

Abstract:

## Media Ethics – A Question of Communication Culture

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Ethics is a ground model of human knowledge, which gives an idea of the sense of working out personal and social life. It is a referential model of meaningful sense by which everyone knows that every other one has the same (culturally appropriated) knowledge and consciousness. Ethics as a system of beliefs is not a closed text or protocol which would exist even if we would not know about it. It just has an existence by consciousness, which also means: It is present and memorable by and through communication. In this sense ethics is a societal model of competence by which sense-making decisions are possible – and also reasonable – for everyone by means of communication.

Media ethics is – following this constructivistic argumentation – not firstly a question of behavior in relation to media and (productive and consumptive) use of media, but it is a question of communication culture: what values of individual and social life are we facing or achieving by communication? Is it homogeneity (homology) in interpreting life and experience, or is it difference (heterogeneity, heterology) – and if difference and diversity of meaning: what conditions are we prepared to accept and to respect in order to benefit from a multisemantic interpretation of modeling individual and social life?

Media literacy insofar is - besides a technical and social working capacity - an ethical challenge as it has to do with responsibility for individual competence of life in a framework of social organization of society. Media literacy in an ethical context is a concept of individual attitude and capability for social use of media, which means the productive and consumptive use of media according to the rationality of communication. The challenges of rationality of communication are: appropriation of reality by sharing of (cultural and social) meaning, empathy, participation, difference of meaning, distinction and decision.