



Unconference Critique Digitale Report- Oct. 21-22, 2021

## **Social Media as a source for research (ethical, technical, legal)**

*Panel C5- Lausanne*

*21.10.2021, 13h30 - 14h15*

*Panel suggested by: Andrea Lorenz and Mia Berg*

*Reporter: André Cardozo*

### **Discussion leaders:**

Andrea Lorenz works as part of the SocialMediaHistory project at the University of Hamburg. She studied Slavic Philology, History and Public History at the Ruhr University in Bochum and the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. As an editor and producer, she was responsible for the YouTube channel "MrWissen2GoGeschichte".

Mia Berg works as part of the SocialMediaHistory project at the Ruhr University Bochum. She studied history, theater studies and public history at the Ruhr University Bochum and the Turun Yliopisto in Finland. Her research interests are (digital) history culture and the representations of history in social media.

### **Discussion:**

The guiding line comes from the current research of Andrea and Mia. Both are historians working together on historical representations on Instagram and TikTok. The panel examined ethical, technical and legal questions of doing research with social media. The main issue comes from the fact that there is not really a well-established code of practice to research for the field, and especially across different disciplines.

### **Challenges:**

One example is the elements of consent and anonymisation. For consent, It is still uncertain if public posts in social media require specific consent, or even, what would be a public post. The issue adds another layer of complexity once we talk about specific subjects such as children. For anonymisation, its employment is considered as a standard, but for social media users that are influencers, there have been some cases where the subjects openly requested to be mentioned.

### **Takeaways:**

We need to be aware of our position as researchers in a larger context of digital capitalism and immersed in an algorithmic structure. This is one of the contrasting features in case of critique of the digital turn, and has implications with the form of construction of the data, which is a form of co-production, and part of the structure of web 2.0. This is particularly relevant for contemporary history research, where the narratives are competing and coming from multiple sources. The discussion followed with the regards of the non-users and the extrapolation of narratives of social media to the whole of society. Results and affirmations should take this with a grain of salt, and on the other hand, with the fact that even non-users are somewhat datafied by the lenses and narratives of the users. The



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advent of social media brought tensions with historic search, on the issue that the narratives are co-interpreted and co-produced.

**Shared literature:**

Balleys, C., Millerand, F., Thoër, C., & Duque, N. (2020). Searching for Oneself on YouTube: Teenage Peer Socialization and Social Recognition Processes. *Social Media + Society*.

Coughlan, T., & Perryman, L. A. (2015). A murky business: navigating the ethics of educational research in Facebook groups. *European Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 146-169.

**Project discussed:**

<https://smh.blogs.uni-hamburg.de/>