

Interactive talkbacks of online journalism in Israel

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This study examines interactivity in talkbacks- user comments accompanying online articles- of online Israeli journals.

Talkbacks are a form of user-generated-content and share some characteristics with other content contributions on the net (such as in forums and social networks), though there is only dearth of empirical evidence focuses specifically on them.

This study examines talkbacks' interactivity utilizing a model proposed by Rafaeli (1988). The model defines interactivity as a variable of communication setting which depends on the responsiveness level of its partners. The goals of this research is observe the type and level of interactivity in (1) talkbacks of online corporate, religious and economic journals, and in (2) talkbacks accompanying controversial issues (surrogacy and recruiting Haredim) and more moderate issues (culture, recreation and leisure).

Research hypotheses assume differences in the type and level of interactivity within different subjects in corporate journal and between corporate journals, religious and economic journals.

Sample included 150 articles and 7868 talkbacks between 2009-2012, taken from: 'Ynet', 'Israel', 'Channel 7', 'The Marker'. Methodologically, we applied a quantitative content analysis by coding articles and talkbacks into categories such as: title, reporter name, length of article and talkback, type of interaction involved etc.

The study hopes to contribute academic discussion in two fields, interactivity and talkbacks, and shed some light on the response object, user or content. Furthermore, it can help point to the extent to which a sphere (e.g. Journal talkbacks) contained a real discourse and not just sequential responses that cannot be describe as discourse.