

# Young Audiences and their Valuation of Public Service Media

## *A Case Study in Austria*

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### Abstract

Public service media is confronted with a decreasing usage among young audiences and a general decline in the use of linear programming. Even though young audiences have been socialised by linear media offerings and with public service media in particular, their media usage displays a mixture of old and new patterns and on-demand media repertoires. In an increasingly digitized and networked society the general valuation of public service media plays an important role to select and retain those media choices. This chapter explores young people's perceptions and valuation of public service media in Austria based on semi-structured qualitative interviews and on a quantitative online survey in an experimental design focussing on monetary valuation. The results suggest that it is a matter of more and clear information about the benefit of public service media when compared to private competitors. Trying to refrain from political and economic influences to ensure journalistic autonomy would improve the valuation of public service media for young audiences.

Keywords: public value, willingness to pay, ORF, media repertoires, youth and media

### Introduction

Public service media (PSM) is supposed to provide content that has public value (Moore 2013) for every member of society (Martin & Lowe 2014). That is a key task more or less everywhere. Fulfilling this aim is increasingly complex, however, due to changing patterns of media use associated with advancing digitalisation that facilitates accelerating individualisation in media choices and growing audience fragmentation. Contemporary conditions make accomplishing this key task more difficult than in the broadcast era, both in terms of universal provision and reach. Growth in media choice encourages increasing demand, especially today for social media (Katz 1996; Bardoel & d'Haenens 2008a; Bjur et al. 2014).

General decline in the use of linear programming, the basis of PSB, is notably steep among younger people who are the biggest users of online content and services (IP Network 2016). For young audiences with an abundance of offerings online, selec-

tion is driven by personal evaluations of past performance and anticipation of finding personally appealing content (Gonser 2011). This has implications for the valuation of PSM. Do young audiences appreciate the idea and ideals of PSM? Would they pay money for PSM offerings? If not, what do they criticise and find lacking? This chapter addresses those questions with an empirical contribution to this area of scholarly debate. We address the book theme by specifically considering the ‘problem of youth audiences’ in their relations with PSM in a media environment that is characterised by abundant choice facilitated by networked media of communication.

### Youth and media use today

Online media enables detailed measurement of use. Page visit rankings and counting clicks and likes are considered key success factors. This is evident in debate over principles and performance in PSM with an increasingly pervasive economic rationale that suggests lower amounts of use and weaker support from audiences. The value of PSM programming is uncertain in this environment – even when these institutions remain faithful to public service principles (Bardoel & d’Haenens 2008b ; Lowe 2016). Online media bring expansive offerings on varied platforms. Coping successfully with requires significant change in a transition from PSB to PSM, earlier stipulated as the ‘core challenge’ (Bardoel & Lowe 2009). Contemporary development in media systems is thought to entail a new social obligation for PSM to achieve innovation in efforts to reach audiences – particularly young people (BBC 2004; Elni 2008).

Online media distribution combines new and traditional sources and allows users to build individualised media repertoires (Taneja et al. 2012). A 2015 longitudinal study in Germany investigated media use among 14–29 year-olds and found that traditional media are less often used by those who prefer internet sources (Engel & Breunig 2015). A similar development has been observed in Austria where the use of internet media is high throughout the day, while linear media use follows a familiar pattern: radio in the mornings and TV during ‘prime time’ in the evenings. In fact, this pattern is generalisable throughout Europe and across generations. Internet penetration in Austria is 83 per cent, on par with the European average (e.g. Media Server 2014/15). The extensive usage of mobile and online networks similarly mirrors other European countries. Key findings in the *2017 Reuters Digital News Annual Report* indicates parallels across the EU that match patterns in Austria (Reuters 2017). All of this suggests the Austrian situation is an appropriate case for analysis of what is likely to be more generalisable regarding the valuation of PSM by young people. This chapter reports findings from a study that has done that.

Research suggests that young people in Europe have been socialised by linear media use and experiences with PSM (Süss 2004). This implies adherence to valuations and patterns of use learnt through adolescence. It has long been understood that PSM has educational and modelling functions that have a bearing on future

media use and perceptions. What is new and especially important in the context of an emerging networked society is the growth of interaction via social media platforms where the influence of peers affects media socialisation and choices – with long-term consequences (Friedrichs & Sander 2010).

Uses-and-gratification theory indicates that satisfaction of various needs by particular media influences future use (Katz et al. 1973). Evidence also suggests that ‘temporary routines’ can become durable (Naab 2012), and that personal media repertoires are often the result of an image or ‘schemata’ that is evident in recognition patterns (Marewski et al. 2009). All of this suggests that how young people use media today has consequences for their future patterns of use, with important implications for PSM.

This is why young audiences have been such a pressing concern for the institutional future of PSM. Research suggests that young audiences are less likely to support public expenditure to subsidise online content (e.g. Kammer et al. 2014). Linked to this, people’s willingness to pay (WTP) for media offerings is declining more or less everywhere (Klimmt et al. 2006; Schlegel 2011), which must have a bearing on contemporary discontent with mandatory financial contributions to fund PSM. This trend has strengthened with the growth of networked communications (Levy 2005). The proliferation of digital media channels provide a growing amount of cost-free content. Older generations value this too, but often still pay for various media offerings due to their habitual use in daily routines – especially evident in newspaper subscriptions. Younger generations do not and are permeated with a ‘free lunch’ mentality from early childhood (Sjurts 2002).

The ‘public value’ concept has been useful for discussion and analyses of PSM in competitive media markets (Lowe & Martin 2014). This discussion can be categorised as having two major dimensions. First, there are needs keyed to the individual value of services for each user who rates and estimates PSM’s importance in personal terms. Second, PSM also serves important societal needs and citizen perceptions play an important part in determining the value of PSM. Ideally, a summative valuation of PSM will include both dimensions (Gonser & Gundlach 2016). The degree to which this is true has a decisive bearing on the legitimacy of license fee financing for PSM (Jäckel 2003).

Despite their obvious importance to the future of PSM, young people’s perceptions and valuation of PSM have been insufficiently studied. Most of what has been done are quantitative surveys about media equipment and use (Hasebrink 2014; Engel & Breunig 2015; MPFS 2016; Ofcom 2016a, 2016b), which indicate that traditional and online news platforms are complementary in use among young audiences (Van Cauwenberge 2010). Previous studies rarely examined attitudes towards media in much detail, which is needed because of its essential importance to the future of PSM (Vanhaeght & Donders 2016). Scientific investigation of people’s evaluations and expectations for PSM is limited across all age groups, and a pressing need today (Gonser 2011; Paulussen et al. 2016). To develop a useful picture of the complex and

dynamic contours of PSM's personal and social value, as well as its monetary value (WTP), a broader perspective is required (Jørgensen & Rutgers 2015).

The concrete drivers for supporting or rejecting PSM offerings among young audiences across types of media are inseparably linked to all these factors because we are dealing with a rapidly changing media ecology that is more highly and intensively networked but also more fragmented. This environment is conditioned by media use experiences that, in turn, condition future patterns of media use. This dynamic experience grounds perceptions of value for all media offerings and brands.

## The Austrian media landscape

We don't want to stretch the point, but we believe the Austrian case is useful for developing a more general understanding of challenges facing PSM regarding youth audiences in today – that the case is at least reasonably generalisable to Europe. But it is important to sketch the historical and social circumstances for PSM in Austria to also acknowledge what is unique. This pertains mainly to the national public service broadcaster in Austria, ORF (Österreichischer Rundfunk).

Hallin and Mancini (2004) categorise the Austrian media system as a case of the 'democratic corporatist model' they consider characteristic of the approach in northern Europe. Austria is a small EU member state with approximately 8.6 million inhabitants (Statistik Austria 2015) and is frequently suggested as a suitable case for examining 'small state problems' due to its large state neighbour (Germany), which is very influential due to a common language and similar culture. German media have considerable impact on domestic media and cause highly competitive conditions (Puppis 2009; Künzler et al. 2011). Both of the German PSM providers, ARD and ZDF, as well as the many private commercial channels in Germany, are popular among Austrians and part of most people's media repertoires. But ORF has so far maintained a strong position in the home market. The main TV channel (ORF eins) and at least one ORF radio channel (Ö3) have leading positions in daily reach (ORF Medienforschung n.d. a, b).

Austria is somewhat unique because digitalisation evolved slowly. ORF has launched services to facilitate time- and place-shifting. Television and radio offer I-player services via ORF-TVthek and archive functions that have gained popularity (ORF 2016). ORF also operates orf.at, a popular news website. More than half the Austrian internet population visits ORF's web services at least once a month (56.8 per cent), and the orf.at network is the most accessed online platform nationwide (ORF Medienforschung n.d. c). ORF also provides a short newscast called 'ZIB 100' designed for quick updates on mobile devices (each episode lasts 100 seconds). Reach has climbed to 60,000 users a day. The average age of users is 26 (Presse 2016). Other efforts to enhance digital engagement have been intentionally restricted, as in Germany (VFGH 2013).

Despite the wide range of ORF products and its strong position in the Austrian market, there are frequent allegations of too much political influence within the organisation. The governance of ORF involves a proportionate representation of political parties in each successive government. Overall governance is entrusted to the ORF Board of Trustees, which recently reappointed the Director General Alexander Wrabetz, a Social Democrat who competed for the post against a candidate favoured by the Conservatives. The strategy Wrabetz has proposed for the next four years of ORF operations and development focuses on producing innovations that appeal especially to young audiences between 14 and 29 years of age (Wrabetz 2016).

ORF has a mixed funding system, but license fees are the most important source of revenue. Every person owning a broadcasting receiver of any kind is obliged to pay the license fee. But this levy is not automatically charged per household as in Germany, and those who choose to confine use of ORF services to computer access (streaming) can do so free of charge (GIS 2017). In 2015, fee revenue was twice the amount derived from advertising (ORF n.d. b). On average, a full TV and radio license in Austria cost €282 EUR in 2014, while the EBU average was €135 EUR (EBU MIS 2015). Students, the unemployed or people with the right to social benefits are exempt from paying the license fees.

## Methodology

Our empirical research was conducted in two parts in the ‘Public Value Goes International’ research project.<sup>1</sup> The research focus is on the valuation, expectation and individual use of PSM online contents and services by Austrians, with an open, unrestricted approach in qualitative interviews (‘Part one’) combined with a tight measure of monetary support for PSM that distinguishes between online and linear offerings (‘Part two’). Although the study was about the population in broad terms, in this chapter we focus on findings related to young audiences.

### *Part one: Personal and social value of public service media*

Part one of our research relied on semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted in winter 2014 and spring 2015 after preparatory training for the interviewers (Irvine et al. 2013). Austrian respondents were selected via a ‘snowball’ sampling method to gather a diverse population. There was a rough ex ante consideration of demographic variables that include gender, educational achievement and age-group. Interviewees between 18 and 30 years of age comprise our sample of young audiences (N=50). Coding and management of the transliterated interviews was performed with Atlas.ti software (Friese 2014). To protect confidentiality, the names in Table 1 were produced by a random generator. This was not an equalised sample, but gender and age

groupings are adequately balanced. The majority of participants had high educational levels, however, which is an important limitation.

Three categories for further analysis were first established and are indicated in Table 1. The largest group of young people appreciates the offerings from ORF and favours the principle of PSM. We categorised this group as ‘PSM-valuers’ (N=24), amounting to about half of the sample. The second group did not care as much about this or recognise important differences in either quality or programming when comparing ORF with private channels. We categorised this group as ‘PSM-neutrals’ (N=18). The third group was the smallest. They emphasised not valuing offerings from ORF and did not support the idea of PSM. We categorised this group as ‘PSM-non-valuers’ (N=8). Thus, the first thing to note is the strong general level of support for PSM in use and perceptions among young people in Austria.

**Table 1.** Sample of Austrian young audiences in a qualitative research design (N=50)

Female				Male			
Age	Educational level			Age	Educational level		
	Low	Average	High		Low	Average	High
18-21	Jaqueline	Claudia		18-21	Robert	Florian	
	Leonie	Sarah			Kevin	Jürgen	
	Jessika	Diana			Marcel	Markus	
	Tara	Tanja			Jonas		
22-25	Stefanie	Karin	Anna	22-25	Martin	Maximilian	Peter
		Angelika	Sabrina		Dominik	Christian	Philipp
			Birgit			Ralf	Alexander
			Lena			Felix	Patrick
			Andrea				Stefan
			Maria				
			Sophie				
26-30	Nina	Amelie	Julia	26-30	Andreas	David	Thomas
	Monika	Vanessa	Alexandra			Lukas	Sebastian
	Cornelia						Jan
						Erich	

PSM-valuers

PSM-neutrals

PSM-non-valuers

*Comments:* Low educational level = minimum compulsory schooling or vocational schooling, average educational level = vocational schools with higher education entrance qualification or academic high school, high educational level = academic degree from a university. The anonymised names were randomly generated.

Distinguishing between the three groups was possible due to a question directly asked in the interviews about whether each person recognises any differences between ORF and private channels, and whether those differences are important to her or him. This does not mean the interviewed person was current user of ORF, but all participants knew of a variety of offerings from public and private media.

PSM-valuers responded affirmatively and were, in most instances, frequent users of ORF services. For example, Philipp (m/22/high) said, “Public service media is im-

portant for me”. In comparison, Tanja (f/21/average) is an example of PSM-neutrals; she couldn’t think of any differences and said, “No, it does not matter at all. There is manipulation in public service media as well as in private media”. Lukas (m/27/average) is representative of PSM-non-valuers who are in most instances neither valuing nor using PSM. He said, “if I think of the internet and the networks and the forums etcetera, then public service media is in the end not necessary anymore”. We discuss detailed findings after the next section, which explains the second part of our empirical framework.

*Part two: Monetary value of public service media*

The second part of our study is based on a non-representative quantitative online survey in an experimental design conducted in June and July 2016. For the targeted group of young audiences, a total of 722 completed questionnaires were analysed (Table 2). The invitation to participate was distributed to students and graduates of the FHWien University of Applied Sciences in Vienna on internal message boards, e-mail notifications, and social media. Additionally, journalism students in a methods class recruited participants with the additional requirement not only to ask fellow students but also to invite people outside the university. Thus, we did not use a simple random sample, which limits generalisability, but the total who completed questionnaires is comparatively high and the student body includes young people from across Austria.

**Table 2.** Sample of Austrian young audience in quantitative online survey (n=722)

Age		Educational level			Total
		Low	Average	High	
18-21	female	6	141	6	153
	male	5	57	3	65
22-25	female	0	125	86	211
	male	0	62	30	92
26-30	female	0	28	96	124
	male	1	26	50	77
Total	female	6	294	188	488
	male	6	145	83	234
Total		12	439	271	722

The average age of respondents was 24 and 68 per cent of the sample was female. That is a high percentage, also indicating the non-random sample. Respondents of the lowest educational level are underrepresented, although about 60 per cent have an average level of education and about 38 per cent hold an academic title, i.e. already graduated with at least one degree. The survey was created and processed using Unipark/

Questback software and distributed with a non-personalised link. The questionnaire contained several sections dealing with media use, views towards PSM and commercial media, and WTP for PSM. The section on media views included questions about satisfaction with PSM, degrees of trust in various media brands in general and the evening news in particular, and attitudes about license fees and routine media expenses.

To test how lack of knowledge or awareness of PSM online services might affect the WTP, we used an experimental design to present segments of the sample with a stimulus adapted from earlier surveys with a similar focus (Fauth et al. 2006; Schlegel & Seufert 2012; Schlegel 2014). Two PSM stimuli were displayed to respective groups: one featuring traditional TV and radio broadcasts presented to sample group 1, and a second featuring online services shown to sample group 2 (Figure 1). No stimulus was offered for a control group. Both stimuli contained a PSM brand logo, symbols referring to broadcast or online content, and a short statement about how license fees contribute to sustaining the services represented.



**Figure 1.** WTP stimuli for sample groups 1 (TV- and radio stimulus) and 2 (online-stimulus)<sup>2</sup>

After exposure, participants responded to the WTP question. Following Delaney and O'Toole (2004), as well as Schlegel and Seufert (2012), a subscription scenario was chosen as the context for the WTP elicitation, which was measured using a 'payment ladder' (Bateman et al. 2002). This required the respondent to 'climb up' from EUR 0 to the maximum price they would be willing to pay for a subscription. In our sample, the mean was only EUR 8.70. The average that young audiences would pay for ORF's offerings was actually higher in the group without a stimulus (mean = EUR 8.79; see Table 3). Thus, even without a significant difference between groups, we interpret this to mean that the sensitisation did not increase the WTP and actually seems to have provoked a lower average WTP. The same effect appears for the online offerings of ORF.

## Analysis: Parallels between the two parts on the valuation of public service media

Our results on the WTP test suggest the problem for PSM and young audiences is not lacking information about offerings, but rather a matter of whether the perceived relevance and monetary value are questionable. Even when PSM is valued, the average monetary value is low. We also found higher support among young people for the idea of PSM than the actual offerings of ORF. That suggests ORF as a specific provider does not meet the expectations of young audiences overall – even for those that use their services. The most radical interpretation might be taken as an indication of a general reluctance to pay for any media service of any type.

**Table 3.** Mean values of WTP for Austrian young audiences

Experimental groups	Mean	N	Standard deviation
TV- and radio-stimulus	EUR 8.52	225	7,161
Online-stimulus	EUR 8.77	256	7,376
No stimulus	EUR 8.79	235	6,911
Total	EUR 8.70	716	7,150

It is important to observe, however, that there are many valuers of PSM among young people in Austria. PSM-valuers actively use ORF and specify the advantages of PSM in principle and in referring to ORF as a predominantly good example. Florian (m/19/average) used orf.at and said, “especially ORF is, in my opinion, very professional and keeps you up to date”. PSM-valuers were heavy users of ORF’s online offerings. At the same time, they want more provision of appropriate content for younger people, although Florian thought it necessary for PSM to be “boring” and to leave out “the drama where there is no drama [because] the ORF is not profit-oriented and concentrates on provision of information”. When asked where she would expect to find trustworthy information, Lena (w/25/high) answered, “Public service media. And I would never ever search for information in some of those internet forums”. In comparison to other PSM providers, Philipp (m/22/high) saw development potential for ORF, “because there is an ample scope above it. If one takes for example the BBC or the German public service media, the ORF is just fair to middling”. PSM-valuers are convinced of the idea of PSM and mainly satisfied with the content provided by ORF, despite criticisms of performance and compared with PSM providers outside Austria.

PSM-neutrals are generally also users of ORF offerings and mostly evaluate them favourably. Markus (m/21/average) liked to “read the ORF News. They are very short and so on”. Karin (w/22/average) thought, “the majority of people are pleased with the media offerings [of ORF]”. Still, Felix (m/22/average) did not see any personal benefits in using ORF offerings and explained his general attitude: “I do not see a huge difference between ORF eins and ProSieben. There are American TV serials all

day long on both channels”. Andreas (m/29/low) agreed, “in my opinion ORF shows too much entertainment and less education”. Political influence was only mentioned by one participant and the overall image of ORF seems vague, although quite positive overall. There were some recommendations for improving ORF online content. Nina (w/28/low) preferred it when “everything is compact and concrete. I would recommend it [orf.at]”. Nonetheless, the concrete distinctions between ORF and private providers could not be nailed down by this group.

PSM-non-valuers are predominantly non-users of ORF offerings and see the main disadvantage of ORF in assumed political influence in the selection of news coverage, and in managing the company. Moreover, perceptions of outdated offerings and ORF having commercial priorities were predominant drivers for refraining from use. Sophie (f/22/high) was sceptical because, “the board of trustees of ORF is politically staffed and one may conclude that because of that, certain political issues are reported in ORF and certain other issues are not”. Although there were users of orf.at in this group too, regular or routine consumption was rare. As David (m/26/average) explained, “it only unnerves me. It looks like they have been stuck in the Stone Age”. Another criticism was a perceived lack of range in ORF offerings. Vanessa (f/30/high) was disappointed and said, “ORF also just wants to make money. [...] some political backgrounds are important but economic reasons as well”. In sum, for this group ORF is not much used and more distrusted due to perceptions that it is politically influenced, old-fashioned, and too focused on economic drivers.

Referring to the general level of monetary contribution for ORF’s online offerings, commitment is very low across the youth population. The average amount young audiences are willing to pay for PSM was only €8.70 EUR per month, about one-third of the current license fee for them. Given our results, this is not caused by lack of information about ORF online offerings. Comparing the low WTP with comments from our qualitative survey, two main reasons for reluctance to pay become obvious.

First, low WTP is rooted in a general tendency to criticise economic competition in ORF, confounded by obligatory license fees. Commercial advertising provides additional income, but is not an acceptable option even among PSM-valuers. Ralf (m/25/average) criticised this: “ORF collects license fees and still there are commercials as well”. PSM-neutrals do not appreciate license fees because, as Andreas (m/29/low) complained, “I do not know what they are doing with the license fees” and, he added, “They should invest in high quality documentaries rather than in entertainment”. PSM-non-valuers argued there is too much political influence, not enough plurality of opinions, and injustice because of obligatory license fees that must be paid even by individuals who don’t use ORF services. Vanessa (f/30/average) was clearly disappointed and said, “I have expectations of public service media. But they are not accomplished because they are too dependent”.

Second, participants described online offerings from private competitors as an enrichment of options and a preferable possibility for generating plurality of perspectives. Angelika (f/25/average) saw a benefit in using private offerings and explained, “if

there is just PSM, only one single opinion is forced and influenced by the state. Private providers have the chance to come up with their own beliefs and spread them. They have another point of view”. Alarming, PSM-non-valuers tend not to take any PSM offer into account because they have not found interesting content earlier and therefore anticipate more of the same. David (m/26/average) did not see a benefit for himself and commented, “the price-performance ratio is not fair – I do not get anything; I do not even use ORF”. For PSM-non-valuers, the wish for political independence is most obvious and the lack thereof is the main reason for being sceptical of PSM. Besides this, there is no disposition to support the idea of PSM as a way to create social value because that is not considered possible given the prevailing circumstances of PSM with regard to political influence.

## Discussion

Combining the results of individual and social valuations with the monetary valuation of PSM, a general picture emerges. To start with the good news: young audiences in Austria are aware of the various PSM offerings, are still using them (especially for news consumption), and generally appreciate the idea of PSM. But this result is probably overestimated as a result of low news consumption among young people and an overcritical evaluation of media offerings they don't even use (Prior 2009). Nonetheless, strong criticism of political and economic influences is pronounced among this population, and seen as highly problematic no matter whether the interviewees favour PSM in principle or not. However, there is suspected manipulation of content not only in PSM but also from private providers due to commercial motives. In that sense, young people are sceptical about commercial motives in media and especially sceptical about commercial PSM. The interviews also suggest that young people do not discern much difference between PSM and private providers.

Our findings demonstrate that there is a relationship between usage and valuation – finding relevant content conditions media routines and a personalised media repertoire (Napoli 2011). Nonetheless, refusal of PSM offerings in principle, and no matter on which platform, is a serious problem for the future of PSM. Although the specific national media background of Austria has to be taken into account, general interpretations can be inferred from empirically observed tendencies and coherences and the overall similarity of patterns in Austria compared with Europe more broadly, as discussed earlier.

### *The main results*

We structure the main results in three sections: public value, transparency and economic dependence. The most pressing need for PSM is not lack of information about their offerings, since all participants in our survey knew about ORF offerings even though they were not all current users. PSM-non-valuers in our survey are unlikely

to use linear PSM offerings but may turn to online offerings. The problem is that they might not even recognise they are using PSM content. There is, however, a lack of clarity about personal benefits and no sufficiently persuasive reason to use PSM offerings on the new platform. Alarming, even among PSM-valuers the meaning of public value and knowledge about legal requirements for ORF were shallow. There are annual reports provided online by ORF, but general knowledge about that, or even the basic idea of PSM with its complex social functions and relevance, is quite low. Transparency about political influence and journalistic autonomy is another area where more information and clarification should improve the image of PSM. Correspondingly, the use and reinvestment of license fee revenue was important for PSM-neutrals and PSM-non-valuers. This suggests the need to emphasise the social and individual rewards and explain how the money is spent, and why. Our results can be interpreted to imply a general scepticism about media that is keyed to suspected manipulation of content for political and commercial reasons. The obligation to pay for PSM offerings that are reportedly unused provokes incomprehension among young people. PSM-valuers are more likely to find license fees acceptable since they are usually PSM users. It was therefore evaluated as a justifiable contribution and an acceptable investment, but the actual amount this is worth was quite low.

Finally, for the young audiences we observed there was a general opposition to financing PSM by both license fees and commercial advertising. The mixture of income streams accounts for elevated scepticism concerning political interference on the one hand and undue economic influence on the other. PSM-neutrals and PSM-non-valuers were especially bothered and focused on the importance of avoiding economic dependencies all together. In fact, this was a critical issue even for PSM-valuers, and therefore poses a fundamental question for PSM. It merits a comprehensive rethinking.

As a whole, our results suggest that young audiences must be taken seriously by PSM providers for their long-term future. It is necessary to craft and communicate a clear message (i.e. rationale) for the relevance of PSM that is relevant to the next generation of potential users – or, otherwise, non-users. Which of the two an individual is likely to become has much to do with whether they value PSM in principle and in performance (both). More should be done to communicate the benefits of PSM in online platforms because so many young audiences prefer them.

Finally, to enhance the image of PSM among young people there is need to reduce political and commercial influences as the best way to guarantee high independence as an institution and in news coverage. Work is also needed to ensure clear distinctions between PSM and commercial providers. In an increasingly networked society this must be done especially on platforms that are used by young people. Failing this, there doesn't seem to be a good enough reason for using the services or paying the fees. Even worse, there is not obvious cause for supporting even the general idea of PSM as any necessity for the future.

## Notes

1. The project 'Public Value goes international' (2014-2016) brings together PSM researchers from Austria, Belgium, Finland and Germany to collaborate on audience- and content-related issues in several European countries. It receives funding by Vienna Municipal Department 23 for Economic Affairs, Labour and Statistics (MA23). For further information: [www.journalismusdreinull.at/en](http://www.journalismusdreinull.at/en).
2. TV- and Radio Stimulus: "Every day, millions of people watch or listen to the TV and radio programs provided by the ORF. These are financed through license fees and advertising." Online-Stimulus: "Every day, millions of people use the ORF's services on the Internet. These are financed through license fees and advertising."

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