

Responsible use of AI in public communication:

Discourses about accountability measures and governance options – A comparative analysis in Europe

DIACOMET

About

DIACOMET contributes to the advancement of ethical and accountable communication by fostering capacity building for civic resilience against information distortions and promoting civic accountability. Therefore, DIACOMET aims to generate a concept of Dialogic Communication Ethics (DCE), which would provide a framework for an inclusive model of accountability mechanisms that combines media accountability (the level of organisations) with civic accountability (the level of citizens) and is guided by Principles of Good Communication Conduct (PGC).

More info at:



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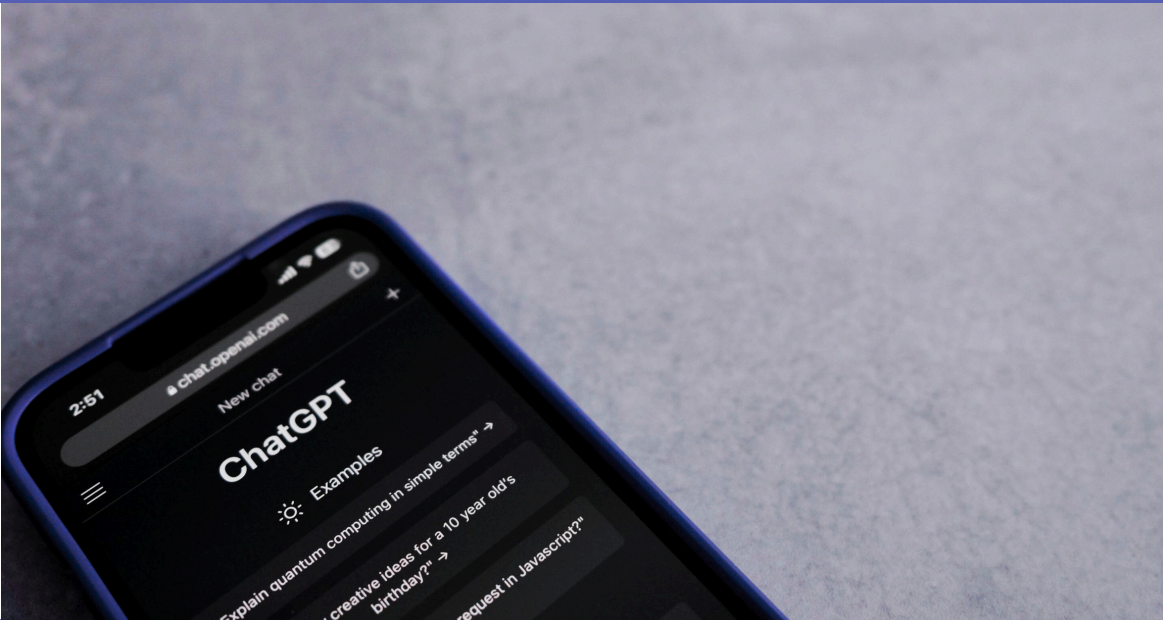
Affiliations

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Introduction

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is **reshaping public communication** in today’s hybrid media ecosystem (Chadwick, 2017).
- While generative AI enables **participatory and pluralistic dialogue**, it also facilitates **harmful patterns of communication**.
- These risks raise **concerns about AI’s role in the public sphere** and its impact on democratic processes (Jungherr, 2023), such as the communication and media industries (Guzman and Lewis, 2024).
- Governance and accountability of AI tools in media and communication **require urgent attention** to ensure transparency, fairness, and responsibility.



Research Questions

What **themes emerge in codes and guidelines** for public communication?

How do AI governance strategies differ between **national and supranational actors**?

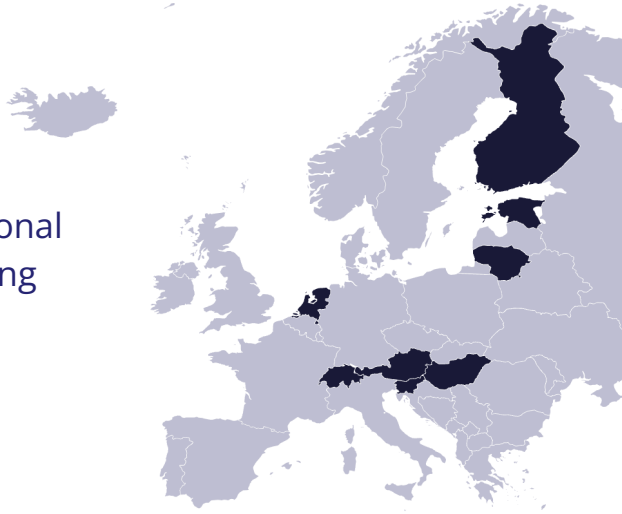
What **accountability and governance mechanisms** do these frameworks propose?

Methodology

- Systematic collection of 429 national and international codes and guidelines for public communication in Austria, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Switzerland.
- From this database, 63 documents (14.7%) - almost half by supranational organisations - explicitly addressing AI governance were analysed using **qualitative inductive thematic analysis** (Braun & Clarke, 2012).



Are you curious about how AI is addressed in various sectors of public communication?
Explore our database: <https://diacomet.eu/database/>



Key Themes & Risks Throughout AI’s Lifecycle

Development and operation

Technical and social robustness

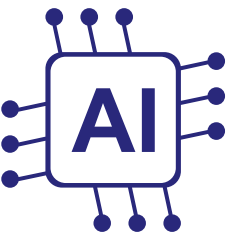
- Errors (‘hallucination’/‘bias’)
- Impact on data and privacy
- Legal compliance

Legitimation for the use

Cost-effective and efficiency-enhancing solution

- Monitoring of self-regulation
- Moderating social media

“(AI) as a tool, never as a system that can replace the work of a journalist.” (De Volkskrant Protocol, Pos. 34)



Deployment of AI

- Disruptive patterns
- Legal compliance
- Diversity and inclusion
- Openness and accessibility

National versus Supranational Stakeholders



National documents – mostly by tech-related companies - are customised to align with the national laws and regulations, media systems, cultural, economic and political context (*everyday application*).



Supranational stakeholders prioritise a more extensive framework grounded in fundamental rights, aiming to harmonise shared values and standards across the heterogeneous member states (*normative point of view*).

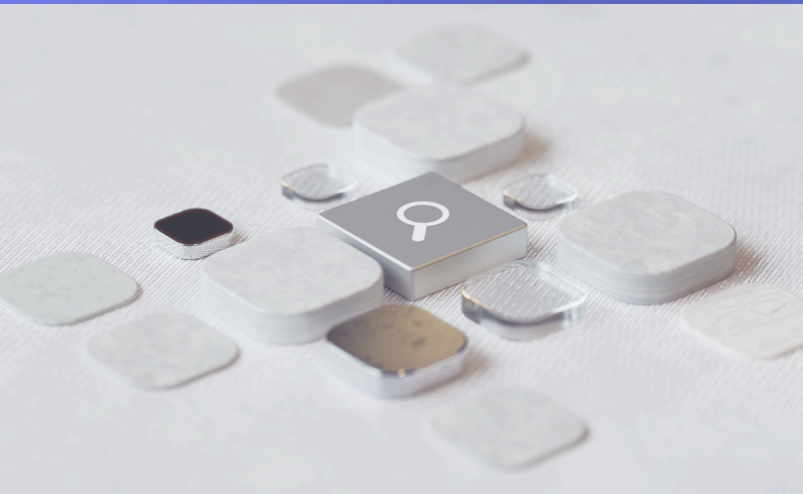
Governance and Accountability Mechanisms

- Advertising, PR, and corporate actors emphasise **future investment** in AI automation, but offer little detail on ethical measures.
- Social media relies on automated moderation while limiting AI-generated content.
- Need for **transparency, accuracy**, and adherence to **professional standards**.
- Emphasising **human autonomy, responsibility**, and **human oversight** is critical to prevent misuse and ensure democratic accountability.
- Risk control**: Proactive testing and monitoring help ensure accountable AI governance.

Conclusion

Responsible use of AI systems in public communication remains marginally addressed, with limited understanding of potential risks and no universally accepted framework. Achieving algorithmic accountability requires core values like transparency, fairness, and human oversight supported by collaboration among policymakers, media organisations, technologists, and civil society.

As AI continues to reshape the public sphere, mapping governance strategies and best practices is essential to upholding democratic values and media accountability.



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