

Vojtěch Mejzr – Opinion leadership in the era of social media

Abstract (in English):

The concepts of opinion leadership and personal influence in relation to media emerged around 1950s, in the era of mass media. Opinion leaders became a cornerstone for a magnitude of consequent studies, either as mediators of media influence, but also as providers of personal influence, able to incidentally affect the opinions or acting of the people around them. The traditional medial system upon which are the classic theories based, however, has undergone significant changes – changes, which blur the lines between its primary distinctions. The emergence of “new” media is connected to processes of convergence, affecting the media technologies, the content, the relationship between the media and time, space and individual experiences of everyday life, but most importantly, the relationship between the content producers and the audiences, which are no longer just consumers. Diffusion of the internet and furthermore the user-oriented Web 2.0 grants the users abilities to use the social media in order to participate in the selection, production, but also distribution and gatekeeping of content – functions that have been previously distinctively held by the producers and the media industry. In this study, I use theoretical literature review in order to deal with the question of relevance of opinion leadership and changes to its forms brought by the era of social media. I also try to apply opinion leadership onto a relatively new concept of “influencerism”, i.e. user-created microcelebrities, whose influence has been soon noticed by the marketing industry.