

[DE] BLM media council adopts digital ethics guidelines

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At its meeting on 11 April 2019, the media council of the Bayerische Landeszentrale für neue Medien (Bavarian New Media Authority - BLM) adopted a set of digital ethics guidelines. Its position paper, focusing on the ethical and socio-political aspects of digitisation, is designed to stimulate debate on the consequences of the increasing use of technology in the media and on future approaches to regulation. It forms part of the media council's efforts to identify how social rules on the use of new technologies can be established. The BLM is the regulatory body for broadcasting and telemedia services in Bavaria. Its media council adopted a total of seven digital ethics guidelines.

The first guidelines state that digitisation processes must build on the non-negotiable fundamental values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Transparency towards users is therefore an essential requirement. The aim must be to harness the potential of new technologies and keep pace with other countries while remaining aware of possible problems and taking appropriate counter-measures in good time.

A modern legal framework should also be created in order to ensure fair competition and prevent monopolies by promoting diversity. In order to foster diversity, smaller services must not be discriminated against in relation to open access and equal opportunities on platforms, for example.

Efforts must also be made to promote each individual's right to decide for themselves and to teach people how to set limits in relation to social media, online shopping or personal data, for example. Meanwhile, high-quality journalism and media research should continue to be supported. Since in-depth research, the comparison of opposing views and the separation of news and comments are more important than ever, media education must evolve as digitisation progresses. In research projects, the role played by intermediaries in opinion-forming processes, for example, should be investigated.

The paper also addresses the issue of artificial intelligence (AI). Nowadays, machine learning applications can be developed and used with minimal outlay. However, not every application is wanted by society. It may even be the fear of losing control in the face of intelligent digital solutions that is creating increasing uncertainty in western society and strengthening the position of populists with

simple messages. The media council is therefore calling for a more interdisciplinary approach in AI research so that, in addition to economic and technical factors, attention is paid to the human perspective.

At the beginning of April, the independent European High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence (HLEG AI) presented its final ethics guidelines for trustworthy AI, which deal mainly with the issues of control, security, data protection, non-discrimination, sustainability, accountability and transparency.

The BLM hopes to continue dialogue on ethical and socio-political issues related to digitisation at local and global levels. It believes the digital transformation also requires media authorities to act beyond their traditional remit and support broadcasters and viewers on the path to a multi-channel digital world.

Leitlinien des Medienrats der Bayerischen Landeszentrale für neue Medien

https://www.blm.de/infothek/positionen_und_reden/2019-04-11-positionspapier-leitlinien-digitale-ethik-11258

Guidelines of the Bavarian New Media Authority media council

