

YouTube as a Trustworthy Confidant? A Closer Look at Educational Channels

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PROBLEM

- great importance of (educational) videos in the daily (learning) routine of pupils, especially on the online video platform YouTube (cf. mpfs 2018, p. 13, 32–34; mpfs 2019, p. 39; Rat für Kulturelle Bildung e.V. 2019, p. 28)
- some research existent on the quality of educational videos (cf. e.g. Findeisen/Horn/Seifried 2019; Dorgerloh/Wolf 2020) and their recipients (cf. Rat für Kulturelle Bildung e.V. 2019)
but:
 - educational videos vary in quality, design, content etc. (cf. Dorgerloh/Wolf 2020, p. 8)
 - often no information on YouTube about the quality of videos or the correctness of the information (cf. Dorgerloh/Wolf 2020, p. 9)
 - hardly any focus on the people/companies behind the videos/channels (cf. Valentin 2020, p. 51)



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Who is responsible for (German) educational video channels on YouTube?
2. To what extent do the these channels differ from each other?

ANALYSIS GRID FOR EDUCATIONAL VIDEO CHANNELS ON YOUTUBE (AEY)

Development

- so far, no suitable instrument for comparative analysis of YouTube educational video channels available
- construction of a new instrument based on the questionnaire on open educational resources (OER) (cf. Siegel/Heiland 2019) and the Augsburg analysis and evaluation grid for analogue and digital educational media (cf. Fey 2015)

Structure

5 categories with 31 questions (cf. e.g. Findeisen/Horn/Seifried 2019, p. 18–31; Kulgemeyer 2020, p. 71–74; Rat für Kulturelle Bildung e.V. 2019, p. 8, 10; Schmidt-Borcherding 2020, p. 67–68; Schön/Ebner 2020, 78–79; Wolf/Dorgerloh 2020, p. 187–188)

- I. Channel Performance** (6 questions)
- II. Channel Structure and Didactic Contextualisation** (12 questions)
- III. Channel Responsibility** (4 questions)
- IV. Economic Framework** (4 questions)
- V. Quality Assurance** (5 questions)

Use

- use of the AEY in the German-language study “MrWissen2go, sofatutor und Co. auf dem Prüfstand” (cf. Siegel/Streitberger/Heiland 2021, in press)
- sample: 11 educational video channels (cf. qr-code on the right)
- non-reactive data collection (cf. Lütters 2004) in August 2020
- descriptive-content-analytical approach (cf. Fey 2015)



Fig. 1. Project Homepage with Information on Sample, Research Materials and AEY

IV Economic Framework	2 Advertisement			
	Does the channel place commercial advertisements? If so, how? (multiple choice)	Commercial advertisements on YouTube are one of the most important sources of revenue for YouTube content creators (cf. Döring 2014, p. 25–26). Young people, who frequently watch explanatory videos, are a target group worth protecting. Thus, a channel's use of advertising should be examined critically (cf. Deutscher Werberat 2017).	☐ deactivate adblock ☐ videos / sort by <i>Date added (newest)</i> / "Examine videos in 1st, 2nd and 3rd position incl. video description and comments" ☐ videos / sort by <i>Most popular</i> / "Examine videos in 1st, 2nd and 3rd position incl. video description and comments"	
	☐ yes – by use of affiliate links in the video description	☐ yes – by use of adverts before, during or after video	☐ yes – by use of product placements	☐ no

SELECTED RESULTS

- large differences in terms of type and frequency of advertising
- common forms of advertising: use of adverts (6 out of 11 channels), affiliate links (5) and product placements (3)
- very questionable use of hidden advertising – as represented by product placements for children and young people in particular – as YouTubers are considered very trustworthy confidants for this target group (Araújo et al. 2017, p. 342)
- for further results see Siegel, Streitberger and Heiland (2021, in press)

DISCUSSION

- **limitations:** small and selective sample of German-language educational channels on YouTube; cross-sectional study with limited data collection period on a very dynamic video platform
- **strengths:** exploratory study in an important field of research for media education; development of a science-based instrument (AEY) to critically reflect educational video channels, their providers and content
- **next steps:** subject-specific adaptations of the AEY in preparation (e.g. for geography-specific channels); practical implementation of the AEY e.g. in teacher education, video production and distance learning contexts

RQ1: Highly diffent providers are responsible for (German) educational video channels on YouTube (e.g. one-person providers, public organisations, profit-oriented corporations)

RQ2: Providers differ especially according to size, channel structure, didactic contextualisation and funding (e.g. advertising); Channels Trustworthy? → Trustworthiness of providers difficult to assess → multicriterial analysis of each channel necessary, e.g. by using the AEY

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