Audiences and Facebook

Ragne Kõouts, PhD
Liis Velsker, MA
What motivates today’s audience to search for contact with traditional media outlets via FB?

- Individual media repertoires
- Rationales behind news consumption on FB

Study carried out in Estonia among different age groups
Figure 1 Watch TV everyday/ almost everyday on a TV set (%)
Figure 2 Listen to the radio everyday/ almost everyday (%)
Figure 3 Read the written press everyday/ almost everyday (%)
Figure 4 Internet use in selected countries (%)

- use the internet everyday
- use the online social networks everyday
- Watch TV via the internet (everyday)

Standard Eurobarometer, Autumn 2014
Figure 5 Trust in state institutions and in media in European countries

Eurobarometer, Autumn 2011
Figure 6 Media use tendencies among Estonian audiences (comparison based on the year 2000 = 100)

Source: Vihalemm, Lauristin, Kötts 2012: 23
Figure 7 ‘Media menus’ of Estonian inhabitants (in comparison to average usage, representative survey, N=1510, K-Means clusters)

Source: Kõuts, Vihalemm, Lauristin 2013: 23
Estonian media landscape

Diversity of media channels

- 11 daily newspapers
- 42 non-daily newspapers
- 35 radio programs
- 9 TV programs in Estonian language
- The main news portals: delfi.ee (only online); postimees.ee (online and print)

Per 1,313,271 inhabitants (Statistics Estonia, 01.01.2015)
Estonian traditional media brands in FB
(Source: MA-Thesis, Velsker 2014)
How actively is journalistic content consumed and shared via FB?

Media repertoires (Hasebrink/ Domeyer 2012)

Combining qualitative and quantitative research methodologies

72 semi-structured interviews
- 52 adolescents (16-19 years)
- 20 adults (average age 39 years)
+ 40 interviews in the age group 20-34 years
Results:

All groups live and act in similar technological and media environment printed newspaper delivered to homes; TV-set and broadband internet connection; mobile device for personal use

Their preferences to use the content are clearly different
In Facebook:

- Liked at least one media brand in FB:
  - Below 20 years – 77% (more different brands)
  - Over 20 years – 40% (rather one-two brands)

- Mainly the print media brands
  - Reading the print media delivered to the home does not relate to liking the same brand in FB

A group with highly selective media repertoire oriented to the transnational content (e.g. BBC, CNN, The Guardian) – Integration into the Estonian society?
Motivations of liking:

The rapid acquisition of information
Keeping up to date
Geographical proximity
Psychological closeness
Obligation
Interest in the topic
Entertainment and gossip
Social utility
Media habits and brand trust
Being a fan
Need for a reminder
Impact of marketing and advertisements
Main conclusions:

FB is not a primary news source (yet?)
Media consumption via FB is greatly affected by friend network – closure!
‘Traditional media menu’ and ‘FB media menu’ does not match (but: traditional brand delivers the trustworthiness to the FB brand)
FB is the place where media outlets can increase their audience
New providers have few possibilities to take up a position in audience’s media menus
There is a growing group who avoid journalistic content completely
ragne.kouts@ut.ee
University of Tartu, Estonia