Abstract

This thesis examines how traditional media could reinforce its position as a reliable source of information, overcoming the huge amount of misinformation in public space. First, the thesis analyzes the concept of fake news, examining different concepts of this expression across American and Anglo-Saxon environments. In the following chapters, the thesis presents a link between trust in media and the spread of fake news, outlines psychological factors that allow for fake news to be spread easily and highlights the role of media literacy. Next chapters list the specific ways in which traditional media can fight against fake news, for example through slow journalism or factual verification. That is how the thesis gets to the three analyzed fact-checking departments, which were established as a part of foreign traditional media: ARD Faktenfinder, BBC Reality Check and RFE / RL / VOA Polygraph.info. These departments were founded between 2015 and 2017 and perceive verification of information as an independent journalistic output. Using semi-structured interviews, the thesis examines how these departments work, how they define fake news, what are their future plans or whether they actively contribute to the development of media literacy. Comparative analysis has shown that none of the departments has analyzed the impact of its activity on media consumers. It also turned out that all three respondents define fake news fairly broadly, focusing on not only contributions circulating on social networks, but also on statements of politicians. Respondents' testimonies have shown that they are concerned about the politicization of the term “fake news” and that interest in verifying information has been increasing. The proof is, among other things, that the departments were established as temporary projects but the media outlets eventually decided to continue to operate them. There are no such departments operating as a part of Czech traditional media outlets. Interviews with News Directors of the Czech Television and the Czech Radio have shown that these institutions are not planning any new fact-checking departments, mainly because of financial demands and lack of staff.