

## **Research Problems in Media and Communication Studies within the Digital Environment: A Critical Review of Traditional Methodologies and the Constraints of Practice**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines a profound problem facing media and communication studies in Algerian universities: the inability of classical methodological approaches to accommodate the rapid, complex transformations of the digital environment. It seeks to provide a critical examination of data collection and analysis tools and to assess their effectiveness in measuring the interactive, fluid phenomena produced by contemporary digital platforms. By adopting a critical analytical approach, the paper highlights the epistemological and procedural constraints that hinder everyday research practice. The study ultimately concludes that there is an urgent need for methodological renewal and for the development of an academic awareness that embraces newly developed digital measurement tools. Such renewal is essential for improving the quality of Algerian scholarly output and keeping pace with the dynamism of the contemporary media landscape.

*Keywords:* media research, methodology, digitalisation, Algeria

### **Introduction**

The accelerated transformations in information and communication technology constitute one of the greatest challenges confronting the human mind in the twenty-first century. For us, however, as researchers in media and communication studies, they represent a cognitive predicament that goes beyond the user's mere fascination with the medium. Today, we stand before a digital space that is no longer simply a vessel for transmitting messages but has become a vital environment that reshapes social, political, and cultural relations through complex linguistic-programmatic logic.

This contemporary digital environment is characterised by extreme fluidity, in which the roles of sender and receiver overlap and the boundaries between the private and the public dissolve. This renders the communicative phenomenon continuously flowing, thereby transcending the rigid frameworks within which we have long been accustomed to working in our classical academic studies, which for many years focused on traditional media such as television and the printed press.

The epistemological problem that this paper seeks to address lies in the widening gap between the methodological equipment and tools inherited from the founders of this discipline and the reality of communicative practice, which is now governed by the power of algorithms and the rise of artificial intelligence. The media researcher today may find himself equipped with “rigorous” tools. However, these were designed under conditions in which the text was fixed and the audience was known by its geographical and demographic characteristics. At present, however, we are confronted with “hybrid” phenomena, such as interrogating the production of meaning through big data, in which meaning is generated not solely by the will of the communicator but also by silent technical interactions that determine what should be shown to the user and what should be concealed. This places the validity of traditional theoretical approaches under scrutiny and compels us to question their continued adoption without an updated review.

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to grasp the essence of contemporary research practice, seeking to rehumanise media research in an age in which numbers and sterile “trends” dominate the substance of human interaction. There is an urgent need to restore the value-based and ethical dimension in our studies, particularly given that virtual space has raised complex ethical questions related to privacy, the credibility of information, and the power of transcontinental platforms that control the direction of public opinion.

From this standpoint, our study seeks to offer a critical reading of the cognitive trajectories of this research, attempting to deconstruct the intricate relationship between programming techniques and freedom of expression while focusing on the manner in which media language has been transformed from a means of persuasion and argumentation into technical “algorithms” aimed at attracting search engines and securing prominence in their results, far removed from the essence of addressing the human mind.

On this basis, the study problem revolves around a fundamental question: To what extent can traditional methodologies in media and communication studies accommodate and interpret the structural transformations imposed by the digital environment on media discourse? From this question emerges a set of subsidiary questions:

- How do algorithms affect the structure of meaning-making and the shaping of digital public opinion?
- What are the limits of the methodological validity of classical tools such as content analysis and surveys in the context of big data flows?
- Can the local Algerian researcher produce a distinctive cognitive paradigm that expresses his or her cultural and digital specificity rather than consuming ready-made Western theories?

## **Methodological and Theoretical Framework of the Study**

### **1. Study Objectives**

The objectives of our study are as follows:

- Diagnosing the methodological gap: clarifying the extent of the divergence between classical research tools and the reality of “digital fluidity” imposed by algorithms.
- Understanding the mechanisms of “algorithmic meaning-making”: Identifying the intervention of the algorithm as a hidden partner in the shaping of public opinion.

- Exploring methodological prospects: the need to consider scientific approaches that combine digital analysis with an understanding of meaning while accounting for local research specificities.

## **2. Reasons for Choosing the Topic**

A set of determinants led us to examine this scholarly issue:

\*-Personal motivation: Our choice of this topic stemmed from our observation of the clear discrepancy between the traditional tools that we study at university and the rapid digital transformations that we actually experience, shaped by algorithms. This prompted us to seek a form of compatibility between the two.

\*- Objective motivation: We were guided by the conviction that if our current methodologies are not reconsidered, the discipline of media and communication studies may lose its connection with reality and become merely an excavation of the past, especially in light of what digital phenomena reveal.

## **3. Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its endeavour to move beyond conventional academic discussion toward a deeper understanding of digital reality by restoring the human dimension to the analysis of media phenomena and avoiding a purely numerical approach. It also calls for the construction of local knowledge grounded in the specificity of Algerian and Arab society rather than relying entirely on ready-made models. Its importance is also evident in its critical reading of the role of digital platforms and algorithms in shaping public opinion as influential forces that require understanding and analysis rather than mere observation.

## **4. Concepts and Theories of the Study**

Defining concepts in media and communication studies is an indispensable methodological step, especially given the considerable overlap that digital technology has created between technical and sociological terminology. We begin with the concept of the “digital environment”, which does not simply mean the internet but rather an integrated communicative space characterised by interactivity, immediacy, and a high degree of connectivity. Within this environment, the media message is no longer a closed text but has become a hypertext linked to other contexts through links and tags. (Deuze, 2019, p. 45)

The second central concept is the “algorithm”, which is no longer merely a mathematical formula for organising data but has become, from a media perspective, an intelligent “gatekeeper” (Tarleton, 2018, p. 75) that determines user priorities on the basis of previous behavior. This leads to the emergence of what are known as “echo chambers” or “filter bubbles”, which confine the individual to a single view of the world. This requires us, as researchers, to redefine the concept of media pluralism. (Bucher Taina, 2018, p. 39)

Within the same cognitive context, the concept of “meaning-making through big data” emerges as one of the most complex concepts confronting us. In the traditional environment, meaning is derived from linguistic and historical contexts; however, in the digital environment, meaning is sometimes produced automatically through the repetition of keywords and hashtags imposed by search engine optimisation strategies. Here, language is transformed from a human communicative tool into raw material processed programmatically to satisfy digital interconnections. (Fuchs, 2021, p. 156) This transformation requires us to reconsider the concept of “media discourse” itself: are we faced with a discourse addressed directly to the

user or with a discourse addressed to the machine so that it may deliver it to the user? This precise distinction is what we term the “semiology of tags and symbols”, whereby interactive symbols, such as likes and emojis, replace logical argument and become the principal criterion for measuring the impact of the message and its success in digital space. (Danesi, 2017, p. 42) From a theoretical perspective, this study draws upon Marshall McLuhan's theory of technological determinism but from a contemporary critical standpoint. If McLuhan argued that “the medium is the message”, we now go further by asserting that “the algorithm is both the environment and the message”. Digital technology is no longer merely a channel for transmitting information; rather, it has come to shape the nature of human thought and determine patterns of social interaction. We also invoke Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere to discuss how, in the digital age, this sphere has been transformed from a space for sober rational debate into a fragmented space controlled by the commercial interests of major platforms. (Cardon, 2010, p. 112) Linking these theories to digital reality highlights the urgent need for what is termed “epistemological critique”, that is, a reconsideration of the foundations of knowledge upon which we build our research, to ensure that they remain capable of explaining complex practices such as “digital manipulation” and “falsification of consciousness” through artificial intelligence. (Floridi, 2013, p. 77)

In addition, the theory of agendasetting cannot be overlooked in its new form. In the past, journalists and managers determined what mattered to people; however, the “trend” has become the driving force of the media agenda, and such topics are often stimulated by automated accounts or paid promotional strategies. (Quessard, 2021) This radical transformation requires us to adopt theoretical approaches that integrate digital sociology and data science to understand how audiences are directed in invisible ways. Reliance on classical theories alone may lead us to misleading conclusions because such theories assume the existence of a conscious and independent audience, whereas digital reality points to “users” surrounded by intelligent algorithms that predict their desires before they become aware of them. This raises enormous challenges for the concept of free will in contemporary communicative processes. (Sadin, 2015, pp. 45–60)

### **5. Research Population and Sample**

Defining the research population in digital media studies is regarded as one of the most difficult methodological steps that we faced in this study, owing to the fluidity of digital space and the blurring of its geographical and human boundaries. Nevertheless, we considered the research population of our study to consist of academics and researchers in media and communication studies at Algerian universities as a representative sample of local Arab researchers. The selection of this population in particular stems from the fact that it is the group most directly confronted with the current methodological problems associated with fluid variables. In terms of teaching traditional methodologies and confronting the new digital reality imposed by algorithms, this circumstance constituted a motivating factor for investigating the subject of our study. This choice also seeks to identify the cognitive gap between what is available in classical curricula and what is required by complex technical reality, thereby helping us to understand the “crisis of method” from the perspective of field practices.

In addition, the research population also includes digital media actors, namely, content creators and administrators of online news pages, because this group constitutes the real site in which

meaning is formed today. Content is no longer produced with complete freedom but is affected by the choices imposed by algorithms and by what they permit to circulate. The inclusion of these actors within the study population enables us to observe how digital public opinion is shaped not only by theory but also by daily technical practice. Restricting the population to these groups appears to serve the subsidiary question concerning the extent to which the local researcher is capable of producing a distinct paradigm, since these individuals are directly concerned with the process of localising media knowledge or consuming it from Western sources, which makes them the principal source of information in this study.

In keeping with the nature of the topic, which tends more toward an attempt at analysis than toward statistical enumeration, we selected a purposive sample consisting of 20 researchers and lecturers in media and communication specialisations, in addition to 5 experts in digital content management, as follows:

- **The first group includes academics and researchers (20 participants).** This group includes lecturers specialising in media and communication studies from different academic ranks, namely, professors, lecturers, and doctoral students, who belong to various Algerian universities. The purpose of targeting this group is to identify the “methodological gap” between the classical methodologies being taught and the challenges they encounter in their academic research when dealing with digital phenomena.
- **The second group includes experts in digital content management (5 participants).** This group includes field practitioners who are concerned with platform algorithms, search engine optimisation, and administrators of million-follower news and community pages. The inclusion of this group was necessary, as these experts engage daily with the algorithm as a technical actor and are best placed to explain how public opinion is shaped digitally beyond traditional theorisation.

On the other hand, we took care to consider the research interests of the selected sample within the concerns and topics of media and communication studies. We focused on scholars working in the field of the sociology of communication to understand the impact of algorithms on the formation of public opinion and on those interested in methodological studies to discuss the limits of classical tools in addressing current research problems. This diversity within the sample provides us with the possibility of obtaining rich responses that explain why the researcher experiences a kind of methodological alienation or disorientation when attempting to apply the outcomes of theories such as agenda-setting to a digital environment governed by Facebook algorithms or the X platform, which reorder priorities according to purely commercial and technical considerations that bear no relation to traditional editorial standards.

## **6. Data Collection Tools of the Study**

In our attempt to address the extent to which traditional methodologies can accommodate digital transformations, we relied on semistructured interviews as the primary tool for collecting qualitative data. Our choice of this instrument stemmed from our awareness that the traditional questionnaire might have restricted the participants. We sought to elicit in-depth responses from the study sample concerning fluid concepts such as digital meaning-making and paradigmatic dependency. The interview began with a central principal question linked to

each subsidiary question of the study, followed by several spontaneous questions shaped by the discussion, all of which remained directed towards the study's main problem.

Hence, the questions were divided into thematic axes that served as the driving framework for the remaining interview questions:

- **The axis of meaning-making:** In this axis, we focused on the digital experts on the manner in which the programming code intervenes in the structuring of content, where the main question was "To what extent does the algorithm impose its agenda on the local content creator?" The aim was to connect the technical dimension with the sociology of the formation of public opinion and mass mobilisation.
- **The axis of methodological validity:** This axis was directed to researcher-academics to explore the methodological reality of their engagement in their personal studies or in their supervision of student work related to big data. Given the enormous volume of posts, we raised the question of the effectiveness of the enumeration and counting categories. Here, we attempted to identify and document the extent to which the researcher feels methodological inadequacy, as well as the means by which methodological sufficiency might be achieved in such research situations.
- **The axis of the local paradigm:** This was a shared axis through which we sought to infer the possibility of constructing an independent vision. We asked the participants "Can we interpret the behavior of the Algerian user through theories that emerged in a Western liberal context?"

To ensure that the instrument measured what it was intended to measure, we submitted the interview guide to a group of reviewers. We conducted a pilot interview with one researcher and one expert to refine the wording. Among the practical observations we recorded were that content experts tended to use purely technical terms such as the engagement rate, reach, and shadow ban. In contrast, academics tended to relate the phenomenon to traditional theories of influence. This required a degree of methodological translation to bring viewpoints closer together during the presentation and analysis of the findings.

### **Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the Results of the Field Study**

Before presenting the results of our interviews with the participants, we find ourselves obliged to discuss the background of this field experience. At the outset, we encountered some academic reservations, as we observed during the first sessions that discussing the epistemology of methodologies or cognitive paradigms created a rigid barrier between the participants and us. We therefore deliberately sought to break the ice by drawing on our personal interests and our familiarity with Algerian sporting issues. Instead of posing dry theoretical questions, we linked the interviews to one of the contentious trends, namely, Algeria's participation in the most recent Africa Cup of Nations (2025), where the guiding question was "How do you interpret what happened on Algerian social media platforms during the most recent Africa Cup of Nations?" This simple question was sufficient to stimulate the participants' analytical engagement, and they began applying the concepts of meaning-making and shaping public opinion to living examples that every Algerian had experienced and interacted with. This methodological shift from dry theory to the sporting case enabled us to obtain dense qualitative data, as the participant explained the most complex theories through

the analysis of a sporting trend or an angry post about the national team. This transformed the interview from a mere question-and-answer exchange into a process of shared reflection on the validity of traditional methodologies in the face of the power of algorithms.

Our role here was not confined to recording responses; rather, we prompted participants to reflect on a striking paradox: how can the manual content analysis tool we teach at university comprehend millions of comments flowing in a single second during a controversial sporting moment? This question constituted a turning point in most of the interviews, as academics and experts alike began to acknowledge the existence of a gap between what we teach students and the challenges imposed by the digital environment, challenges that are programming-based and invisible to the naked eye, on the basis of our shared understanding of content analysis as the apparent description of the content of the communicative process.

The researcher, accustomed to the rigour of classical content analysis, now finds himself confronted with an overwhelming stream of posts that form and disappear within fractions of a second. This flow, or big data, is no longer merely a technical challenge but has become an obstacle to achieving accurate results. How, then, can we analyse public opinion concerning the Africa Cup of Nations 2025 when it changes with every like or comment imposed by the algorithm?

In this context, one lecturer put forward a highly significant idea: "We commit a methodological error when we attempt to confine a fluid phenomenon within rigid frameworks." This statement may mean that classical tools were designed for an environment characterised by relative stability. In contrast, in the digital environment, content is not a text suspended in a vacuum but rather a continuous interaction.

One expert explained that the algorithm does not aim to convey sporting truth; rather, it aims to maximise engagement, which means that it prioritises the most controversial posts because they keep users on the platform for as long as possible. This explanation places us before a disturbing question: if the algorithm chooses for us what we see of the news about the Africa Cup of Nations 2025, where is free will in shaping our sporting opinion? Here, the algorithm emerges as a hidden producer of meaning, directing us toward what serves the trend rather than what serves knowledge.

We may interpret this, within our local context, as meaning that the Algerian supporter who opened his account found himself confronted with a stream of news that reinforced his preexisting viewpoint. If he is angry about the national team's performance in the Africa Cup of Nations 2025, the algorithm will isolate him from all rational opinions and surround him with videos that intensify his anger. This process, which the participants termed "directed meaning-making", means that meaning is no longer produced through dialogue but through a filtering algorithm that selects for the user what corresponds to their technical inclination. We are thus confronted with a dangerous transformation in the structure of sports media discourse: the audience, which believed it was following "real" news, was in fact following an algorithmic version of reality, specifically designed to align with its digital footprint.

This analysis leads us directly to the concept of filter bubbles. During my discussions with academics, this concept emerged as one of the most significant findings, explaining the sharp polarisation within the Algerian sporting sphere. The participants indicated that the algorithm performs a silent sorting of users: the supporter who inclines towards a discourse of conspiracy

about the elimination of the national team from the Africa Cup of Nations 2025 finds himself surrounded by thousands of others who think the same, while no opposing viewpoint ever reaches him. This programmed isolation (Pariser, 2011, pp. 05–59) leads to the fragmentation of sports public opinion into isolated islands, where each island believes that it possesses absolute truth. This is the form of fragmentation that occurred when the Africa Cup of Nations became merely a means of intensifying conflicts between digital bubbles rather than remaining a sporting event for entertainment.

On the basis of participants' responses, it appears that these bubbles are not merely a technical problem but also a social and cognitive crisis. During the Africa Cup of Nations 2025, we observed how the public became sharply divided over technical choices, with no middle ground for discussion. The participants explained this by arguing that the algorithm destroys the shared public sphere. Instead of discussing football as a phenomenon of enjoyment and recreation, it was transformed digitally into a means of intensifying conflicts. Meaning-making here becomes a reflexive process, as the algorithm reflects only to the user what he or she wishes to see, thereby leading to a lack of critical awareness. It may be said that the algorithm succeeds here in directing the user without his awareness, as the supporter feels that he himself chose this content. In reality, it is the software that engineered this narrow vision for him.

When we compare these field findings with classical theoretical conceptions, we find that traditional theories, such as agenda-setting or gatekeeping, assume the existence of human actors who control the flow of information according to professional criteria. However, digital realities show that today's gatekeeper is a machine that possesses no ethical awareness but rather adheres to equations aimed at profit and the intensification of engagement around the trend. How, then, can the method and tool of content analysis, originally designed to study the printed press, accommodate this digital fluidity? Here, we find ourselves before a clear methodological inadequacy, as classical tools become incapable of explaining how algorithms manipulate users' collective consciousness. (Neuman, Guggenheim, Jang, & Bae, 2014, pp. 193–214)

It also becomes evident that traditional methodologies suffer from procedural and applied weaknesses. The researcher who applied manual content analysis to 100 sports posts did not see the algorithm that pushed those posts to the top or the big data from which those orientations were formed. Academic participants acknowledged that we are measuring twenty-first-century phenomena with twentieth-century research techniques. This methodological inadequacy leads to the results of current media research at Algerian universities appearing, at times, far removed from reality. Traditional questionnaire-based surveys may measure people's opinions. However, they do not tell us how the algorithm manipulated those opinions before they reached people's minds during the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations.

From another perspective, content experts offered a more pragmatic view. One participant argued that "the figure in the digital environment is deceptive if it is not read through the algorithm". He clarified this with a practical example: a media researcher may analyse 1,000 comments on a post about the Africa Cup of Nations 2025 and infer a general trend but may overlook the fact that a large proportion of these comments could originate from electronic flies or fake accounts programmed to direct the discussion. Here, the limitation of the survey

method becomes apparent: its inability to distinguish between human interaction and artificially generated interaction through programming.

When we pursued the discussion further regarding units of analysis, we observed methodological confusion among young researchers. One of them indicated that he had attempted to apply content analysis to reels concerning the Africa Cup of Nations 2025 but encountered the difficulty that meaning lies not solely in spoken words but also in the background music selected algorithmically to increase circulation and in the hashtags that link the clip to wider global contexts. This overlap makes traditional analytical categories simplistic in the face of the complexity of digital discourse. We are dealing with a multidimensional discourse, while traditional methodologies attempt to read it through a single dimension, leading to truncated results that do not explain why the transformation occurred but are satisfied merely with describing what happened superficially during the tournament.

In addition, the problem of sampling emerged in the digital environment. Whereas the classical survey relies on statistically representative samples, another participant maintained that “the concept of the research population in digital space is a methodological illusion”. The Algerian users on Facebook are part of transnational virtual communities, and their interactions are influenced by global trends imposed by algorithms. How, then, can the researcher measure representativeness in studies of digital audiences?

In light of all the above, we raise the following question: can the Algerian researcher continue to consume Western theories without contextualising them and subjecting them to local research conditions and environments? These findings indicate that we need a new cognitive paradigm emerging from our own specificity. In his sporting interaction with issues concerning the national team, Algerian combines national emotion with rebellious digital behavior, something that the Western algorithm cannot fully comprehend, just as classical theory cannot entirely explain it. We face an urgent need to rethink our research tools, as the digital field has outpaced our academic steps, and big data has outgrown our manual capacity for enumeration. An example of the Africa Cup of Nations 2025 shows that we need hybrid methodologies capable of tracking and understanding trends within their sociotechnical context.

### **General Conclusions of the Field Study and Its Recommendations**

In light of the foregoing, the field study and its analysis led us to formulate a set of conclusions, which may be summarised in the following points:

\*- **The algorithm as a primary invisible communicator:** We found that algorithms are no longer merely tools for organising content but have been transformed into a dominant communicative actor possessing authority that exceeds that of the human communicator. In the context of the Africa Cup of Nations 2025, we observed that the media's understanding of the tournament was not produced in sports editorial offices but rather in programming laboratories. This places us before the reality that meaning in the digital environment is, in many cases, artificially produced through programming, which threatens the independence of audience consciousness, as the audience believes it is interacting spontaneously while in fact, moving along algorithmically predrawn paths.

\*- **The clarity of methodological inadequacy in the face of the fluidity of big data:** It is evident that there is an epistemological gap between what we study and what occurs in digital

reality. Classical tools, foremost among them manual content analysis, have become procedurally ineffective in the face of the flow of big data. We are now confronted with a reality that compels us to acknowledge that we are measuring an ocean of data with a small methodological spoon, which causes our scholarly results, when based on traditional tools, to fail to penetrate the depth of the algorithmic engine directing those phenomena.

\*- **The fragmentation of national digital identity through filter bubbles:** One of the most important conclusions reached by our study concerns the sociology of the audience, as algorithms have fragmented public opinion into isolated islands. Instead of the Africa Cup of Nations 2025 serving as a space for inclusive national discussion, algorithms placed each supporter in a filter bubble that reinforced preexisting biases. The algorithm destroys the shared public sphere: the supporter who adopts an angry discourse sees only what nourishes it. In contrast, the optimistic supporter sees only what confirms it, leading to the disappearance of a middle ground for dialogue. This conclusion explains why digital polarisation in Algeria has gone beyond sport and into digital identity conflicts, thereby demonstrating that the algorithm is not merely a neutral tool but a social engineer that reshapes our relations with one another.

\*- **Cognitive dependency and the need for an independent local paradigm:** From our discussions with the participants, we concluded that we still live in a state of theoretical dependency, as we attempt to force Algerian digital reality to conform to ready-made Western theories designed for different technological environments. We are in urgent need of a local cognitive paradigm arising from the observation of our own interaction with different events, far removed from Western centrality, which views the user merely as a number and a statistical category. In contrast, in reality, he or she is a social actor who distinctively reproduces algorithmic meaning.

On the basis of these conclusions, we offer the following practical recommendations:

\*- **Adopting a hybrid methodology:** It is advisable to combine human analysis with automated analysis by employing digital tools that help to accelerate data collection while preserving the researcher's role in interpretation and understanding.

\*- **Strengthening students' digital training:** It is necessary to introduce simplified training in programming languages such as R and Python to enable media students to handle and analyse digital data effectively.

\*- **Moving toward the analysis of interactional trajectories:** It is important not to confine analysis to the content of messages but rather to focus on how they spread and to understand the role of algorithms in shaping trends and directing interaction.

\*- **Updating educational curricula:** Digital reality requires the revision of traditional theories and their adaptation to the modern communication environment, together with the inclusion of new concepts related to algorithms and their effects.

\*- **Encouraging interdisciplinary cooperation:** It is important to strengthen collaborative work between the disciplines of media and technical specialisations to understand digital phenomena more deeply and more accurately.

\*- **Promotion of digital media awareness:** There is a need to increase users' awareness of how digital platforms operate, especially with respect to the influence of algorithms, to avoid the manipulation of public opinion and preserve social cohesion.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, in this research paper, we may say that we stand at the threshold of a radical transformation reshaping the foundations of media and communication studies. The answer to the problem of the extent to which traditional methodologies can accommodate digital transformations appears complex and unresolved. Classical methodologies still represent the backbone of scientific research. However, they suffer from procedural weakness in the face of the power of algorithms and the immense flow of data. The issue of the local researcher and the production of a distinctive paradigm remains dependent upon the ability to reconcile technology and culture. The algorithms designed overseas influence public opinion in Algeria, yet the way we interact with them bears our own cultural imprint. Therefore, this research does not close the door to definitive answers but rather opens it to deeper questions: are we in need of a comprehensive methodological revolution and an epistemological break with the past, or is what is required merely a reworking of traditional methodologies to suit the digital age? It is certain that the accumulation of knowledge does not cease. That research in media studies will always remain in a state of gradual development and experimentation in an attempt to understand a world that grows more complex as its algorithms advance.

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