium for communication and information but also at the same time as a media event which had become worthy of reporting by the 'old' media (ibid.).

I presume that the societal perception of digital media, the Internet, and the Social Web is to a large extent affected by the traditional media. Thus, the way the Internet is perceived within society has been changing over time, and against this background the content analysis of the traditional media – especially newspapers and journals – dealing with this topic on a historical basis is a crucial endeavor. Since this new continent of the World Wide Web was perceived by the majority of the people as a terra incognita, the need for information about it increased, and it has become more important for the traditional media to report, to print and to broadcast on this topic. As a result, the Internet started to make headlines.

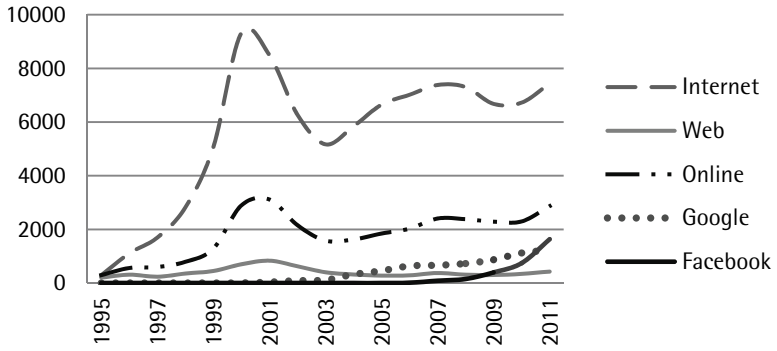
In the early days of Internet research Patrick Rössler (2001) analyzed an even earlier period (1995-1998) of news coverage on the Internet, published under the snappy title "Between online heaven and cyberhell". In this study Rössler found out that the Internet was framed predominantly positively as a new media technology which may foster societal development as well as a new technology with a huge economic potential (Rössler 2001, 61).

More recently Frauke Zeller, Jens Wolling and Pablo Porten-Cheé (2010) analyzed the media coverage on 'digitalization' and its possible changes between 2003 and 2008. In their study 'digitalization' is understood in all its complexity and multifariousness and not simply as a synonym for the web. This may be the reason for a slightly more positive image of new technology compared to my findings presented here, which are essentially based on news about the Internet, the web, new media etc.

As part of a small study, the news coverage of the Internet and digital media appearing in the traditional media during the years 1995 to 2011 was analyzed. Accordingly, the web archives of two German *(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung)* and two Austrian newspapers *(Der Standard, Die Presse)* were examined for articles containing appropriate keywords, namely *Internet, web, online, Google,* and *Facebook.* In addition to practical reasons concerning online accessibility, which actually excluded the most prominent boulevard papers *Bild* and *Kronen Zeitung*, the selection of the newspapers was intended to be ideologically balanced, including a conservative as well as a liberal paper within both countries. The keywords, however, had been selected according to quantitative and qualitative assumptions, since for instance the term *Internet* represents the most frequently used label for any kind of online or web medium. The more defined term *web,* in contrast, should indicate possible changes concerning a more precise naming of what usually is called Internet. *Online,* on the other hand, is often connected with activities *in* the net, e.g. online-banking, online-shopping etc. *Google* and *Facebook* of course have to be taken under consideration in the course of the shift to the

Web 2.0 respectively the *Social Web*. The year-by-year results of these database queries provide a vivid illustration of the amount of news coverage and its development over time.

Figure 1: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung: Number of Articles Containing the Particular Keyword

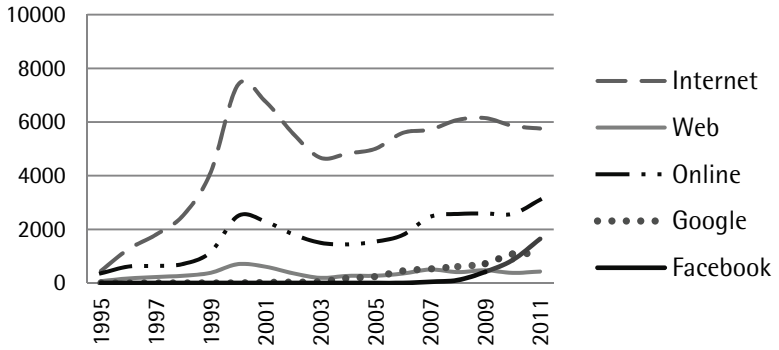


As figure 1 shows, the quantities of the keywords[1] occurring within the texts of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* are quite striking. On the one hand, Internet is the most common noun occurring in the *FAZ* articles; on the other hand, Facebook has been mentioned in the conservative newspaper only since 2010, reasonably enough since it became a Facebook member in March of that year. However, the figure impressively shows the Dot-com bubble, its bursting in 2000, and a constant decrease in the news coverage of new media and the Internet until 2003. The quantities in that year approximate those of 1998. At the same time the figure also shows a slow but constant recovery process of the Internet and its mediated public reputation. Compared to the number of times the terms *Internet* and less frequently *online* were used, the term *web* clearly played only a minor role in the *FAZ* news coverage of new media.

Comparing the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* with the liberal Munich-based paper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* shows astonishingly similar results (see figure 2).

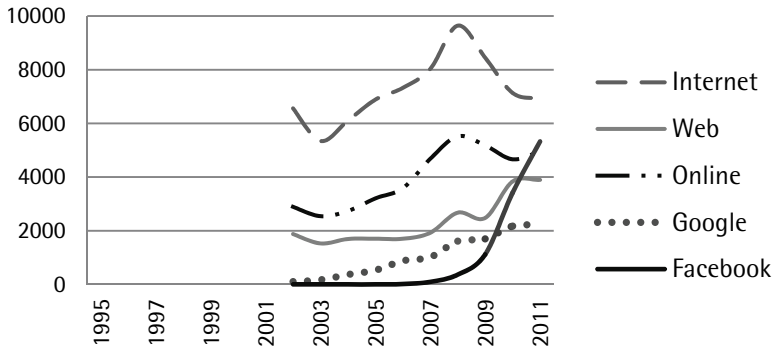
[1] Given that the particular keywords may be found several times within one article, the figures do not indicate the number of articles. Nevertheless, tendencies can be deduced from these results.

Figure 2: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: Number of Articles Containing the Particular Keyword



Starting on an already somewhat lower level of articles on the topic, the decrease of articles after the burst of the bubble is also apparent. Surprisingly, the data show a clear increase in the use of the word 'online' to the detriment of 'Internet'. The graph of *Facebook* quantities is almost identical to that of the *FAZ* data, but astonishingly the *Süddeutsche* did not become a Facebook member until January 2012. All in all, our findings from both German newspapers, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung,* show notable similarities which could not necessarily have been predicted.

Figure 3: *Der Standard*: Number of Articles Containing the Particular Keyword

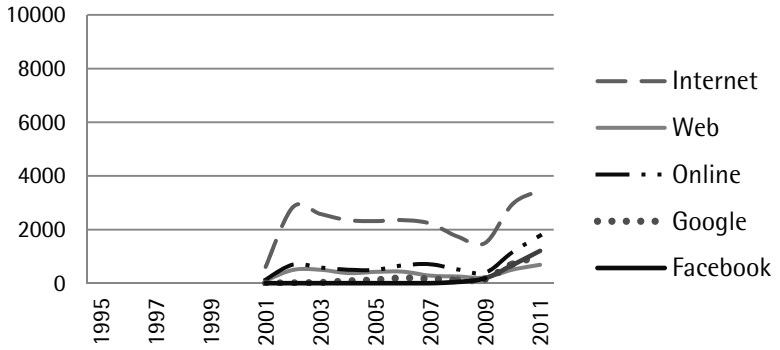


Comparing the above findings with those of the two Austrian newspapers, *Der Standard* and *Die Presse,* reveals similarities concerning the overall trends but quite a few differences in the detail. Given that the only available online data for the Austrian newspapers is from 2001 and 2002 respectively, the effects of

the Dot-com crash around 2000 are not displayed as well as they are in the data from the German papers. In the case of the *Standard* the data give an impression of a similar curve to that of *FAZ* and *Süddeutsche:* the amount of articles decreases after 2002 and reaches the bottom in 2003 (see figure 3).

Compared to the German newspapers, appearances of the keyword *online* are on a distinctly higher level in the *Standard.* The most evident difference, however, is the massive increase in the occurrences of the word *Facebook* in the *Standard's* news coverage, which reaches a level that no other paper in our sample shows. Given that the liberal Viennese paper began rather early on delivering an online edition and integrating social media into its own website plus the fact that the *Standard* had already joined *Facebook* in mid-2009, the higher levels of the more detailed keywords and the corresponding decreased use of the commonly used term *Internet* can therefore be plausibly explained.

Figure 4: *Die Presse*: Number of Articles Containing the Particular Keyword



The data of the conservative *Presse* differ fundamentally to the other newspapers. Not only does the general amount of news coverage on the particular topic seem to be very low, but the curve starts virtually at a zero level in 2001, reaches the peak in 2002, and decreases constantly until 2009. Since then, a considerable increase of all given keywords is apparent (see figure 4).

Because of its rather conservative line and the ideological background of its readers, these findings may be more or less expected. On the other hand, a comparison with the likewise conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* which covered the relevant topic on a discreetly higher quantitative level, raises questions.

4. Qualitative Aspects of Diachronic Changes

Investigating diachronic changes and developments in media systems reveals a central aspect of web history. Besides that, the analysis of the societal and media perception of those changes and developments as well as the search for possible explanations of certain views must also be taken into account. I argue that a substantial agent of change affecting the perception of the web by traditional media over the course of time has been the development of concurrent journalistic media within the web.

Being primarily a technical medium used for data transmission, the World Wide Web has also become a news medium, or expressed more precisely: it likewise has developed services which doubtlessly have the potential to challenge and to change traditional media. As a matter of fact, we face a fundamental crisis within the current old-school media industry today. The development of the Internet, combined with new forms of media production and distribution, is a crucial reason why newspapers are struggling (Neuberger et al. 2009, 9). Axel Bruns describes traditional media as being industrialized products, such as things that we use in our everyday life. They are produced in an industrial, Fordist way, shaped as identical objects and are homogeneous for each customer. In contrast, he characterizes the new forms of news production as being "interactive and customizable by users much in the same way that postmodern products frequently consist of a common central core which can be modified and individualized through the addition of a range of accessories" (Bruns 2005, 218).

Accordingly I assume that the perception of the web by the traditional media has necessarily changed from a generally positive to an increasingly negative view of the web, the Internet, and of digital media as a whole. In order to test this assumption, I examined the covers of the German weekly *Der Spiegel* and its Austrian equivalent *Profil* appearing between 1995 and 2011. The aim of this analysis was firstly to check how often topics concerning the new media and the Internet were on the cover of the magazines and secondly to see how these topics were presented: positively, neutrally, or negatively.

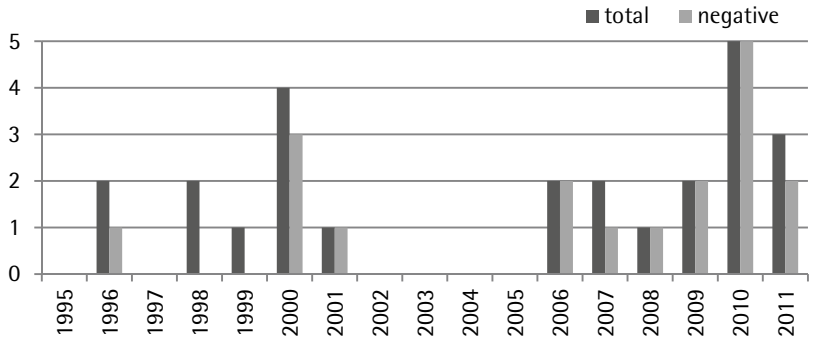
4.1 On the Cover of the *Spiegel*

During the time period of the analysis *Der Spiegel* published a total of 897 editions, with 25 covers focusing on Internet and new media.

As figure 5 shows, the quantitative distribution of cover stories on the relevant issue throughout the period of time is very similar to the findings above for the *FAZ* and *Süddeutsche*. Thus, the number of cover stories also reflects the increasing interest in the topic in journalism and in the wider society, both corresponding entities, during the years before the massive

decrease after the bubble burst as well as the recovery since the middle of the last decade.

Figure 5: Number of *Spiegel* Cover Stories about 'Internet' etc. p.a. (n= 897)



The main intent of this part of the study was to distinguish between positively and negatively connoted title pages. The findings, however, show a quite impressive and clear move towards negative covers since 2000 in both headlines and images. In the early days of the Internet the *Spiegel* published few cover stories about new media and the Internet, but these were predominantly positive. The first cover story devoted to this issue appeared in March 1996, called *Die Welt online – Das Netz* (The World online – The Web). The cover illustration showed the red colored contour of the *Macintosh Classic* with a realistic, non-colored, and non-blurred picture of its screen, on its desktop the most famous detail of Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam,* in which God sends the spark of life from his own finger into Adam's. What is the connotation of this in relation to an article on new technologies? Is it possible to see this picture as being neutral rather than positive? Reading the introductory text in the contents part of the magazine – which was always done to clarify uncertain judgments – confirms an overall neutral position, given a certain ambivalent position towards this new technology that was characteristic for later *Spiegel* articles on this topic and already evident in this case: 'Click into the future: the web is spreading inexorably'. We have the technology for the future, but do we have it under control, the author seems to ask. Something that spreads inexorably reminds us of viruses and diseases. Jumping to a cover from mid-2000 we may find every doubt confirmed: *Die @-Bombe. Killer-Viren attackieren die Computer-Welt (The @-Bomb. Killer-viruses attacking the Computer-World).* Nevertheless, doubts and fears had been published already in 1996, when the security of *our computers* was the September cover story *(Der große Datenklau – Wie sicher sind Computer)* but the overall

tendency was at least neutral, sometimes even euphoric, as the above example of the *seventh continent* demonstrates.

The year 2000 saw a massive change in the perception of the web by the media and by society as a whole. The economic disaster caused by the bursting of the new media bubble shifted these new technologies towards something of a *bad glamour* (see *Der Spiegel* 2000/42: *Der faule Zauber: Warum am Neuen Markt die Kurse abstürzen*). Connected with the changing economic conditions, the awaking of investors to the technological reality introduced skepticism into the perception of the web and the entire digital technology generally. For instance, reporting about the new inventions presented at the CeBIT fair in Hannover, the magazine pointed out the increasing complexity of the new gadgets and the excessive demands for their particular users (*Der Spiegel* 2001/12: *Hightech-Welt 2001 – Odyssee im digitalen Raum)*. Nevertheless, digital technologies, especially the web were still not perceived by the print magazine as a concurrent medium – at least it had not been published that way. The presentation of a negative image at this time was mostly related to economic rather than media issues.

In 2006, after four years without any cover story, the discovery of social networks and user generated content by the print magazine put the web back on the cover – in a negative sense, of course: *"Ich im Internet – Wie sich die Menschheit online entblößt" (Me in the Net – How the human race exposes itself online. Der Spiegel* 2006/29). The active user had become a threat to the paper and for that reason the web was presented as a threat to the media consumer, suggestively asking: *Does the Internet make us stupid? Networked, yakked, lost (Macht Das Internet Doof? Vernetzt, Verquatscht, Verloren. Der Spiegel* 2008/33). The lead text in the contents section talked about *infinite online information* and c*ommunication delusion within the web* which has produced *behaviour disordered and highly nervous individuals who learn increasingly more but know decreasingly less.* This seems to suggest that print had its back to the wall. Traditional media had lost its function as a gatekeeper (Bruns 2005; Bruns 2008; Neuberger et al. 2009), and for that reason they presented the audience for the new media in this way. The open gates of news coverage and information on the Internet produce dull lunatics incapable of handling the information overflow. In order to save the rest of us, traditional journalism is urgently needed, the print magazine suggested to its readers between the lines. Looking at further cover story titles in that issue, we encounter predominantly negative words in connection with the Internet and digital media, for example: *the dubious worth of digital relations, web without law, cold war within the Internet, cyber war, etc.*

Corresponding to the increase of news coverage on social media since 2009 shown above (see figures 1-4), the weekly spotted this issue as worthy for cover stories. After having discovered and accepted the virtual world as an economic playground also for traditional media houses, the web had to be

clearly separated into good and bad, and the well-informed reader of the quality magazine, no matter now whether online or offline, had to be taught which part was the good one and which the bad one. With the increase in the use of social media, especially Facebook, the bad part of the web was named immediately. The attacks against the web had changed their direction: information overflow, gatekeeping necessities were no longer the issue: the battle cry of the German media – not only the *Spiegel,* by the way – had become *privacy* (see Jarvis 2011). Thus, Facebook and social media sites were presented as *insatiable* data collectors (*Die Unersättlichen – Facebook & Co.*, *Der Spiegel* 2011/2). The open question to the readers was now: *can we still safeguard privacy?*

Questions regarding *privacy* are strongly connected with the realm of *public* and the idea of *publication.* Given that *publish* means to send something to the *public,* the invention of printing already played a fundamental role concerning the perceptual changes of public and privacy. As Richard Sennett argues, "'public' thus came to mean a life passed outside the life of family and close friends" (Sennett 1977, 17). Again we encounter here a spatial dimension, spheres of inside and outside. When different domains of life became recognized and defined as going public, others as a consequence became exclusively private (see also Jarvis 2011, 69). Following Colman and Ross (2010, 29), I argue "that the public has no ontological essence prior to mediated representation". This appearance in the realm of public and public spaces on the one hand and privacy and family on the other have for centuries created constant preconditions for both modern media production and media consumption. As a matter of fact this normative framework has been abrogating within the last few years – as a consequence of social media, of course. Thus, under these circumstances the privacy concerns of the traditional media, concretely the *Spiegel*, turn out to be the former gatekeepers' worries regarding their loss of power and their commercial troubles.

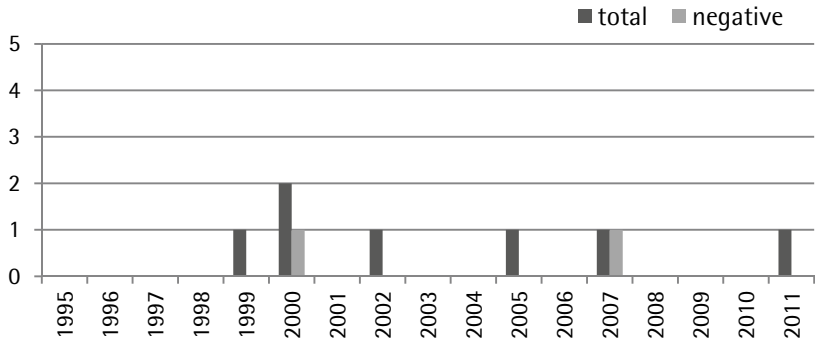
4.2 Differing *Profil* Covers

Between 1995 and 2011 the Austrian weekly *Profil* published a total of 867 editions in which only seven covers featured subjects concerning the Internet and new media. The annual distribution of the cover stories is generally in accordance with the findings of both the dailies analyzed and with the *Spiegel* (see figure 6).

Besides the quantitatively lower rate of that issue in comparison to the German *Spiegel,* the Austrian magazine also differs with regard to the contents. Thus, out of seven cover stories, only two can be rated as negative with regard to the Internet. This means, the relation between positive, or rather neutral, covers and negative ones compared to the *Spiegel* is almost the other way round, i.e. about one third negative *Profil* covers versus nearly two thirds negative covers of the *Spiegel*. Those negative covers of the Austrian weekly

both concerned Internet security. The earlier from 2000, recalling *Spiegel,* was headed: *Viruses, Hacker, Cracker. Attack from the Internet. (Viren, Hacker, Cracker. Angriff aus dem Internet, Profil* 2000/20) and given that the German magazine also published its cover for volume 20 on exactly that issue, this might be an indicator of the heavy attacks of viruses via the Internet at this particular time. Indeed, during May 2000 the so-called *Loveletter or ILOVEYOU* worm appeared in the web; spreading via emails, it infected millions of computers[2]. Thus, for the first time in the history of the web threats concerning viruses and worms became a topic of public discourse. The second negative cover of the *Profil* also was about web criminality, theft of credit card numbers and hackings of bank accounts.

Figure 6: Number of *Profil* Cover Stories about 'Internet' etc. p.a. (n= 867)



Aside from the quantitative aspects, the most relevant difference between the covers of the German and the Austrian journals is the fact that the *Profil* – at least on its covers – on the whole did not portray the new media, the web, or digital technologies negatively. Neither could tendencies from a generally positive coverage during the early years of the web towards a more negative perception of the Internet during this period of time be detected. Thus, the covers of the Austrian magazine do not indicate a journalistic attitude towards the web in the sense of being concurrent media, as the *Spiegel* had done. Even social media, especially Facebook again, was positively portrayed: *Facebook. The most successful machine for relations in the world. (Facebook. Die erfolgreichste Beziehungsmaschine der Welt. Profil* 2011/4).

[2] <http://www.tecchannel.de/news/themen/business/407108/2000_war_das_jahr_der_e_mail_viren> (accessed August 26, 2012).

5. Conclusion

Based on the assumption that societal perceptions of the web and its changes over the course of time form a relevant part of web history, and given that the particular perception of the web is affected to a large extent by the traditional media, the purpose of this paper has been to investigate the news coverage of that issue in German and Austrian newspapers and weekly magazines between 1995 and 2011.

Beginning with a quantitative approach, the amount of coverage in the newspapers has been examined. In a second step, the qualitative analysis of the magazine covers was intended to test the claim that the perception of the web by the traditional media must have changed from a generally positive to an increasingly negative attitude against the web during this period because of the development of concurrent journalistic media within the web.

With regard to the quantitative data, the findings show similar results overall. Each newspaper displayed increasing news coverage on the topic until the Dot-com crises in 2000, which was followed by a constant decrease until 2003, when it was succeeded by a steady increase. As expected, Facebook and Google played a slightly bigger role only the last two years, with the exception of the *Standard,* which showed an enormous increase of articles since 2009 containing that particular keyword.

The claim of an increasingly negative attitude against the web and new media as a whole can be confirmed only by the results of the *Spiegel* data. In contrast the Austrian journal, *Profil,* presented a clearly more positive or at least neutral image of the web on its covers.

Given that the above results are based on title pages only, a detailed content analysis of the particular articles would be necessary in order to get more valid findings. Nevertheless, these first results foster the assumption that – at least in Germany – the coverage in the traditional media of the Internet and digital media, and now social media as well, is strongly influenced by a competition between the old and the new media as well as the ongoing changes within media systems. Therefore a comparative perspective based on both a historical and a regional basis is required. Especially with regard to the anxious attitude of Germans to social media, what Jeff Jarvis (2010, 30) recently called "The German Paradox", a broader international comparison is particularly needed. Thus, questions concerning privacy in addition to issues of economic interests have to be central aspects of future web historical research. Such comparative studies, therefore, could further a central aim of web history: finding answers concerning the functional embedding of web media within the development of particular media systems.

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