The Images of science in the digital world: between social networks and internet media

The project is financed by the Bulgarian National Science Fund under Contract КП-06-Н55/6 with Fund for Scientific Researches. Principle investigator is Martin Ivanov, PhD
Period: November 2021 – November 2024

The project is a fundamental study that aims to justify a new interdisciplinary scientific field - the images of science in the digital public space - and to develop a multidimensional theoretical framework for its understanding. To achieve this goal the project will:

- Develop a methodology to enable quantitative measurement and qualitative analysis of the distribution of different images in the network.
- Identify the key actors involved in the formation of images of science and their typology.
- Analyse the difference between images of science in official digital media and social networks.
- Reveal ideas held about science in different social groups.

The project is relevant insofar as it problematizes and explores one of the main prerequisites, which, however, relatively rarely attract scientific attention in our country for the implementation of any strategy and policy in the field of scientific research, namely - public perceptions of science.

The theoretical framework and methodology of the project are innovative and interdisciplinary. The methodology includes two components that are original for both Bulgarian and international research practices: 1) application of the actor-network theory as a theoretical framework; 2) use of machine self-learning for quantitative analysis of large text arrays. The project also envisages conducting a representative survey and focus groups.

The main scientific results, which will be published in journals with impact factor or impact rank and in refereed journals and collections, are: a) comprehensive interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological framework for analysis of images of science in digital space; b) historical analysis of the emergence of specific images of science; c) typology of the images of science and the actors involved in their formation; d) development of digital infrastructure for big data analysis; e) creation of an information corpus with free access to the database.

The project will be implemented by a team of established and young scientists and in collaboration with foreign experts in the field. The dissemination plan is aimed at different target audiences, to whom a different approach and targeted messages will be applied. The sustainability of the research will be guaranteed through the created infrastructure, the formation of interests and knowledge of young scientists in the field and the creation of a problem group for researching the images of science.

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Keywords: images of science, actor-network theory, digitalization, machine self-learning, large databases.