[DE] Media authorities' 2026 youth protection and media literacy report published

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On 13 March 2026, the state media authorities (*Medienanstalten*) published their new 2026 youth protection and media literacy report, entitled "#FollowMe!? Social Media, Influencing und Responsability". The report brings together the latest scientific findings and legal assessments, as well as practical projects from across Germany. As its title suggests, social media and influencers form the core themes of the report. This is due to the fact that, according to the 2025 "Youth, information and media" study (*Jugend, Information, Medien* - JIM), social media is not only perceived as entertainment for young people, but also as a source of information and a forum for social debate, while users are also exposed to advertising and a number of risks. In this environment, influencers shape opinions, lifestyles and political attitudes through their proximity to users.

The report focuses on five central findings: 1. the information shift with growing influencer power; 2. platform logics and the attention economy; 3. regulation, law enforcement and youth media protection as a structural issue; 4. media literacy skills and regulation only work together; and 5. networked structures increase the impact and reach of protective measures.

The structures and framework conditions of influencing, including algorithmic control mechanisms and economic models, are analysed in the report, while regulatory approaches in the area of youth media protection and media education are identified. Central aspects include political influencers, health and family formats as well as issues related to platform regulation, age verification and possible social media restrictions.

As regards youth media protection, in addition to legal requirements, the report presents strategies to prevent extremism and the expert opinion of the Commission for the Protection of Minors in the Media (*Kommission für Jugendmedienschutz* – KJM) on the labelling of edited social media photos (including those edited by AI). The risks of family influencing are also examined from the perspective of child protection.

The report also describes examples and tried-and-tested approaches from the media education field aimed at strengthening media literacy skills and reflective use of social media, as well as initiatives to strengthen parents' media

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literacy skills.

The report is aimed at political, supervisory, educational and scientific stakeholders, as well as interested members of the public, and aims to provide a basis for evaluating current developments in the field of social media and influencing, which also relate to the regulatory tasks of the state media authorities under EU and national media law.

Link zur PM der Landesmedienanstalten

https://www.die-medienanstalten.de/pressemitteilungen/vielleicht-ist-social-media-nicht-kaputt/

P ress release of the state media authorities

https://www.die-medienanstalten.de/pressemitteilungen/vielleicht-ist-social-media-nicht-kaputt/

Link zum Jugendschutz- und Medienkompetenzbericht 2026

https://www.die-medienanstalten.de//fileadmin/user_upload/die_medienanstalten/Aufgaben/Medienkompetenz/JuMeKo_Bericht/Jugendschutz_und_Medienkompetenzbericht_2026.pdf

2026 youth protection and media literacy report

https://www.die-medienanstalten.de//fileadmin/user_upload/die_medienanstalten/Aufgaben/Medienkompetenz/JuMeKo_Bericht/Jugendschutz_und_Medienkompetenzbericht_2026.pdf

Link zur JIM-Studie 2025

https://mpfs.de/app/uploads/2025/11/JIM_2025_PDF_barrierearm.pdf

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