DATA JOURNALISM AND DEMOCRACY: HOW AMERICAN MASS MEDIA FRAMED THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IN THE UNITED STATES USING DATA VISUALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of data visualization in the media coverage of the 2016 presidential campaign in the United States by focusing on data-visualization projects from The New York Times and The Washington Post. The research is focused on how journalists implemented data-visualization techniques and how the theory of framing is connected with that process. A secondary purpose of the research is to collect opinions from journalists working in the field about how data visualization influenced coverage of the campaign and how future reporting can be improved.

This study consists of two parts: textual/visual analysis of data visualization examples from coverage of 2016 U.S. presidential campaign and interviews with the journalists involved in infographics production. Visual analysis was used for analyzing various design elements such as type of graphics, colors, fonts and how they helped to frame issues during the campaign. Textual analysis was used to identify the main issues and frames that were covered and considered important for the audience. The interviews provided information about the professional experience of data journalists and editors and their opinions about the role of data visualization and the problems and limitations that they experienced while working with it.