

Riepls-Law in the Online-Age. A Secondary Analysis on the Boundaries of Substitutional Effects of the Internet on Traditional Mass Media.

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Once specific technical media have established themselves as a means of social communication they will never be fully replaced or permanently substituted even by technically more advanced media. Rather, established media will continue to be used, though, they will possibly be forced to change their contents and fields of application. This hypothesis, known as “Riepls law” was formulated by Wolfgang Riepl in 1913 concerning news media in ancient times. It proved to be true for the development of traditional media like newspapers or radio. There are a couple of reasons to believe that Riepls law will also apply to the effects of the internet.

Analyzing German data from the representative annual marketing survey "Typologie der Wünsche 1998/99" shows, that using the internet or proprietary online-services hardly affects the use of traditional mass media. All in all content and gratifications of online-media seem to be too different from traditional media. Peculiar media-usage-patterns among onliners are largely explained by their sociodemographic and personality features.

Time spent on the internet does only to a small extent diminish the amount of time spent for using traditional mass media. Thus, as long as the average online-time per user will not drastically increase, the effects of the internet on the use of traditional mass media will continue to be moderate at most

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