

Editorial

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Dear SComS readers,

We are pleased to introduce the third issue of 2024, which features three insightful articles in our general section, a book review, and a workshop review in our community section. Before introducing the articles and review, we want to address the transition from APA 6 to APA 7 as our new author guidelines.

Transition to APA 7 Guidelines and Policies on Generative AI

The American Psychological Association (APA) released the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual* in October 2019 (American Psychological Association, 2020). As part of our commitment to clarity, accessibility, and inclusivity, SComS is transitioning from APA 6 to APA 7. The updated guidelines introduce essential changes to streamline the citation process and enhance readability. For instance, the phrase “retrieved from” is no longer necessary in reference entries, and DOIs should now be presented as URLs. Authors are no longer required to translate non-English titles in the reference list. These updates aim to improve efficiency and precision in academic writing.

However, the release of APA 7 in 2019 predates the advancements in generative artificial intelligence, which are now reshaping academic research, writing, and publishing. A pivotal moment came in November 2022 with the release of ChatGPT. Since then, general-purpose AI tools like ChatGPT and CoPilot, alongside specialized research applications

such as Elicit and SciteAI, have significantly impacted various aspects of scholarly work. Recognizing the profound impact of AI on academic publishing, the APA Publications and Communications Board introduced updated policies in November 2023 to guide the ethical and transparent use of generative AI in manuscripts (American Psychological Association, 2023).

The updated guidelines address generative AI’s ethical and transparent use in scholarly publishing. For instance, authors must disclose their use of AI tools in the methods section, clearly detailing how, when, and to what extent these tools were utilized. The American Psychological Association (APA) further emphasizes that generative AI cannot, under any circumstances, be credited as an author. According to the APA, human authors are “responsible for the accuracy of any information in their article.” Notably, grammar-checking tools and citation management software that do not employ generative AI do not require disclosure. To uphold confidentiality and privacy, journal editors and reviewers are prohibited from inputting manuscript materials into AI tools during the peer review process.

Similarly, authors are strongly discouraged from submitting sensitive or proprietary data to AI platforms, which could compromise participant privacy or endanger intellectual property (American Psychological Association, 2023). We plan to issue a formal policy statement by 2025 outlining our journal’s own stance and guidelines on the responsible integration of AI into academic writing. Until then, we encourage our authors to follow the APA



AI guidelines. For now, we recommend that our authors and reviewers adhere to the APA guidelines until we specify our own guidelines tailored to the requirements of SComS.

To ensure a smooth transition, we will support our authors and reviewers in adopting the updated APA 7 guidelines and adhering to the new AI policies. Please contact the journal manager or our editorial team for further information or assistance.

General Section

The General Section opens with a study by Hendrik Michael (University of Würzburg) and Valentin Werner (University of Bamberg), titled “Digital press archives for media and communication history research: From ‘reading rooms’ to virtual research environments.” The authors examine the profound impact of digitized press archives on media history research. These archives provide unparalleled access to historical newspapers, supporting qualitative and quantitative analysis. The authors identify three types of archives: flat portals, offering basic search functions; deep portals, integrating advanced search and automation for close and distant reading; and virtual research environments, enabling data visualization, text mining, and collaborative research. The article highlights projects like *Chronicling America* and *European Newspapers* and illustrates how digitized press archives reveal trends in journalism, language, and public discourse. However, challenges persist regarding media and communication history research, including inconsistent data quality, limited standardization, and access restrictions. The authors advocate blending computational tools with traditional qualitative methods to address these issues critically. Ultimately, digital press archives revolutionize media history research but require interdisciplinary solutions to harness their potential fully.

Ilya Sulzhyski (University of Innsbruck), Olga Matveieva (Dnipro University of Technology and Ruhr-University Bochum), Vasil Navumau (Ruhr-University Bochum), and Johan Skytte (University of Tartu) present a study titled “Comparing Russian and Ukrainian media frames during the war:

A mixed-method semantic network approach.” The authors examine how Russian and Ukrainian Telegram channels framed the Russo-Ukrainian war, focusing on the Battle of Mariupol and the Siege of Azovstal (February–June 2022). Using a mixed-method semantic network approach, they reveal how media narratives reflect cultural, ideological, and political contexts. The study identifies four distinct frames: RIA (Russian pro-government) portrays the war as “liberation from Nazis,” positioning Russian forces as saviors and Ukrainians as victims of their government. Meduza (Russian opposition) condemns Russian aggression with a “civic critique,” separating citizens from state actions. UNIAN (Ukrainian pro-government) employs a “unifying nationalism,” presenting Ukraine as heroic and Russia as dehumanized. Legitimny (Ukrainian opposition) advances a “conspiracy” frame, critiquing Ukrainian leadership and suggesting broader geopolitical manipulation. The study uncovers structural and contextual differences in media narratives by blending semantic network and qualitative content analyses. It underscores the critical role of media framing in shaping public perception, mobilizing support, and polarizing audiences during conflict.

Benjamin P. Lange (University of Würzburg and IU Internationale Hochschule), Stefanie Lörch (University of Würzburg), and Frank Schwab (University of Würzburg) present a study titled “Zwischen Wissenserwerb und wahrgenommener Glaubwürdigkeit. Effekte unterschiedlicher sprachlicher Gestaltung in den Fernsehnachrichtensendungen ‘Tagesschau’, ‘RTL aktuell’ und ‘logo!’” This article explores how linguistic styles in different TV news programs – *Tagesschau* (Germany’s flagship nightly news program), *RTL aktuell* (a commercial news program catering to a broad audience), and *logo!* (a unique news show designed for children, featuring simplified, age-appropriate language) – impact viewers’ knowledge acquisition, perceived credibility, and mental effort. An online study was conducted using re-recorded news clips tailored to various language levels to examine these effects. Key findings reveal that simpler language, such as that used in *logo!*, enhances knowledge retention, outperforming other formats. Surprisingly, perceived credibility

was not strictly tied to linguistic sophistication – logo! matched or exceeded Tagesschau in credibility, likely due to its accessibility. Mental effort, correlating with perceived linguistic complexity, reduced knowledge retention but did not consistently boost credibility. Standardized video stimuli ensured controlled testing of language levels, isolating linguistic effects. Optimizing news content demands balancing clarity and credibility to address diverse audience needs, paving the way for further research into multimedia effects.

Community Section

Franziska Oehmer-Pedrazzi (University of Applied Sciences of the Grisons) and Martina Staub (Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen, SRF) review a workshop hosted by SRF and SGKM that explored the impact of conscious and unconscious biases in research – both applied and academic – and their influence across different stages of the research process. Based on two case studies discussed in the workshop, the review highlights key findings, including strategies for minimizing biases and the potential of citizen science to engage the public in reducing these distortions. The identified strategies to reduce biases include incorporating diverse perspectives through methods such as rotating research topics among team members, involving citizens in the research process, using pretests and checklists for questionnaire design, and ensuring diverse recruitment and inclusive communication strategies.

The issue concludes with a book review by Patric Raemy (University of Fribourg) on “Innovations in journalism: Comparative research in five European countries,” authored by Klaus Meier, José A. García-Avilés, Andy Kaltenbrunner, Colin Porlezza, Vinzenz Wyss, Renée Lugschitz, and Korbinian Klinghardt. Raemy’s review highlights the book’s analytical approach to journalism innovation, praising its structured analysis of 18 key innovations and focus on societal adaptation and collaboration. While critiquing the arbitrary selection of countries and some organizational choices, Raemy deems the book a valuable and essential resource for understanding journalism’s evolving role in quality and public service.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this issue,

Philipp Bachmann, Sina Blassnig,
and Thilo von Pape

References

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