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Communication Today is a reviewed periodical published twice a year. It focuses on theoretical studies, theoretical and empirical studies, research results and their implication into practice, as well as professional publication reviews.

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Dear Readers,

Hundreds of millions of terabytes of data (International Data Corporation, 2024) are produced on a daily basis and 90% of all existing data has been produced in the last two years (Duarte, 2026). These findings make us rightly conclude that content has never been so abundantly available in human history. However, at the same time, we have never been so uncertain about its authenticity and credibility. Historically speaking, these essential components enable meaningful communication, mutual understanding, and action (Luhmann, 1979; Giddens, 1990; Warren, 1999; Kioussis, 2001). An entire line of research is dedicated to authenticity as a fundamental principle of communication (Lee, 2025). And both concepts overlap: the definition of authenticity of mediated communication includes credibility (accuracy, correctness), originality (authenticity, genuineness), and spontaneity (Enli, 2015). However, modern algorithmic systems moderate the media space and do not necessarily optimise truth, credibility, or authenticity, but rather prefer engagement – thereby creating an environment where manipulative, controversial, and disinformation content becomes functionally advantageous. The ability to distinguish such content becomes crucial and requires logical analysis and critical thinking, or activation of System 2 (slow thinking according to Kahneman, 2012). Fast (and less precise) thinking is more appealing; it works automatically and intuitively and is subject to emotions (which are part of such messages). Its prevalence is documented by Hajdu et al. (2024): susceptibility to certain hoaxes in the V4 region (especially in Slovakia and Hungary) remains high and/or is on the rise. And delegating thinking to AI (Grinschgl & Neubauer, 2022) is even less time-consuming than System 1. “Outsourcing” (a cognitive surrender or resignation) is a state in which people stop using their own thinking abilities (both slow and fast) and completely hand them over to tech tools – AI systems (the so-called System 0 according to Chiriati et al., 2024). This has demonstrably led to limited critical thinking, the emergence of AI dependency (Tian & Zhang, 2026), and impaired efficiency of higher cognitive functions (León-Domínguez, 2024). As outlined by the author, the dangers are not only in the ever-increasing laziness to think. There is an even greater risk of atrophy of cognitive development and the ability to solve problems. This could gradually lead to a society devoid of critical thinking and creativity that has succumbed to the habit of delegating the “hard work”, i.e. thinking, to AI. On the contrary, the development and constant solution of new tasks employing one’s own creative thinking increases the ability to solve complex problems, respond flexibly to new situations and adapt to the rapidly changing conditions (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2014). A recent study of creative AI outputs (Wang et al., 2026) showed that despite the relatively high output rate, AI still significantly lags behind the most creative human individuals. The solution is not to give up on AI altogether, but to understand it, critically evaluate it, and reflect on the consequences of its use. Only then can it bring positives to the final products and to the development of human potential and critical thinking (Bećirović et al., 2026). At the same time, it has been shown that a mental focus and active use of AI, which is accompanied by thinking about the answers, reduces the above negatives, and AI then fosters human thinking rather than replacing it (Tian & Zhang, 2026).

The topical diversity of papers in this issue points to the complexity of current problems in communication studies and suggests possible solutions. The authors and their contributions are proof that creativity – the ability to think differently, slow down, doubt, ask new questions, explore, seek answers, and create – is not only becoming a competence, but also a value that determines the quality of communication in the era of artificial intelligence. It is then up to scientists and practitioners to optimise the processes (work, education) so that AI can be used as a partner and not as a substitute for thinking. Only then can AI become a catalyst for creativity and not its limitation, and the future

of communication does not have to go hand in hand with a decline of critical thinking, but rather with its transformation.

Prof. Katarína Fichnová, PhD.

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra

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