

Abstract

This thesis examines the role of authenticity, its elements and manifestations in the process of developing a relationship between micro-celebrities and their fans. The issue is demonstrated by the example of YouTube, the most important video-sharing site. Part of the issue is whether the YouTube content creators and their subscribers develop parasocial relationships as defined by Horton and Wohl (1956), and authenticity as an element that sets the relationship between micro-celebrities and their fans apart from the relationship between traditional celebrities and their fans. The theoretical part of the thesis deals with concepts that are associated with development of the micro-celebrity phenomenon, discusses the concepts of micro-celebrity and authenticity themselves, and expounds the parasocial relationships theory. Analysis of the role of authenticity in the process of developing the relationship between micro-celebrities and their fans is based on qualitative research that draws from interviews with micro-celebrities and their fans and the analysis of videos and comments by which viewers respond to them.