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Communication Today is a scientific journal from the mass media and marketing communication field. The journal contains professional scientific reflections on the media, media competence; it also offers academic discourses on the limits of reality, media thinking, new media, marketing and media relations, new trends in marketing including their types and specifics, psychology and sociology of marketing communication, as well as new knowledge about the structure of media contents, marketing strategies and communication sciences. The professional public is offered an interdisciplinary, focused, targeted discussion in these pages.

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

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Dear Readers,

You know that traditional media are rapidly growing supported by information technologies forming the global information space as a new virtual medium of communication formed by a set of multiple media streams. This new virtual territory, which has no state borders and tangible barriers, is known by scholars as information space, media space, information field, media environment, media landscape, etc. and greatly influences communication processes. These processes are mainly conducted by different media texts, which are connected with various media channels (printed media, radio, TV and the Internet). Media texts are traditionally subdivided into news, commentary, features and advertising and have dominant themes or belong to a particular stable media topic. This topic may be culturally specific: people of some countries prefer to read criminal news; some are interested in royal family life; in Islamic countries, religious topics are very popular. There are some topics, which appear unexpectedly, such as COVID-19, wars, revolutions, *coup d'état*, etc. or there may be constantly discussed topics, for example elections.

The Internet has gained such popularity that today it is not only a means of communication and information transfer, but also a means of manipulating public consciousness. Thus, media influence the mass consciousness of a society, its political life and public opinion formation. The functions of media are different; among them we may mention informing the population about events in political life, public control over government actions, education of people, expression of public interests and public opinion formation. I have made a review of the mass media essence and their functions and specified the most important topics which attract the attention of scholars. I want to state that this issue of *Communication Today*, which is always at the forefront of media studies, presents the most topical articles providing clear illustration of what I have previously mentioned.

All the articles form several thematic groups. The first is the analysis of consumers' behaviour (Kristína Igarová, Zdenka Kádeková and Ingrida Košičiarová, Slovakia). COVID-19 or SARS-CoV-2 was and still is a particularly stable media topic. Natividad Crespo Tejero, Susana Fernandez-Lores and Ruth Fernández-Hernández, Spain; Anita Dremel, Gordana Lesinger and Juraj Jurlina, Croatia; Peter Horváth, Richard Brix and Erik Urc, Slovakia; Jana Přikrylová and Ladislav Pátík, Czech Republic present the results of their post-COVID research and consider different aspects of the pandemic, its influence on young people, the appearance of infodemic, etc. To the functions of the media mentioned above, we can add socialisation as considered by Zora Hudíková and Hana Pravdová, Slovakia.

Media may also be a method of political propaganda, agitation and political manipulation of the population. Mohd Nashriq Nizam, Hasmah Zanuddin and Mohamad Saleeh Rahamad, Malaysia specify methods of the mediatization of politics highlighting elections. Populism as a communication strategy attracts the attention of Jakub Charvát, Denisa Charvátová and Eva Niklesová, Czech Republic. Philip Katz, Czech Republic discusses the political cartoons of the 1950s.

Miroslav Macák and Veronika Šašalová (Slovakia) consider digital games as valuable cultural artefacts and as a widespread cultural phenomenon. The last group includes studies based on different media channels: radio news (Lubica Botošová and Andrej Brník, Slovakia) and the Internet, namely a psychological approach to its problematic use (Dominika Kurajda and Dominika Doktorová, Slovakia).

I deliberately mention the locations of the authors; we see that the articles cover large territories ranging from Europe to Asia. Another important moment is the status of the authors. *Communication Today* publishes not only already known authors; it opens its doors to young scholars and PhD students, who without any doubt successfully represent their universities and research schools.

Prof. Nataliya Panasenko, DrSc.

Member of Communication Today's Editorial Team

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