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PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH IN THE TIME OF BIG DATA

Abstract:

Public relations research has been facing many challenges in a fast-changing media environment. How to measure public relations effects? This remains the key question for many scholars and communication professionals. In the time of big data, possibilities to measure different aspects of human activities seem accessible. However, the challenge of coping with 3Vs (Volume, Velocity, Variety) of big data seems as an exhaustible effort to get a whole picture and interpret the meaning of these data. Undoubtedly, big data research represents an interdisciplinary approach. In public relations research interdisciplinarity was always present and therefore scholars and public relations professionals are in search of possible tools, designs and solutions that can help in big data analysis. The aim of this paper is to present possible research designs and solutions for public relations research concerning big data and user-generated content (UGC). As communicative practices are increasingly changing and moving on to social media platforms, focus of public relations research is also moving online. The author is examining collection, aggregation, analysis and interpretation of data obtained from various online sources that are publicly available. In terms of big data, the analysis is focused on user-generated content as a potential manifestation of public relations activities. The author is analysing UGC with real-time sentiment analysis and other available tools.

Keywords:

public relations research; big data; sentiment analysis; research design

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