

TOPIC: Projects Analysing Broadcast Media

TAGS: Research, Non lab projects, Science Communication, Media Analysis, BoB

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Content analysis of newspapers using tools such as *Nexis & Factiva* is a well-established research model in social sciences. New tools are offering the opportunity to apply similar approaches to broadcast media. Projects analysing the content of television and radio still require appropriate literature review both to develop keywords and to critique the accuracy of the science presented.

KEY TOOLS

For Universities in the UK, the main resources are BoB (sometimes called Box of Broadcasts, <https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand>) and TRILT (the Television and Radio Index for Learning & Teaching, <http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandradio/trilt>). Videos on Getting Started with BoB are available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL494tnLpP4KtFK3s4PTw7FkKhykAs30js>). BoB is a collection of more than 2 million programmes which are freely accessible at member HEIs and represents an ideal “bounded collection” for analysis. BoB and TRILT have slightly different search models so it may be appropriate to use both in conducting a survey.

TYPICAL METHODOLOGY

1. Conduct literature review to generate keywords
2. Use keywords to search BoB and/or TRILT (apply filters “Show only latest”, “Available in BoB”)
3. Remove duplicates (e.g. found using >1 search term, and/or “SignZone” version)
4. Constrain search using any/all of:
 - Screening programme synopsis
 - Date range
 - Genre (TV/Radio/both)
 - Particular channels
 - Combinations of keywords
5. “Mark” all plausible content, output to spreadsheet
6. Watch/listen/read transcript of programmes on long list
7. Remove irrelevant content
8. Rewatch (and make transcripts of) final selection
9. Detailed content analysis alongside review of science literature

EXAMPLE PROJECTS

- How accurate is the presentation of Alzheimer’s Disease in broadcast media?
- Representations of personalised medicine in broadcast media: an ethical perspective
- Does broadcast media give an accurate representation of the science regarding the role of exercise in prevention of cardiovascular disease?
- Scientific and broadcast media representations of the “gay gene”
- Representation of medical cannabis in broadcast media (following legalisation in the UK)

LIMITATIONS

BoB is excellent bounded collection, provided users recognise the limitations. For example, prior to 1st August 2016 most but not all core channels recorded. Similarly radio (and some TV channels do not have subtitles (from which the transcripts are generated). It is therefore most appropriate for qualitative evaluation. Quantitative analysis should be couched in appropriate language i.e. “Within the sampled programmes...” not making overarching claims.

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