

ZeMKI-Forschungskolloquium

ZeMKI Research Seminar

Linzer Str. 4, Room 60.070, 28359 Bremen, DE

26.06.2024, 16.15 – 17.45 (CET)

Prof. Dr. Anne Kaun
(Södertörn University, Sweden)

Vanishing Act - An Ethnography of Digitalization and the Disappearance of Printed News

Abstract:

In this presentation I engage with digitalization through the lens of disappearance, challenging the prevailing narrative of digital emergence and transformation. Guided by Jean Baudrillard's idea that concepts emerge when things begin to vanish, the study focuses on the disappearance of printed newspapers as a case study. There are two main aims: first, to ethnographically document the decade-long shift in news delivery from the perspectives of readers and producers; second, to theoretically understand the role of disappearance in the digitalization process, exploring how experiences of loss shape the emerging media landscape. The research questions delve into the experiences of newspaper distributors, producers, and readers in the face of disappearing print media, as well as the influence of this disappearance on new distribution formats and media practices. The presentation contributes to journalism studies by addressing the overlooked aspect of newspapers' materiality and distribution shifts. Additionally, it adds to the literature on the role of technology for social and cultural change by exploring loss and disappearance alongside emergence. Methodologically, the presentation builds on material gathered through ethnographic methods to study industry shifts and audience experiences. The aim is to nuance the understanding of the interplay between disappearance and emergence in the digitalization process.

Bio:

Anne Kaun is Professor at the Department of Media and Communication Studies, Södertörn University, Sweden, and a Wallenberg Academy Fellow studying the democratic implications of automated decisions making, artificial intelligence and digitalization more generally in the welfare sector.