

# Understanding the Platformised Public Service Media Audience: The German *funk* Content Network and its Users

Ann-Kathrin Böttke  
*Leipzig University, DEU*

Sven Stollfuß  
*Leipzig University, DEU*

## Abstract

This article examines the target group-specific orientation of platformised public service media (PSM) in Germany. As PSM undergoes changes due to platformisation, it must adapt to evolving infrastructural conditions in digital media culture. Addressing users and adapting to their needs through communication is essential if PSM is to meet public demand in a platform-driven public sphere. This article discusses audience orientation by analysing the case of *funk*, the German public service content network operated by ARD (a consortium of public broadcasters) and ZDF (second German television). This analysis highlights the importance of approaches that will allow PSM to engage its younger audience, particularly on social media platforms (SMPs). The study utilises data collected through an online survey ( $N=17,049$ ) of *funk* users, and uses content analysis to evaluate the data. The article contributes to the research on platformisation of PSM through its analysis of user feedback on the strategic and communicative transformation of PSM on SMPs.

**Keywords:** Platformisation, Public service media, Convergence, Social media, Audience research, User feedback

## Introduction

Social media platforms (SMPs) have reshaped digital media culture through data interface policies that structure online communication (Helmond, 2015). As Faulkner-Gurstein and Wyatt (2023: 891) note, platforms have become key ‘political-economic formations’, merging with organisational structures and forcing adaptation to an expanding ‘entrepreneurial approach’ rooted in exploitative data practices characteristic of the data-extractive operations of ‘platform capitalism’ (Srnicsek, 2017), which increasingly affect public organisations and institutions. Similarly, van Dijck et al. (2018) have explored these developments through the emergence of a platform society. In this context, established media organisations, such as public service media (PSM), face structural and strategic challenges in adapting to a platform-driven environment – particularly in engaging younger, internet-savvy audiences who prefer online platforms over traditional broadcasts (van Es and Poell, 2020; Sehl, 2020: 359-360; Redvall, 2018: 143).

In this platformised environment, involving users in media policy is central to rethinking the public service mission (van Es and Poell, 2020: 2). This involves delivery of targeted and appropriately representative content to the platforms where younger users are already engaging with media. However, while PSM must better align with younger users’ expectations in a platform-driven environment, there remains a limited understanding of what audiences actually ‘expect and want from PSM’ (Urbániková and Smejkal, 2025: 2; see also Campos-Rueda and Goyanes, 2023: 2495; Sehl, 2020: 361; Just et al., 2017: 992). Therefore, it is essential to develop a deeper understanding of younger audiences’ interests and expectations and to engage them more directly with PSM content on SMPs. Doing so enables the creation of content that is more effectively tailored to specific target groups, fostering a more interactive and participatory communication dynamic (Neuberger, 2022: 105-106; see also Enli, 2012: 126).

From this perspective, we aim to explore PSM’s audience orientation amidst platform-driven transformations, using the example of German public service content network *funk* – which is operated by ARD (a consortium of public broadcasters) and ZDF (second German television) – to highlight new strategic attempts by PSM to meet its younger audience, in particular on third-party SMPs. In the course of our research, we conducted a study that attempts to answer the following questions: Q1: How well does the *funk* network align its content with the needs of its target audience on social media platforms? This research question focuses on the needs and expectations of targeted audiences in the context of platform-driven media usage, and how PSM content is being adapted to address the evolving conditions of today’s media environment. Q2: To what extent does the content offered by *funk* resonate with the topics that users feel represent their lives and interests? This research question centres on user-oriented issues to provide deeper insights into how younger audiences, in particular, engage with PSM and what they expect from its content.

Within digital media and communication studies, this article contributes to research on the platformisation of PSM and PSM audiences by analysing user feedback on PSM’s transformation on SMPs. The theoretical framework is based on approaches to the changing conditions of PSM on digital and social media through platformisation (e.g., Nieborg and Poell, 2018; van Dijck et al., 2018; van Es and Poell, 2020; Stollfuß, 2021; Neuberger, 2022). Methodologically, the study employed an online survey using a standardised questionnaire (Reinecke, 2019) for data collection ( $N=17,049$ ) and combines qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2015) with a quantitative approach (Brosius et al., 2012: 133) to evaluate the data.

Building on and extending the discussions in Stollfuß (2019, 2021, 2024), our argument proceeds as follows: first, we outline the conceptual context and background of the study by discussing the structural challenges that PSM face in adapting to transformations driven by platformisation. Second, we narrow our focus to the specific case of the German network *funk*, which produces and distributes PSM content aimed at younger audiences on SMPs. Third, to better understand how *funk*'s content resonates with its audiences, we present and discuss the findings from our online survey of *funk* users. This analysis focuses on four key areas: (1) the devices and platforms used to access *funk* content, (2) the role of social media in engaging with PSM content, (3) the motivations and reasons for using *funk* on SMPs, and (4) the extent to which *funk* reflects the target audience's interests and life realities. Finally, we draw conclusions based on our approach.

## **Public Service Media and the Challenges of Platformisation**

The cultural upheavals and transformative dynamics caused by digital media have posed significant challenges for traditional media such as PSM. Particularly, the shift towards platformised content production and distribution to meet increasing online consumption habits has profoundly impacted how PSM organisations operate in this environment (Doyle et al., 2025: 2; Johnson and Dempsey, 2023: 501-503; Stollfuß, 2024: 191-192; Donders, 2019: 1020; Rustad, 2018: 508). In the era of platformisation, as Dragomir and Túnñez López (2024: 609-610) write, content decision-making processes are no longer driven by editorial decisions. Instead, they are 'curated based on algorithms that analyze audience preferences and behaviors' (Dragomir and Túnñez López, 2024: 610). In this situation, tech companies like Alphabet/Google, Meta/Facebook, Apple, Amazon, and Microsoft – often referred to as the 'Big Five' (van Dijck et al., 2018: 15) – have become leading infrastructural platforms shaping the rules for most content providers in Western digital media (Nieborg and Poell, 2018; Plantin and Punathambekar, 2018). This leads to one-sided dependencies, forcing content providers to adapt to the platforms' terms (Nieborg and Poell, 2018: 4277). Consequently, this marks a sweeping transformation across technological, cultural, economic, and political domains, building new structures of societal mediation that go beyond traditional mass media (van Dijck et al., 2018: 15-16; Jarren, 2019: 16).

Commercial providers and third-party platforms have long presented challenges to PSM (Johnson, 2013; Syvertsen, 2003). However, as van Es and Poell (2020: 2) emphasise, digital platforms now actively shape the visibility, circulation, and consumption of cultural content through their techno-commercial infrastructures. SMPs are 'not just new channels through which public service content can be distributed; they profoundly reshape the larger media landscape in which PSM operate' (van Es and Poell, 2020: 3). Amid growing competition in a platformised media environment, PSM and policymakers must develop a clear understanding of platforms and their audiences – especially to reach younger users (van Es and Poell, 2020: 2). Platformisation thus requires a rethinking of the public service mission (van Es and Poell, 2020: 2). PSM's mandate to serve the common good by promoting key public values – such as universality, independence, equality, and cultural diversity through accessible public service content – is increasingly compromised by its alignment with SMPs (van Es and Poell, 2020: 1; Stollfuß, 2024: 188-189). Platforms shape public communication through hierarchies driven by commercial interests rather than public values, altering the foundations of democratic societies in the platform era (van Es and Poell, 2020: 1). This poses systemic and operational barriers in aligning PSM's conceptualisation of public value, which is a key element in defining

PSM and its public service mission, particularly within the evolving context of SMPs (for discussion, see Doyle et al., 2025; Cañedo et al., 2022). From this perspective, Doyle et al. (2025: 3-4) even emphasise that PSM deserve recognition as ‘critical infrastructures’ of democracy and social cohesion, especially amid platform-driven transformations. They argue that these changes do not simply expand traditional remit but reposition PSM alongside essential sectors like education, transport, and healthcare.

However, as social media increasingly shape key aspects of user experience – such as orientation, information, entertainment, participation, social values, identity, and guidance (Hasebrink, 2016) – PSM cannot ignore the spaces where audiences are already active (see also Stollfuß, 2019: 518). Consequently, as Moe (2024: 596) highlights in the ongoing discourse on PSM’s platformisation, ‘a key question has [recently] been whether broadcasting organizations should utilize the so-called platforms to reach new audiences or focus on their own site to build a clear public alternative’. While public broadcasters – at least among European PSM – pursue both approaches, no consistent strategy has emerged so far (Moe, 2024: 604-605). Still, to meet the needs and expectations of younger audiences – especially for those PSM organisations aiming to engage users on SMPs – there is a growing need to adapt communication strategies and develop models that are not only different from commercial competitors, but also sustainable and attractive to users (Dragomir and Tüñez López, 2024: 612).

Yet, as Urbániková and Smejkal (2025: 2) note, there remains a lack of deeper understanding regarding what audiences expect from PSM. Sehl (2020: 359-360) further highlights that PSM continue to struggle in attracting ‘young and hard-to-reach audiences’, particularly within today’s digital media environment, where they face competition not only from SMPs and start-ups but also from non-journalistic, curated content. To genuinely connect with younger users, PSM must – as Redvall (2018: 144) argues – ‘take them seriously by listening to them’ across the various platforms they actively use. In response, PSM are now developing strategies to engage audiences under these new conditions. Van Es and Poell (2020: 3) discuss these strategies through the concept of ‘platform imaginaries’, defined as how users envision platform audiences, algorithms, data, and other elements shaping the platform experience. This concept reflects how social actors organise their activities around platform structures (e.g., algorithms, interfaces, communication procedures, user practices), highlighting the emergence of routines and strategies for navigating these environments (van Es and Poell, 2020: 3). This approach helps explain how content decision-makers perceive and respond to platformisation in media production, distribution, and communication. For PSM – particularly in reaching younger audiences – it means recognising platformisation as a structural condition for delivering content online (Stollfuß, 2024: 187). To provide a more nuanced discussion of the situation facing German PSM, we now take a closer look at the content network *funk*.

## **Platformisation and Feedback Communication in German Public Service Media: The Case of the *funk* Network**

The *funk* network was launched in 2016 by German television broadcasters ARD and ZDF in response to the evolving media landscape and changing media consumption patterns due to the proliferation and diversification of SMPs (for an analysis see Stollfuß [2019, 2021]). Representative studies, such as the recent ARD/ZDF online and media studies, show that among fourteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds, digital platforms and social media are used not

only for personal communication but also for a wide range of audiovisual entertainment – enabling on-demand access and surpassing traditional linear models (Rühle, 2024; von Oehsen, 2024; Hess and Rhody, 2023; Rhody, 2022). The smartphone, as a multifunctional convergence device in a digitally networked culture (Miller, 2014; Fortunati, 2023), has become the primary medium for mobile online use. In addition to streaming services and media libraries, SMPs – especially Instagram – play a central role in the everyday media habits of this age group (Müller, 2024; Koch, 2023).

Therefore, the network's 'online-only' initiative specifically targets audiences aged fourteen to twenty-nine. By distributing content on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram, the network reaches audiences during their daily scrolling sessions, social interactions, or news checks. The *funk* network boasts a portfolio of more than seventy formats,<sup>1</sup> categorised as 'orientation', 'information', or 'entertainment' (*funk*, 2022). Since its inception, the content network has become part of the lives of fourteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds, thus engaging young people with PSM content online; up to 78% of the target audience consumes *funk* content (*funk*, 2024). Over the years, *funk* has maintained more than 200 accounts; it aims to continuously refresh and revise content to adapt to the 'dynamic market' of SMPs (*funk*, 2022). As Stollfuß (2021) has put it, the network is an alternative to a digital youth channel on television. Thus

the 'funk' network emerges within the communicative environment of social media. In this sense, 'funk' must provide content that fits the social media ecosystem and permits the third-party platform to amass and change a digital public within the operational boundaries of social media platforms. (Stollfuß, 2021: 131)

Moreover, under the new German Interstate Media Treaty (2024), structural changes prioritise the integration of content targeting young adults (for an analysis see Stollfuß, 2024). The provisions for young audiences focus on engaging and connecting with individuals aged fourteen to twenty-nine, meeting them on their terms by addressing their 'real lives' and 'interests'. This attempt makes a distinct contribution to fulfillment of the public service mandate in the platform-driven media environment (Article 33 'Offer for Young Audiences'). To further achieve this goal, various community management strategies have been tested by German PSM providers on social media to 'acquire deeper knowledge and understanding about the audience' (Malmelin and Villi, 2016: 590). In alignment with the interactive and participatory communication environment of SMPs, the *funk* network places significant importance on addressing critical feedback from its user base. As part of the network's 'culture of transparent error handling' (*funk*, 2022), *funk* communicates directly with its users. For example, errors are rectified and content adjusted in response to questions or critical comments (*funk*, 2022). The network's identity is built on this approach.

Taking into account the latest trends from the German ARD/ZDF mass communication study (Rühle, 2023), it is evident that even among younger users aged fourteen–twenty-nine, whose media habits are heavily influenced by SMPs (Koch, 2023: 1), PSM offerings are still highly recognised for their social relevance (80%) and credibility (75%); however, they are

---

<sup>1</sup> The use of the term 'formats' in reference to the network's content may initially appear ambiguous, as such content is typically described as 'titles' or 'programmes' in the context of television. However, since *funk* itself employs the term 'format' – in part to signal a shift resulting from the transition from traditional television to online platforms – we adopt this terminology to maintain analytical precision and remain consistent with the network's own classification.

individually perceived to be comparatively less useful (40%) (Rühle, 2023: 8). Criticism focuses, for instance, on issues surrounding media representation of social diversity (54%) (Rühle, 2023: 8). Concerns about media reliability – especially online – have grown slightly in recent years. Nevertheless, although digital platforms make information sharing easy, PSM remain the most trusted source, with over 62% of people aged eighteen and older rating them as reliable, even though figures were slightly higher in previous years (between 65% and 72%) (Schultz et al., 2023: 5).

In Germany, PSM face growing criticism – from debates over gender-inclusive language to structural issues like license fees – alongside rising skepticism about trust and political balance. These concerns, also reflected in surveys by the public broadcaster and ARD member Northern German Broadcasting (NDR) (#NDRfragt, 2023), are increasingly shared by younger audiences, posing challenges for *funk*. Therefore, direct communication appears to be useful for gaining deeper insight into the critical perspectives of the network's users. Hence, the *funk* report in 2022 emphasises,

Communication and interaction with audience members, in all their diversity, are an integral part of *funk's* content strategy. Social media platforms provide numerous opportunities for this, as places for sharing thoughts on content, giving feedback to those responsible for formats, discussing content with others, and making topic suggestions to the editorial teams so they can better address the interests and questions of the community. (*funk*, 2022)

As the *funk* network emerges within the communicative landscape of SMPs, its strategic approaches must adapt to the dynamics of social media. These include handling large volumes of data, rapid communication, and a growing communicative culture of interactive feedback. These aspects diverge significantly from traditional mass media approaches to PSM policy. Professional PSM actors are needed, to not only respond to, but also to actively engage with users across various platforms. Furthermore, in order to enhance understanding of the target group and ensure appropriate contextualisation of content, information and communication, the *funk* network must address users' interests and social realities in accordance with the Media Treaty (2024). To explore and evaluate these aspects, we conducted an online survey among *funk* content users.

## **Method and Data**

This study aims to investigate whether the *funk* network provides adequate content and target-group specificity with regard to user expectations, interest and daily reality. We conducted an online survey to answer the following research questions: Q1: How well does the *funk* network align its content with the needs of its target audience on social media platforms? Q2: To what extent does the content offered by *funk* resonate with the topics that users feel represent their lives and interests? Methodologically, the study collected data via a standardised online questionnaire (Reinecke, 2019). It takes a quantitative approach (Brosius et al., 2012: 133) combined with qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2015) to identify basic formal and textual features from a large data sample.

### *Data Collection and Sampling*

Data collection took place using the Sosci Survey online tool over a three-month period (July to September, 2022). Following a two-week pretest phase with minor adjustments, the questionnaire was initially distributed via various Leipzig University email distribution lists, which resulted in low engagement. We therefore contacted *funk* directly and requested that they promote the survey on their social media accounts.<sup>2</sup> Following the network’s promotion on their main Instagram channel, the numbers improved significantly. By the end of the survey period, a total of 18,245 cases were collected. After adjustments, a total of  $N=17,049$  cases were deemed suitable for analysis.<sup>3</sup> All information was collected in an Excel format for coding in a spreadsheet program. Given the substantial volume of data, the evaluation phase extended from January to August, 2023.

Table 1: Sociodemographic Data.

Category	Characteristics	Appearance (%)
Gender identity or expression	Female	69.62
	Male	28.8
	Diverse	1.58
Educational level	‘Abitur’ (German high school diploma)	28.92
	Bachelor’s degree	21.14
	Vocational training	0.9
	Master’s degree	13.01
	Doctorate	1.3
	Secondary school (‘Realschule’)	5.76
	Secondary school (‘Hauptschule’)	0.72
	Secondary school (‘Gesamtschule’)	0.33
	Primary school	0.92
	No school leaving certificate	0.4
Age groups within the target audience	Younger than 14 years	0.19
	14–16 years	4.75
	17–19 years	13.32
	20–24 years	29.02
	25–29 years	27.50
	Age over 29 years	24.98

<sup>2</sup> In order to increase recognition among the target audience addressed by our study, we asked *funk*’s management to promote it on their social media platforms. However, evaluation and discussion of the findings were carried out entirely independently, without any interference from the network. We therefore extend a special thanks to Philipp Schild, the programming director of *funk*, and Linda Zimmerman, a consultant to *funk*’s programming management.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents who did not complete the questionnaire, or provided nonsensical answers, were not included in the evaluation. The survey aims to investigate the online usage behaviour of participants and their perception of the importance of *funk* content. Participants who indicated that they were not familiar with the *funk* network or were unaware of any of the content provided, and did not use it, were excluded from the evaluation.

Against the backdrop of the aforementioned challenges facing PSM due to platformisation, this study focuses on four key areas: (1) devices and platforms used to access *funk*, (2) the role of SMPs in engaging with PSM content, (3) motivations and reasons for using *funk* on SMPs, and (4) how well *funk* reflects users' interests and realities. To explore how individuals access their favourite formats, special emphasis was placed on the perceived diversity and variety of content. Furthermore, in line with the German Media Treaty (2024), a distinction was made between 'everyday reality' and 'interests', examining whether users felt adequately represented in both areas.

A basic overview of the participants' composition can be obtained by examining the provided sociodemographic data (Table 1). As mentioned, a total of  $N=17,049$  completed questionnaires were included in the analysis. However, self-identification in the gender category, information on the highest level of educational attainment, and classification into specific age groups within the target audience were offered as optional items. This approach was adopted to minimise participant drop-offs associated with sensitive questions and to enhance the likelihood of survey completion. As a result, not all participants chose to provide this information or make a selection in these categories (gender:  $N=16,876$ ; educational level:  $N=17,039$ ; age groups  $N=16,980$ ). Approximately 70% of the participants identified as female, nearly 29% as male, and less than 2% indicated their gender as diverse. Regarding educational attainment, the distribution is as follows: a significant portion of the participants reported their highest educational qualification as the 'Abitur' (German high school diploma), followed by a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree. Other educational levels are less represented. This distribution corresponds with the reported age groups, as the majority of participants are over twenty years old. Therefore, the network's audience can be understood as an educated target group composed primarily of female users in their twenties.

### *(1) Devices and Platforms*

In light of evolving media consumption habits among younger audiences, the data on device usage indicates that nearly all respondents access *funk* content via smartphones (98.9%). This is followed – at a significant margin – by computers or laptops (41.8%), tablets (29.8%), and smart TVs (23.4%) (Fig. 1). Regarding platform preferences, Instagram (94.2%) and YouTube (80.6%) emerge as the dominant access points for *funk* content, with Spotify (32.8%), as well as the ARD (20.7%) and ZDF (20.2%) media libraries, trailing behind (Fig. 2).

While these findings resonate with already existing expectations – particularly when compared with data from representative studies such as the ARD/ZDF Mass Communication Study, which highlights the growing preference for autonomous, time-independent media consumption (see, for example, Hess and Müller, 2022) – they underscore the strategic importance of aligning *funk*'s content production and distribution with mobile-first, platform-centric usage patterns. This alignment is essential to meet the communication practices and media engagement behaviours of *funk*'s core audience. Given that participants were recruited through Instagram, the platform-specific distribution of responses should be interpreted accordingly. Nonetheless, the findings are consistent with the broader characterisation of Instagram as the most widely used platform among the German fourteen- to twenty-nine-year-old demographic to date (Müller, 2024; Koch, 2023).

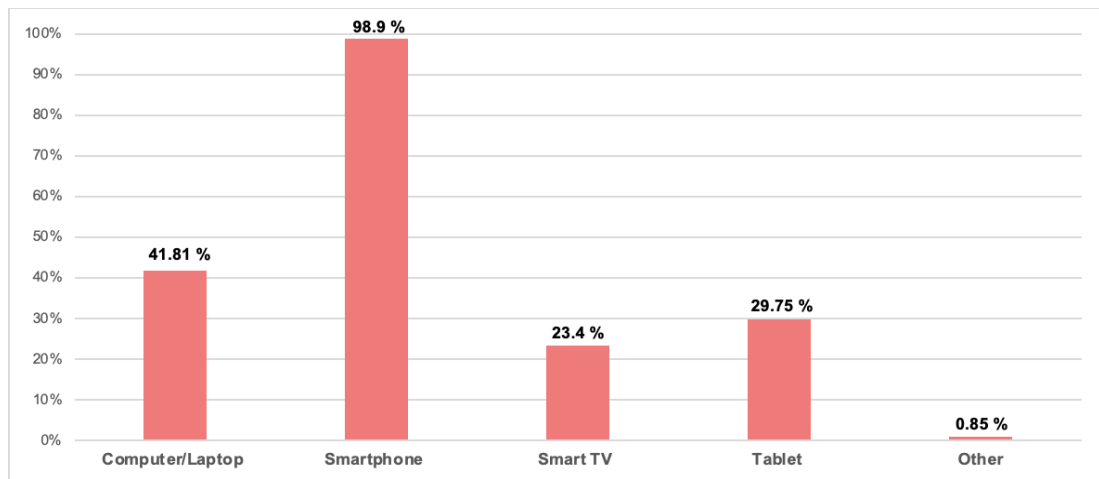


Figure 1: Devices Used to Access Platforms (Multiple Answers Possible).

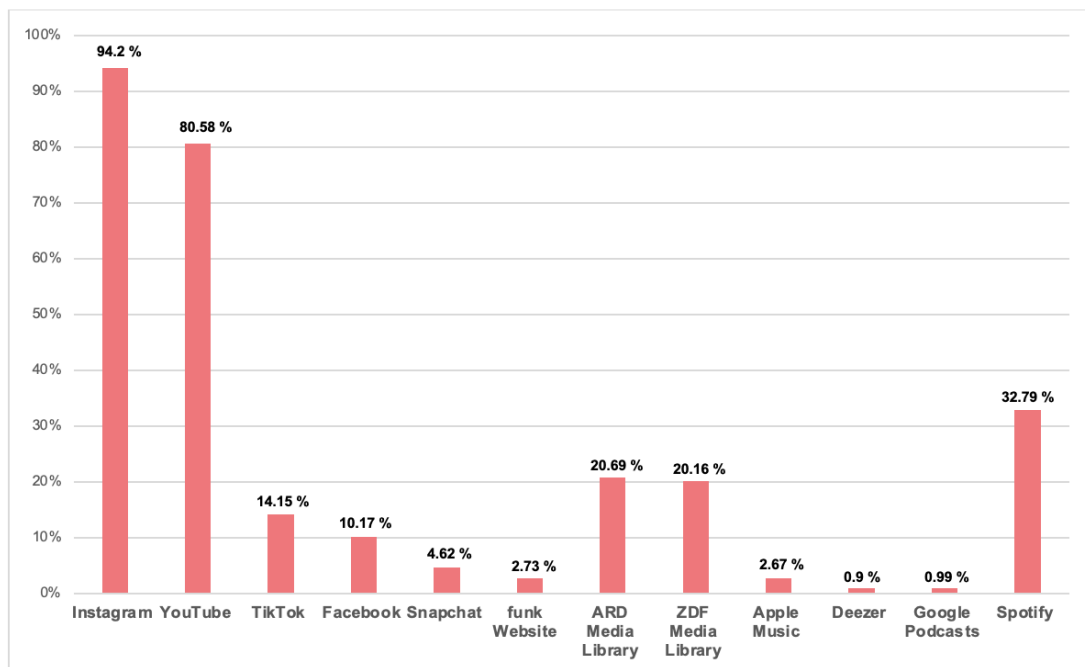


Figure 2: Platform Usage (Multiple Answers Possible).

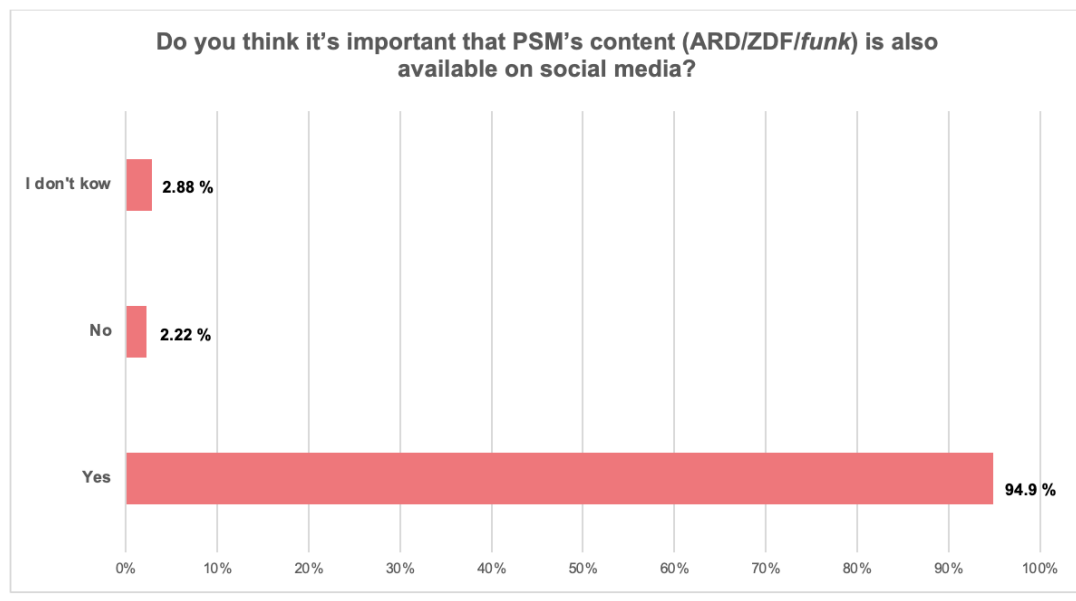


Figure 3: Relevance of *funk* Content on Social Media Platforms.

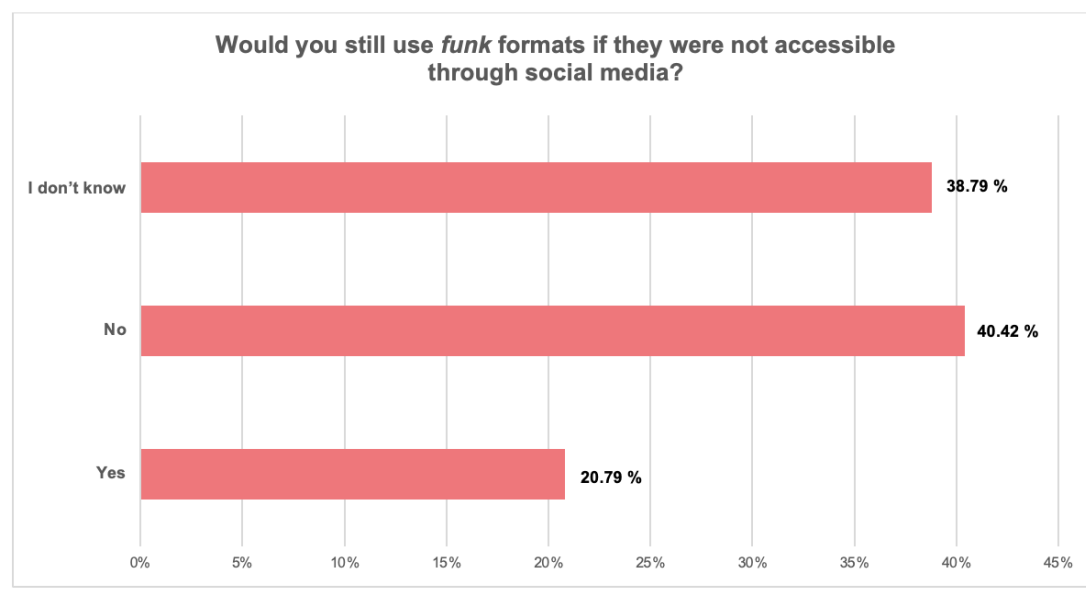


Figure 4: Relevance of Social Media Platforms for *funk* Content.

## (2) The Role of Social Media in Engaging with PSM Content

In general, the *funk* network's presence across various social media channels appears to be well-received and deemed important by the young audience (Fig. 3-4). More than 94% agreed that 'it's important that PSM's content (e.g., ARD/ZDF/*funk*) is also available on social media'. Expanding on this, the question 'Would you still use *funk* formats if they were not accessible through social media?' is also quite relevant. Over 40% of respondents disagreed with this statement, while another 38% were uncertain. Only the remaining 20% indicated that they would be willing to consume content outside of social media-based platforms (Table 3). These findings point to a pronounced demand for public service content – particularly *funk* formats

– that is embedded within SMPs and thus aligned with the digitally networked, platform-centric media practices of the target demographic.

### *(3) Motivations and Reasons for Using funk on Social Media Platforms*

Motivations for engaging with *funk* content are mainly driven by interest (84.77%), preferences ('Topics that resonate with me'; 82.92%) and entertainment (70.16%) (Table 2). However, a significant portion also considers *funk* content to be instructive ('I learn new things through *funk* content'; 78.87%), a reliable source of information (68.17%) and suited to a younger target group (66.85%). Additional notable motivations for engagement include a strong attachment to specific individuals or characters – such as hosts (48.48%) and protagonists (21.55%) – as well as the role of content as a source of everyday orientation (45.57%) and the ad-free nature of public service formats (30.69%). In contrast, factors unrelated to specific content or formats—such as general patterns of social media communication and use—appear to be less influential. These include interaction opportunities (3.62%), community building (5.84%), peer-group orientation (12.90%), and participation in opinion polls (5.30%).

Reasons for platform usage of *funk* content are diverse; however, users' main arguments can be identified as follows: 'Habit' (I use the platform on a regular basis in everyday life anyway) was agreed upon by 90% of users. 'Entertainment and fun' (social networks offer different forms of entertainment) follow second, though with a large gap (45%). Autonomy ('I'm free to decide when and how I use content') and a platform for multiple purposes (e.g., consuming *funk* content while simultaneously maintaining social contacts) were both voted relevant, with 36%. Other notable motivations include platform design (30.83%), and access to exclusive or platform-specific content (19.65%). In terms of platform communication features, content- and format-related factors – such as recommendations (24.42%) and content sharing (21.58%) – are prioritised over more general social media interaction aspects, including ease of interaction (7.32%), engagement with hosts (6.30%), and participation in peer-group discussions (8.85%).

Table 2: Motivations to Engage with *funk* Content (Multiple Answers Possible).

Characteristics	Appearance (%)
Host (moderator, etc.)	48.48
Protagonist (character in the series, etc.)	21.55
Topics that resonate with me	82.92
Stories that interest me	84.77
Entertainment (suitable entertainment for me)	70.16
I learn new things through <i>funk</i> content	78.87
Reliable source of information	68.17
It provides guidance in everyday life	45.57
I find the content contemporary and suitable for young people	66.85
The possibility to interact with other users	3.62
Being part of a community	5.84

Friends watch/use the same content	12.9
I am asked for my opinion	5.3
No advertising	30.69
Other	1.9

Table 3: Reasons for Platform Usage for *funk* Content (Multiple Answers Possible).

Characteristics	Appearance (%)
Habit (I use the platform regularly in my daily life anyway)	90.47
I'm free to decide when and how I use content	36.44
Special interests/Content I don't find anywhere else	19.65
One platform for multiple purposes	36.21
Easy exchange possibilities with other users	7.32
Interaction with hosts/protagonists is possible	6.3
Design and/or functionality of the platform	30.83
Platform offers further content suggestions ('content you might also be interested in')	24.42
Because I can share content with others	21.58
Entertainment and fun (social networks offer different forms of entertainment)	45.02
Having a say (e.g., because friends also use the content on these platforms)	8.85
Other	0.97

#### (4) *funk's Representation of Users' Interests and Everyday Realities*

To examine users' responses regarding the adequate representation of their interests and everyday lives, we employed a two-step approach. Initially, users were asked in general whether they feel adequately seen or represented by *funk* content (Fig. 5-6). Roughly two-thirds of all respondents ( $N=11,303$ ) indicated that they could relate to the *funk* portfolio and perceived real life as adequately represented. Even more respondents ( $N=12,974$ ) identified with the presented areas of interest. 23% stated that they were unsure about the former category and less so in the context of interests, with just under 13% expressing uncertainty.

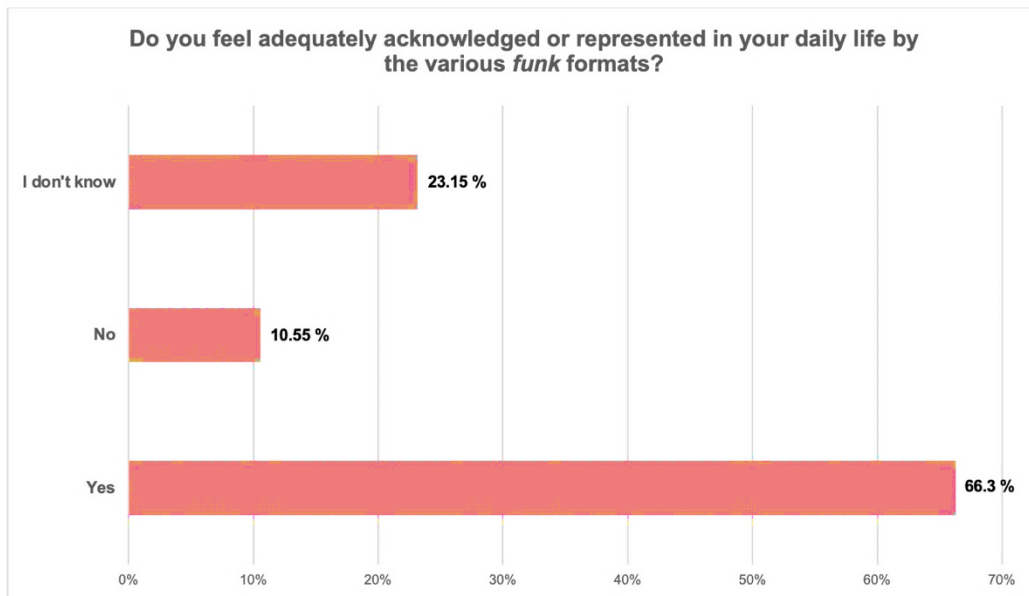


Figure 5: General User Feedback on Everyday Reality.

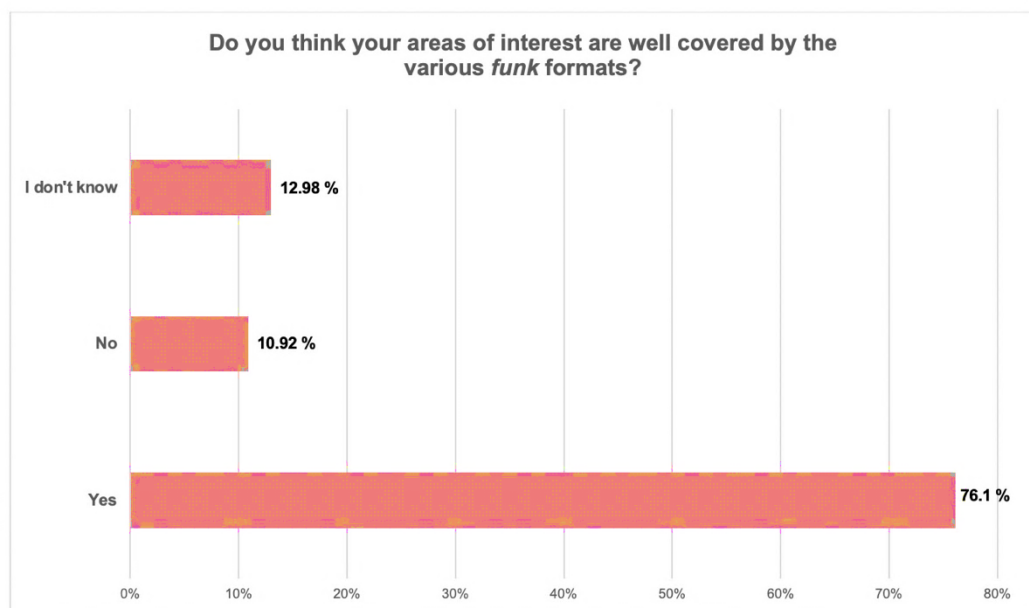


Figure 6: General User Feedback on Interests.

In the second step, users had the opportunity to provide open-ended responses on aspects related to their interests and everyday realities that they felt required more attention. After answering the general questions (see Fig. 5-6), they were invited to use open-ended text boxes to share additional input and preferences, including anything they considered missing or in need of further discussion. Regarding *everyday realities*, the prompt read: 'Please reflect on the various issues and circumstances that you encounter in your life and environment. This may include personal or family matters, friendships, relationships, challenges, personal growth experiences, as well as life planning and future aspirations'. Regarding their respective and individual *interests*, users were asked: 'Please consider topics, objects, or individuals that

pique your interest or capture your attention. For example, in areas such as sports, film and television, politics, religion, identity exploration, life goals, and life satisfaction’. For analysis, we developed a categorical framework (Table 4) to evaluate the open-ended responses, drawing on a review of recent youth studies that explore issues important to younger users. In summary, individual circumstances shape young people’s distinct values, fears, and priorities. Categorising these life experiences – across domains such as leisure, work, future concerns, values, religion, politics, health, and education – is relevant for identifying patterns (Janovsky and Resinger, 2021). Empirical studies, including those by the Deutsches Jugendinstitut (DJI) and the JIM Study (2021), highlight leisure activities, socialisation, and the enduring importance of family relationships, amid increasingly diverse family structures (Berngruber et al., 2021; Hochgürtel and Sommer, 2021). The ‘Youth in Germany’ trend study (Schnitzer and Hurrelmann, 2022) documents rising stress and mental health issues linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, climate crisis, and geopolitical tensions. Concurrently, media consumption, especially social media use, has increased sharply (Naab and Langmeyer, 2022). Additionally, youth navigate a tension between optimism and insecurity, with financial stability – pensions, housing, old-age security – emerging as key concerns (Döbele et al., 2023).

While many participants provided detailed insights on how they would expand the *funk* portfolio, they did not always make a clear distinction between the issues of an interest, hobby, or aspect of their reality they address, and which are not represented in any *funk* format that they are aware of. Owing to the plethora of responses, we first employed a quantitative approach that enables a ‘reductive’ classification of ‘key characteristics’ for basic thematic structuring (Brosius et al., 2012: 133). Frequently cited themes were condensed and classified into main categories, while various manifestations were organised into subcategories based on the domains of ‘interest’ and ‘everyday reality’ (Table 4). For further textual examination, we conducted a qualitative analysis (Mayring, 2015) of user responses. The categorisation process involves both inductive and deductive methods. As Mayring (2015: 11) explains, content analysis aims to scrutinise the content of communication, which encompasses symbols (e.g., verbal, auditory, pictorial, and gestural) in a process that is materialised in fixed forms (texts, videos, and pictures).

Table 4: List of Categories for the Domains of ‘Interests’ and ‘Everyday Reality’.

Main categories (and references)	Subcategories by inductive approach (‘interest’; total of responses N=1,331)	App. (%)	Subcategories by inductive approach (‘everyday reality’; total of responses N=1,008)	App. (%)
<b>(1) Leisure activities &amp; thematic preferences</b> (Janovsky and Resinger, 2021; JIM Study, 2021; Berngruber et al., 2021)	Sports / Music / Literature / Movies & TV / Analog & digital entertainment culture / Art and culture/ Design & architecture / Creativity & DIY/Craftsmanship / Domestic work / Gardening / Travel / Fashion & makeup / Nature & animals & agriculture / Gaming & e-sports / Technology & cars or vehicles / STEM topics / Economics & law / History / Philosophy & ethics / Sciences / Feminism / Masculinity / Fantasy	50.34	Sport / Culture / Pets	1.59
<b>(2) Friendship &amp; relationship dynamics</b> (Janovsky and Resinger, 2021; JIM Study, 2021; Berngruber et al., 2021; Hochgürtel and	Family / Pregnancy / Diverse life models / LGBTQI+	4.5	Family dynamics & life models / Social conflicts / LGBTQI+	11.21

Sommer, 2021; Naab and Langmeyer, 2022)				
<b>(3) Work &amp; career</b> (Janovsky and Resinger, 2021; Schnetzer and Hurrelmann, 2022)	Insights into different professional fields / Volunteering & social engagement	3.68	Women in STEM professions / Unemployment / Career entry / Skill shortage / Work-life balance / Compatibility of family & career / Representation of various professional groups / Volunteering & social engagement	4.27
<b>(4) Future &amp; fears</b> (Janovsky and Resinger, 2021; Schnetzer and Hurrelmann, 2022; Döbele et al., 2023)	Climate & environment / Security / Long-term life planning	2.93	Climate change / Discrimination / Unemployment / Growing up & navigating everyday life / Poverty / Parents' separation / Practical guidance / Social problems	11.21
<b>(5) Goals &amp; values</b> (Janovsky and Resinger, 2021; Schnetzer and Hurrelmann, 2022)	Self-discovery & personal development / Life in rural areas / Tradition	1.5	Home country & regional origin / Living in rural areas / Middle class	5.56
<b>(6) Religion &amp; faith</b> (Janovsky and Resinger, 2021)	Introduction to different faith approaches & worldviews / Spirituality	3.9	Engagement with different faith approaches / Criticism	1.79
<b>(7) Politics, integration &amp; minorities</b> (Janovsky and Resinger, 2021)	Political discourse & news / Political education / Representation of migrants / Minorities / Inclusion	6.39	East-West Germany / Political plurality / Inclusion / Representation of migrants / Minorities	5.06
<b>(8) Lifestyle &amp; health</b> (Janovsky and Resinger, 2021; Schnetzer and Hurrelmann, 2022; Naab and Langmeyer, 2022)	Alternative treatment / Yoga, mindfulness & meditation / Health education / Mental health / Physical health / Nutrition / Sustainability	5.7	Mental health / Neurodiversity / Physical health / Nutrition / Specific female or male life realities / Sustainability	8.03
<b>(9) Education &amp; school</b> (Janovsky and Resinger, 2021)	Life planning after school / Education system / Media literacy	3.0	Career choice / Mental health (specifically in university & school) / Student life / Exploration of specific topics / Education system / Apprenticeships	9.23
<b>(10) Criticism of funk</b> (this main category was determined through an inductive approach, relying on user feedback)	Topic selection / Research work / Presentation of topics / Diversity & plurality / Structure & formats / Target audience / Self-reflection / Negativity / Social media work & handling of followers	18.03	Topic selection / Research work / Presentation of topics / Diversity & plurality / Structure & formats / Target audience / Self-reflection / Negativity / Social media work & handling of followers	42.06

Our analysis employs both inductive and deductive approaches to interpret meaning from the material and to draw conclusions in alignment with the conceptual framework of the study. In the inductive approach, information is derived solely from the sample material (Mayring, 2015: 69). Here, this was utilised to discern the different topical manifestations as subcategories within the domains of 'interests' and 'everyday reality'. Conversely, the deductive approach involves 'thematic structuring' (Mayring, 2015: 97-103) to identify main categories in accordance with a literature review. Based on the themes identified in the aforementioned youth studies, the diverse characteristics were grouped into nine main categories through a deductive process, which also incorporated and adapted attributes to align specifically with the target group analysed in this study. Due to the specificity of our study, the tenth main category ('Criticism of *funk*') was identified through an inductive approach that was informed by user feedback, since none of the studies previously discussed explicitly address the specificity of younger users' engagement with the content network. Based on users' responses to the open-ended questions outlined above, all answers were collected in Excel format for manual coding using a spreadsheet program.

While most users answered the general question about the adequacy of representing their interests and everyday reality, only a minority provided feedback through open-ended responses. In the category of interests, a total of 1,331 open-ended responses were evaluated (7.81%). Of these, the option 'leisure activities and thematic preferences' emerged as the leading category with 50.34%. Notably, responses related to sports stand out at 17.6%. Many expressed a desire for 'sports programs unrelated to soccer' and coverage of sports such as handball, ice hockey, or even yoga. Furthermore, there is a wish for a more in-depth exploration of STEM topics (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, 10.45%) in order to provide space for fields such as astronomy and space exploration. Medicine and chemistry were also frequently mentioned. Though additional subcategories emerged, they were all of minor relevance. For instance, in the category 'politics, integration, and minorities', there seems to be a need for a political discourse or a news-like format tailored to the target audience. Examples such as 'a kind of daily news program for the younger generation' and 'reviews of what was in the news a year ago and how things stand now' totaled thirty-six responses (2.7%). Finally, the younger age group's desire for a 'work and career' category should also be emphasised. Even with relatively few responses, there is a need for various occupational groups and fields to be represented (e.g., police, nursing, emergency services), both in the area of interests (2.18%) and everyday reality (1.29%). We have therefore listed them as subcategories and have not provided detailed discussions of each of them here (Table 4).

However, 1,008 responses regarding everyday reality were evaluated (5.91%). The most striking and meaningful answers fall into the categories 'friendship and relationship dynamics' (11.21%), 'future and fears' (11.21%), 'education and school' (9.23%), and 'lifestyle and health' (8.03%). Most prominently, responses that might be listed under the subcategory of 'growing up, and orientation in everyday life' stand out. Most frequent participant responses, at 5.85%, referred to contracts, insurance, taxes, finances, retirement planning, rent, and authorities. One participant summarised this as the need for 'a format that deals with the bureaucratic challenges young people face on the path to adulthood'. Another described it as the 'basics of life'. Equally worth mentioning are responses relating to family dynamics and life models, at 11.2%. These responses indicate a desire for more in-depth coverage of various family bonds. Participants expressed interest in gaining more insight into the dynamics of young families, the concept of marriage, family planning, and the daily lives of single parents. Topics such as living in large families or children's homes were also mentioned.

Similarly, we were able to note responses in the area of student life. With a total of only thirty-five statements (3.47%), this is not the most prominent subcategory; however, as with family dynamics, respondents desire explicit insights that go beyond traditional topics. These range from desires for more content about life as a working-class student to time management, financing and budgeting at university. These clearly apply to a younger and urban audience and, by contrast, there is frequent criticism of this narrow focus on urban life, as captured in the subcategory of the everyday reality of rural life. Participants wished there were a focus on young people in rural areas, or topics relating to rural youth concerns: commenters noted that almost all documentaries and topics revolve around cities. Though this indicated the clear request for a focus on the problems of such living situations, the number of respondents requesting it remained limited, with a share of just 2.68%. The topic of mental health, as discussed by Schnetzer and Hurrelmann (2022) in their well-known annual representative German youth study ('Trendstudie: Jugend in Deutschland'), falls under the category 'lifestyle and health'. Only 3.27% of respondents mention mental health in the everyday reality domain, and 1.65% in the interests domain. Therefore, this subject does not appear to carry particularly high urgency within the context of this study. However, the statements regarding mental health often reflect a desire for more in-depth thematic exploration – such as discussions of depression, clinical stays, or the creation of dedicated spaces on *funk* to raise broader awareness about the topic. This suggests that while *funk* may already be addressing mental health to some extent, there is a perceived need for greater visibility and journalistic attention. Nevertheless, our data do not provide sufficient detail to draw deeper conclusions about how effectively *funk*'s content aligns with these expectations. More detailed and qualitative research is needed to gain a clearer understanding. In this regard, our study may be considered foundational for further analysis.

There was also a culture of criticism among the participants, who frequently used the open response option to express their dissatisfaction with PSM, especially regarding *funk*. Consequently, the 'criticism of *funk*' category was added later and is reflected here. This category has similar manifestations in both domains, allowing for a comparative analysis. There was criticism regarding the use of gender-sensitive language and the frequent portrayal of so-called 'fringe topics and abnormal lifestyles'. The areas most frequently criticised included: (1) Representation of topics: concerns about 'objective reporting' and 'condescending reporting from the top down'. (2) Diversity and plurality: political, cultural, and in terms of personnel. (3) Target audience: calls to 'cater to older individuals', 'non-students', and 'non-academics'. The vast majority, however, expressed satisfaction with *funk*'s portfolio. Nonetheless, there appears to be a certain preference for broader reporting and coverage of various topics expressed by a small fraction of respondents.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The *funk* network applies a social media-driven approach that meets the demands of its users in a mobile media and platform environment. Nearly all users engage with *funk* content on smartphones (98.9%), followed by computers or laptops (41.81%), tablets (29.75%), and smart TVs (23.4%), with a significant gap between these devices. This aligns with the primary reasons for user platform selection, as the majority of *funk* users (90.47%) consume the network's content on platforms that are already integrated into their daily lives, reflecting everyday media and cultural communication habits. User responses regarding the presence of *funk* and PSM content on SMPs are predominantly positive (94.9%), corresponding to their engagement

with *funk* as social media-driven; only 20% of users could envision using the content outside the mobile media and SMP environment. Thus, in response to the first research question ('Q1: How well does the *funk* network align its content with the needs of its target audience on social media platforms?'), the network has structurally adapted to a platformised media environment and appears to be well-aligned with its audience across various SMPs. From an audience perspective, this highlights the significance and value of PSM content on third-party platforms. From an institutional standpoint, however, it also underscores the growing reliance of PSM on SMPs, and in particular highlights their role as 'new institutions for societal mediation' (Jarren, 2019: 16). In its efforts to meet audience needs and expectations for PSM content on SMPs, *funk* is increasingly drawn into the opaque, data-driven transformations of media culture and communication shaped by platformisation (see also Stollfuß, 2021: 132). This dynamic compels *funk* to operate within the logic and objectives of third-party platforms, driven by PSM's aim to attract a younger audience.

However, in addressing users' needs and interests in PSM content – particularly on SMPs – the *funk* network appears to be well-aligned with audience expectations. To respond to the second research question ('Q2: To what extent does the content offered by *funk* resonate with the topics that users feel represent their lives and interests?'), we need to follow a two-step approach. First, we found that a significant majority of *funk* users feel a strong connection to both the areas of interest presented (76.1%) and the representation of everyday reality (66.3%). This suggests that the *funk* network's user-oriented strategy is effective, with at least two-thirds of respondents expressing satisfaction with both its content and overall approach.

In addition, as reflected in the open-ended responses, a minority of users provided feedback suggesting that, while generally limited, there is still a perceived need for further content development. These comments primarily focus on adjusting the range of topics covered, with suggestions aimed at enhancing users' (mostly positive) perception of the network. This is especially evident in content related to 'leisure activities and thematic preferences' (50.34%), followed with a significant gap by 'friendship and relationship dynamics' and 'future and fears' (11.21%), 'education and school' (9.23%), and 'lifestyle and health' (8.03%). Users seem to be less interested in other relevant topics. Overall, our findings do not suggest a pressing need for change, indicating that *funk's* content largely resonates with its intended target audience. In this context, it is important to note that our study is not comparable to broader, representative studies on youth-related issues (e.g., Janovsky and Resinger, 2021; Berngruber et al., 2021; Schnetzer and Hurrelmann, 2022), even though the topics they examine also appear noteworthy from the perspective of *funk* users. Our research focused specifically on *funk* users and how they perceive the network's content in relation to issues they consider relevant. Since we did not extend our study to include a research panel empirically representative of the broader target group of young German PSM audiences, we are limited in our ability to draw more general or in-depth conclusions.

Given the overall approval expressed by at least two-thirds of *funk* users and the relatively small number of responses calling for content adjustments, it can be concluded that the network largely provides content aligned with audience expectations for PSM on SMPs. However, it is important to note that the online survey was conducted exclusively among *funk* users, with approximately one-third indicating that they do not feel adequately addressed by the current content. Moreover, the presence of 'user criticism' directed at *funk* represents an aspect that may warrant further attention. Some critical responses focused on the use of gender-sensitive language, while others objected to the network's portrayal of non-heteronormative lifestyles. Although these perspectives represent only a small fraction of the user base – and thus do not appear to reflect the majority view – they highlight tensions within

audience reception. Additional concerns raised by this minority included perceptions of insufficient objectivity, top-down reporting, and calls for greater political, cultural, and staff diversity. Furthermore, some users expressed a desire for broader topic coverage and content that is more inclusive of non-student and non-academic audiences.

This underscores the need for a communication and content strategy that continues to deepen the network's understanding of its audience and regularly evaluates the development of diversified content tailored to a mobile, digitally networked media environment. Therefore, our study contributes to research focused on understanding audience expectations of PSM – particularly within a platform-driven environment – while acknowledging that further conceptual development and empirical investigation remain necessary (see also Urbániková and Smejkal, 2025; Campos-Rueda and Goyanes, 2023; Sehl, 2020).

Maintaining a communication and content strategy rooted in user orientation is particularly vital for the network. Within the context of German PSM – and specifically in addressing the needs and interests of younger audiences – the *funk* network holds particular relevance for several reasons. First, high levels of user approval suggest a strong alignment with audience expectations. Second, *funk*'s interactive communication strategy aligns well with the dynamics of SMPs. Third, the network's platform-driven approach is both recognised and appreciated by its users, further strengthening its position within the digital media landscape. Collectively, these factors underscore the need for *funk* – consistent with the objectives outlined in the Media Treaty (2024) – to continue deepening its understanding of its target audience and to further refine the contextualisation of its content, information, and communication strategies.

PSM, as well as commercial providers in Germany and the wider European Union, continue to struggle with the transformations brought about by digital platforms. They face pressure not only from international streaming services, 'whose scale has created an uneven playing field' (Chalaby, 2025: 267), but also from SMPs. The latter, through their expanding infrastructural dynamics, significantly affect PSM by forcing them to operate within logics that 'run directly counter to the basic public good character of public service media,' given platforms' 'enclosed, data-driven, and ad-funded' models (Moe, 2024: 596). In response, scholars in media and communication studies have argued for alternatives, such as a public service internet (Fuchs and Unterberger, 2021; Thomass, 2024).

Yet, within this platformised media environment, PSM still face a strategic dilemma: how to navigate uneven power relations on SMPs while at the same time reaching younger audiences who are active on these platforms. Research in media and communication studies has already examined PSM's attempts to provide content for younger users in digital environments (e.g., Stollfuß, 2021; Andersen and Sundet, 2019; Krauß and Stock, 2018, 2020; Krüger and Rustad, 2019). Still, the specific transformations within PSM and their growing dependence on third-party platforms to reach younger audiences warrant further investigation. Amid shifting user habits and ongoing infrastructural upheavals, traditional media organisations like PSM are increasingly compelled to adapt to the operational and structural dynamics of platform-based political-economic systems (Faulkner-Gurstein and Wyatt, 2023; van Dijck et al., 2018). As Moe (2024) notes, institutional approaches vary. Some, such as the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), tend to withdraw from SMPs, whereas others – such as the German network *funk* – move in the opposite direction, seeking to 'cater to young audiences by way of platforms' distribution power' (Moe, 2024: 599).

Our findings contribute to this debate by showing that younger media users do in fact reward PSM's efforts to engage them on the platforms they already use in their daily lives. From an audience perspective, *funk*'s presence on SMPs and its content strategy are therefore

highly relevant. This does not, however, negate the need to critically address the uneven infrastructural power dynamics between PSM and digital platforms – a responsibility that lies partly with media regulators (see also Chalaby, 2025; Stollfuß, 2024; Poell, 2020). In this context, emerging approaches that conceptualise PSM as ‘critical infrastructure’ (Doyle et al., 2025) merit further theoretical refinement and discursive engagement, particularly in light of the ongoing transformations driven by platformisation.

## Acknowledgements

This article builds upon and expands findings previously published in German (Stollfuß, 2025). We gratefully acknowledge *Media Perspektiven* for granting permission to republish substantial parts of this article in English. Additionally, we extend our thanks to the editors of *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies* for their approval. Finally, we appreciate the valuable suggestions from the article’s reviewers, which have significantly enhanced its quality.

## Funding

The authors disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: this article is an outcome of the research project ‘Platformization of Public Service Media: Platform Approach, Target Group-Specific Community Management, and Public Value Concept in the Case of the *funk* Content Network’ which is funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) – project number 425493721.

## Biographical Notes

Ann-Kathrin Böttke is a research associate at Leipzig University, Institute of Communication and Media Studies. Her research focuses on areas of media change, digital media and book culture as well as digital publishing.

Contact: [ann-kathrin.boettke@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:ann-kathrin.boettke@uni-leipzig.de)

Sven Stollfuß is a Professor of Media Change with a focus on book culture and digital publishing at Leipzig University’s Institute of Communication and Media Studies. He received his PhD in media studies in December 2012 at Philipps–University Marburg, Germany. His research areas include social media, digital media and book culture, platformization of media, book and publishing cultures, AI and algorithmic processes in digital publishing, and social TV.

Contact: [sven.stollfuss@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:sven.stollfuss@uni-leipzig.de)

## References

- Andersen, MM and Sundet, VS (2019), 'Producing Online Youth Fiction in a Nordic Public Service Context' in *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture*, 8:16: pp. 110-125.
- Bergruber, A, Gaupp, N and Langmeyer, AN (2021), in Destatis, WZB & BiB (eds) *Datenreport 2021*, Bonn: bpb pp. 80-86.
- Brosius, H-B, Haas, A and Koschel, F (2012), *Methoden der empirischen Kommunikationsforschung: Eine Einführung*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Campos-Rueda, M and Goyanes, M (2023), 'Public Service Media for Better Democracies: Testing the Role of Perceptual and Structural Variables in Shaping Citizens' Evaluations of Public Television' in *Journalism*, 24:11: pp. 2493-2513.
- Cañedo, A, Rodríguez-Castro, M and López-Cepeda, AM (2022), 'Distilling the Value of Public Service Media: Towards a Tenable Conceptualisation in the European Framework' in *European Journal of Communication*, 37:6: pp. 586-605.
- Chalaby, JK (2025), 'The Rise and Fall of European Media: EU Policy in the Streaming Era' in *European Journal of Communication*, 40:3: pp. 266-283.
- Döbele, C, Engels, JN, Heinrich, R et al. (2023), *Krisenerwachsen: wie blicken junge Wähler:innen auf Politik, Parteien und Gesellschaft?*, Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- Donders, K (2019), 'Public Service Media Beyond the Digital Hype: Distribution Strategies in a Platform Era' in *Media, Culture & Society*, 41:7: pp. 1011-1028.
- Doyle, G, Barr, K and Boyle, R (2025), 'Public Service Media as Critical Media Infrastructure for the Digital Era' in *Media, Culture & Society*, Online First, pp. 1-18.
- Dragomir, M and Túnñez López, M (2024), 'How Public Service Media are Changing in the Platform Era: A Comparative Study Across Four European Countries' in *European Journal of Communication*, 39:6: pp. 608-624.
- Enli, GS (2012), 'From Parasocial Interaction to Social TV: Analysing the Host–Audience Relationship in Multi-Platform Productions' in *Northern Lights: Film & Media Studies Yearbook*, 10:1: pp. 123-137.
- Faulkner-Gurstein, R and Wyatt, D (2023), 'Platform NHS: Reconfiguring a Public Service in the Age of Digital Capitalism' in *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 48:4: pp. 888-908.
- Fortunati, L (2023), 'The Smartphone Between the Present and the Future: Five Changes' in *Mobile Media & Communication*, 11:1: pp. 19-24.
- Fuchs, C and Unterberger, K (2021), in Fuchs, C and Unterberger, K (eds) *The Public Service Media and Public Service Internet Manifesto*, London: University of Westminster Press pp. 1-6.
- funk (2022, 13 December), 'Funk Bericht 2022' in *presse.funk.net*, [online] available: <https://presse.funk.net/pressemeldung/funk-bericht-2022/> [accessed: 5 June 2024].
- funk (2024, 1 October), 'Verändertes Portfolio zeigt messbare Erfolge: funk ist so jung und erfolgreich wie nie zuvor' in *presse.funk.net*, [online] available: <https://presse.funk.net/pressemeldung/veraendertes-portfolio-zeigt-messbare-erfolge-funk-ist-so-jung-und-erfolgreich-wie-nie-zuvor/> [accessed: 5 May 2025].
- Hasebrink, U (2016), in Österreichischer Rundfunk (eds) *Public Social Value*, Wien: ORF-Druckerei pp. 4-35.
- Helmond, A (2015), 'The Platformization of the Web: Making Web Data Platform Ready' in *Social Media + Society*, 1:2: pp. 1-11.

- Hess, C and Müller, T (2022), 'ARD/ZDF-Massenkommunikation Trends 2022: Mediennutzung im Intermediavergleich' in *Media Perspektiven*, 9: pp. 414-424.
- Hess, C and Rhody, A (2023), 'Eine neue Phase in der Nutzung von Bewegtbild: Ergebnisse der ARD/ZDF-Studie Massenkommunikation Trends und ARD/ZDF-Onlinestudie 2023' in *Media Perspektiven*, 24: pp. 1-17.
- Hochgürtel, T and Sommer, B (2021), in Destatis, WZB & BiB (eds) *Datenreport 2021*, Bonn: bpb pp. 51-64.
- Interstate Media Treaty (2024), 'Medienstaatsvertrag (MStV)', [online] available: [https://www.die-medienanstalten.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Rechtsgrundlagen/Gesetze Staatsvertrage/Medienstaatsvertrag MStV.pdf](https://www.die-medienanstalten.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Rechtsgrundlagen/Gesetze_Staatsvertrage/Medienstaatsvertrag_MStV.pdf) [accessed: 5 June 2024].
- Janovsky, N and Resinger, P (2021), *Lebenswelten: Realtà di vita 2021*, Innsbruck: StudienVerlag.
- Jarren, O (2019), 'Social Media: Institutionalisierungsprozesse als interdisziplinäre Forschungsaufgabe. Plattformökonomie und die Macht der neuen Intermediäre als Herausforderung für die Sozialwissenschaften' in *Medienwirtschaft*, 16:1: pp. 14-24.
- JIM-Study (2021), 'Jugend, Information, Medien' in *mpfs.de*, [online] available: [https://www.mpfs.de/fileadmin/files/Studien/JIM/2021/JIM-Studie\\_2021\\_barrierefrei.pdf](https://www.mpfs.de/fileadmin/files/Studien/JIM/2021/JIM-Studie_2021_barrierefrei.pdf) [accessed: 5 June 2024].
- Johnson, C (2013), 'From Brand Congruence to the 'Virtuous Circle': Branding and the Commercialization of Public Service Broadcasting' in *Media, Culture & Society*, 35:3: pp. 314-331.
- Johnson, C and Dempsey, L (2023), 'Public Service Television in the Age of Subscription Video on Demand: Shifting TV Audience Expectations in the UK during COVID-19' in *Media, Culture & Society*, 46:3: pp. 500-517.
- Just, N, Büchi, M and Latzer, M (2017), 'A Blind Spot in Public Broadcasters' Discovery of the Public: How the Public Values Public Service' in *International Journal of Communication*, 11: pp. 992-1011.
- Koch, W (2023), 'Soziale Medien werden 30 Minuten am Tag genutzt – Instagram ist die Plattform Nummer eins: Ergebnisse der ARD/ZDF-Onlinestudie 2023' in *Media Perspektiven*, 26: pp. 1-8.
- Krauß, F and Stock, M (2018), 'Social Teen TV: DRUCK und aktuelle Jugendserien' in *tv diskurs*, 22:4: pp. 84-87.
- Krauß, F and Stock, M (2020), in Krauß, F and Stock, M (eds) *Teen TV: Repräsentationen, Lesarten und Produktionsweisen aktueller Jugendserien*, Wiesbaden: SpringerVS pp. 3-32.
- Krüger, S and Rustad, GC (2019), 'Coping with Shame in a Media-Saturated Society: Norwegian Web-Series *Skam* as Transitional Object' in *Television & New Media*, 20:1: pp. 72-95.
- Malmelin, N and Villi, M (2016), 'Audience Community as a Strategic Resource in Media Work: Emerging Practices' in *Journalism Practice*, 10:5: pp. 589-607.
- Mayring, P (2015), *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken*, Weinheim: Beltz.
- Miller, J (2014), 'The Fourth Screen: Mediatization and the Smartphone' in *Mobile Media & Communication*, 2:2: pp. 209-226.
- Moe, H (2024), 'Embrace or Leave Social Media? On the Viability of Public Service Media Organizations' Strategies Facing Platform Power' in *European Journal of Communication*, 39:6: pp. 595-607.
- Müller, T (2024), 'Zahl der Social-Media-Nutzenden steigt auf 60 Prozent: Ergebnisse der ARD/ZDF-Medienstudie 2024' in *Media Perspektiven*, 28, pp. 1-8.

- Naab, T and Langmeyer, A (2022), 'Medien in Zeiten von Corona – Fluch und Segen' in *DJI Impulse*, 2: pp. 43-46.
- #NDRfragt-Umfrage (2023), 'Öffentlich-rechtlicher Rundfunk ja – aber reformiert' in *ndr.de*, [online] available: <https://www.ndr.de/fernsehen/sendungen/zapp/Umfrage-Oeffentlich-rechtlicher-Rundfunk-ja-aber-reformiert,ergebnisse1168.html> [accessed: 5 June 2024].
- Neuberger, C (2022), in Gerlach, F and Eilders, C (eds) *#meinfernsehen 2021. Bürgerbeteiligung: Wahrnehmungen, Erwartungen und Vorschläge zur Zukunft öffentlich-rechtlicher Medienangebote*, Baden-Baden: Nomos pp. 95-112.
- Nieborg, DB and Poell, T (2018), 'The Platformization of Cultural Production: Theorizing the Contingent Cultural Commodity' in *New Media & Society*, 20:11: pp. 4275-4292.
- Plantin, J-C and Punathambekar, A (2018), 'Digital Media Infrastructures: Pipes, Platforms, and Politics' in *Media, Culture & Society*, 41:2: pp. 163-174.
- Poell, T (2020), 'Three Challenges for Media Studies in the Age of Platforms' in *Television & New Media*, 21:6: pp. 650-657.
- Redvall, EN (2018), in Thornley, D (ed) *True Event Adaptation: Scripting Real Lives*, New York: Springer International Publishing pp. 143-161.
- Reinecke, J (2019), in Baur, N and Blasius, J (eds) *Handbuch Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung*, Wiesbaden: Springer VS pp. 717-734.
- Rhody, A (2022), 'Bewegtbild im Internet erreicht immer mehr Menschen: Ergebnisse der ARD/ZDF-Onlinestudie 2022' in *Media Perspektiven*, 10: pp. 487-492.
- Rühle, A (2023), 'Was Medien(angebote) leisten: Stärken und Schwächen aus Publikumssicht: Ergebnisse der ARD/ZDF-Massenkommunikation Trends 2023' in *Media Perspektiven*, 22: pp. 1-14.
- Rühle, A (2024), 'Zeitsouveräne Mediennutzung auf dem Vormarsch? Entwicklung der linearen und non-linearen Nutzung. Ergebnisse der ARD/ZDF-Medienstudie 2024' in *Media Perspektiven*, 29: pp. 1-6.
- Rustad, G (2018), 'Skam (NRK, 2015–17) and the Rhythms of Reception of Digital Television' *Critical Studies in Television: The International Journal of Television Studies*, 13:4: pp. 505-509.
- Schnetzer, S and Hurrelmann, K (2022, 21 November), 'Veröffentlichung: Jugend in Deutschland - Trendstudie Winter 2022/23' in *simon-schnetzer.com*, [online] available: <https://simon-schnetzer.com/blog/veroeffentlichung-jugend-in-deutschland-trendstudie-winter-2022-23/> [accessed 5 June 2024].
- Schultz, T, Ziegele, M, Jakob, N et al. (2023), 'Medienvertrauen nach Pandemie und "Zeitenwende": Mainzer Langzeitstudie Medienvertrauen 2022' in *Media Perspektiven*, 8: pp. 1-17.
- Sehl, A (2020), 'Public Service Media in a Digital Media Environment: Performance from an Audience Perspective' in *Media and Communication*, 8:3: pp. 359-372.
- Srnicek, N (2017), *Platform Capitalism*, Cambridge: Policy Press.
- Stollfuß, S (2019), 'Is This Social TV 3.0?: On Funk and Social Media Policy in German Public Post-Television Content Production' in *Television & New Media*, 20:5: pp. 509-524.
- Stollfuß, S (2021), 'The Platformisation of Public Service Broadcasting in Germany: The Network 'funk' and the Case of *Druck/Skam Germany*' in *Critical Studies in Television: The International Journal of Television Studies*, 16:2: pp. 126-144.
- Stollfuß, S (2024), 'Platformization as a Structural Dimension for Public Service Media in Germany: The *funk* Content Network and the New Interstate Media Treaty' in *Television & New Media*, 25:2: pp. 185-203.

- Stollfuß, S (2025), 'funk im Medienalltag der Nutzerinnen und Nutzer: Onlineumfrage zum ARD/ZDF-Contentnetzwerk in Sozialen Medien' in *Media Perspektiven*, 1: pp. 1-16.
- Syvertsen, T (2003), 'Challenges to Public Television in the Era of Convergence and Commercialization' in *Television & New Media*, 4:2: pp. 155-175.
- Thomass, B (2024), 'Public Service Media and Public Service Internet as a Counterweight to Media Concentration' in *European Journal of Communication*, 39:5: pp. 457-471.
- Urbániková, M and Smejkal, K (2025), 'The Value of Public Service Media: What Does the Public Expect?' in *Media, Culture & Society*, Online First, pp. 1-18.
- Van Dijck, J, Poell, T and de Waal, M (2018), *The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van Es, K and Poell, T (2020), 'Platform Imaginaries and Dutch Public Service Media' in *Social Media + Society*, 6:2: pp. 1-10.
- Von Oehsen, D (2024), 'Negativtrend der linearen Mediennutzung setzt sich fort: Ergebnisse der ARD/ZDF-Medienstudie 2024' in *Media Perspektiven*, 24: pp. 1-9.