

DIGITAL HANDWASHING

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https://www.pressrelations.com/files/de/prmagazin/prmagazin_2010_FakeNews.pdf

Crises put the trust and credibility of brands to the test. The explosive mixture of information and disinformation during the corona crisis makes it particularly difficult for companies to manage their brand communication and protect their own reputation. For prmagazin, pressrelations analyzed the media resonance of the Dax 30 corporations and the role of journalistic quality standards in online reporting.

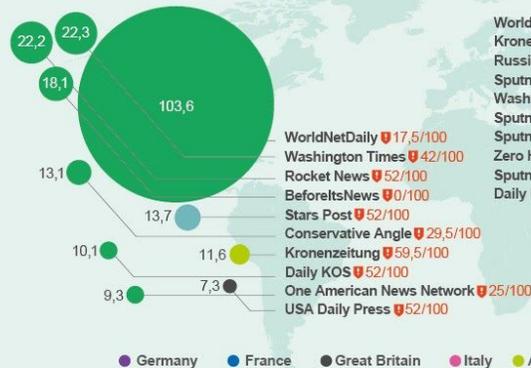
Even before the Corona pandemic, political and business leaders considered "fake news" in the sense of deliberately disseminated false information to be the number one cyber risk (Cyber Security Report 2019, Deloitte/IfD Allensbach). Facebook in particular has moved into focus as a "superspreader." The campaign network Avaaz found that the content of the ten Facebook pages with the highest reach, which deliberately disseminated false information on health topics, received almost four times as many visits as the posts of the ten most important health organizations (NZZ, August 19, 2020). Facebook's handling of such disinformation and hate speech has also been met with criticism and rejection from many Dax 30 companies. 16 Dax companies joined forces with other companies in the #StopHateForProfit initiative and froze their advertising budgets for several weeks, including BASF, Beiersdorf, Fresenius, SAP and Volkswagen. The car manufacturer stands "for open and equal cooperation. An environment of false reports or hate messages is unacceptable for us," VW announced in a ZDFheute survey (zdf.de, June 30, 2020).

Disinformation always raises questions about the credibility of sources. For users, their verification is "the digital version of washing their hands," according to media psychologist Frank Schwab in an interview with Spiegel. Around a third of German citizens over 18 are often or very often unsure whether online news contains false information. This was the result of a representative survey conducted by opinion researcher Civey on behalf of pressrelations. How can dubious news content be identified, and by what quality standards should they be evaluated? To find out, pressrelations integrated NewsGuard's scores, which offer a rating system for online news sites. Trained journalists analyze media outlets according to specific credibility and transparency criteria and rate them using point scores. Has a website repeatedly distributed false information without correcting it? Is research done responsibly, or are quotes or facts taken out of context? Are those responsible for editorial content named? 100 points can be achieved in total.

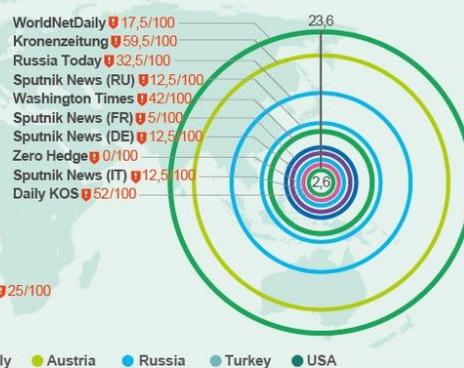
RELIABILITY OF REPORTING ON THE DAX PERFORMANCE-INDEX

TOP MEDIA WITH A NEWSGUARD SCORE BELOW 60

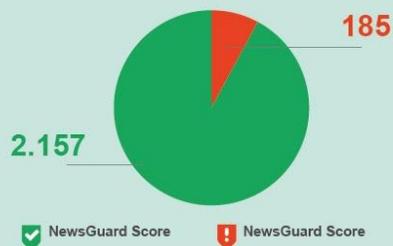
BUZZ IN THSD



REACH IN BIL



THE RATIO OF LESS CREDIBLE TO TRUSTWORTHY SOURCES IS ALMOST 1:12



DAX 30 COMPANIES IN THE FOCUS OF LESS CREDIBLE MEDIA



The data is based on a comparison of 355,153 articles from 185 less trustworthy media sources and 9,549,024 news from 2,157 trustworthy media sources for the period 07/01/2020 - 08/31/2020 collected by pressrelations' SearchPool. Media sources with a NewsGuard score below 60 are considered less trustworthy. The correlation of the German DAX 30 is based on the mention of relevant keywords.

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Among the less credible news sites on the net, the ones with the highest reach are also the most untrustworthy. Among the Dax corporations, BMW, SAP and Volkswagen in particular are struggling with reports in media that violate journalistic quality standards.

If a medium gets a score lower than 60, it does not meet basic journalistic standards and receives a red warning label - for example in the user's browser, in the news feed on Facebook and Twitter, in the media overview or in the analysis portal NewsRadar. Sites classified as credible receive a green label. With the help of NewsGuard's scores, pressrelations has examined the media resonance of the Dax 30 companies and analyzed the ratio of media with a high and low NewsGuard score in their reporting on these corporations. The result: 185 of the 2,342 sources reporting on the companies scored less than 60 points and were therefore classified as insufficiently transparent and lacking credibility. In terms of the total number of media that meet the journalistic requirements (2,157) and media that do not (185), the average is 1 in 11.66. This means that an unreliable source is found in about twelve media with a high level of credibility. The largest share of media that violate the standards is found in the media coverage on BMW (56), SAP (48), Volkswagen (43), Merck (41), adidas (40) and Siemens (38).

Looking at the reach of the different types of media also paints an interesting picture. In total, the media with a NewsGuard score of over 60 outperform the lower-rated media. However, the media with the highest reach among the unreliable sources also score worst in terms of credibility and transparency (WorldNetDaily: reach 23.6 billion, average NewsGuard score 17.5; Sputnik News (cumulative): reach 21.1 billion, average NewsGuard score 10.6). According to NewsGuard's review, the U.S. site WorldNetDaily has frequently published false and misleading claims and promoted conspiracy theories. Likewise, propaganda and false information has been repeatedly disseminated via the Russian Sputnik News. In order to avoid damage to reputation and image, it can therefore be quite relevant for companies and brands to take a look at the entire media spectrum and, in the context of crisis prevention, to pay closer attention to individual dubious sources. When placing advertising, it is important to ensure that the environment is suitable to preserve the desired brand image.

Strong brands will remain indispensable in the future, predicts the Frankfurt Zukunftsinstitut. Above all, people expect transparency "with regard to what is behind brands". In a digital and networked society, in which news offerings continue to grow, this applies both to companies and to the media that report on them.