

Changing Structure and Content

Photojournalism in the Age of Digital Media in Central Europe

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Abstract

This paper examines the actual state of photojournalism in Central European Countries (Czech republic, Poland and Slovakia). Development of the Internet and digital technology by the end of the twentieth century have brought several questions to the field of photojournalism and impacted the entire process of photojournalistic material production. Thus, it is getting more and more important to be able to understand how visual journalism content is produced, what is its context and the circumstances of its usage.

In our research we ask several research questions. How have the routines and practice of photojournalism changed with the advent of digital technologies? How do photojournalists perceive the overall quality of visual news production? How to distinguish between credible, reliable and manipulated visual content? What are the ethical standards concerning photojournalism in the CEC? How do the producers of visual content /photojournalist and photo editors/ contribute to visual literacy?

The findings of our research reveal a complex picture of photojournalism in CEC.

We describe how the adoption of digital technology brought a new set of routines and practices, influenced photojournalism on each level of production, and impacted formal and content quality of visual journalism. Finally, we also suggest how the process of changes fit into and support the necessity of concept of visual literacy.

This paper is based on the results of our research on Central European photojournalism practice. During the fieldwork we conducted 65 in-depth interviews and surveys with fulltime and freelance photojournalists and photo-editors working for printed and online

newspapers and opinion magazines in the Czech Republic (50), Poland (15), and Slovakia (15).