

Summary

The Media Change & Innovation Division of the Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research Zurich (IPMZ) conducts ex-post analyses of the SRG online services on behalf of the Swiss Federal Office for Communication (OFCOM). This is to monitor whether the SRG adheres to the legal specifications of the SRG charter that took effect in June 2013.

The SRG Online Assessment 2015 offers both an overview of the content and link structure of each of the four SRG websites, SRF, RTS, RSI and RTR, and an analysis of charter conformity. Methodologically, the analysis is based on content and link analyses. The extraction of data is carried out with specifically developed software (crawler, character counting tool), which is particularly adapted to the online offers of the SRG.

The content analysis serves to identify areas within the SRG websites where compliance with regulations remains unclear. It is particularly interested in ascertaining whether references to broadcasts are correctly displayed and in whether references to broadcast times are given; whether texts in the areas of news, sport or regional/local that have no reference to broadcasts remain within the limit of 1'000 characters, and whether three quarters of all texts are linked to audio or video files (AV).

The content analysis is based on a representative random sample of 2'400 websites and shows that the online offer of the SRG mostly comply with the SRG charter (96.5%). In total, for 3.5% of the online offer the conformity remains unclear (grey area). RSI exhibits a significantly larger grey area (8.8%) than the other SRG websites. RTS has the second largest grey area at 3.3%, which is around the SRG average. The grey area for SRF is 1.8%, and RTR has the lowest, at 0.3%. The grey area is particularly pronounced for text contributions in the areas of news, sport and local/regional (12.2% and 14% respectively). With regard to AV linking, all SRG offers combined achieve the 75% mark, but with values between 45.2% and 66.9% RSI lies below this threshold.

The link analysis serves to assess whether the SRG websites contain electronic linking that is commercially motivated. The study focused on the 100 most connected link destinations for each of the four SRG websites. Each of the links was classified on the basis of their linking intensity and in five functionally different categories that differ in their potential for commercialization. Links to technology-suppliers showed the highest linking intensity. Links in this category have a rather limited potential for commercialization and include audience and traffic measurements (*wemfbox.ch*), social distribution channels (*facebook.com*) and links that help to provide an up-to-date website functionality (*googleapis.com*). There are many other links to third-party content sites and to suppliers of technically integrated content. These links are mostly placed in an editorial context and thus have limited potential for commercialization. A greater potential is assumed for links to e-shops and ad-serving technology providers. No illegitimate connections to advertisers were found in 2015. However, there are individual cases of links in the context of sponsoring and connections to 24 e-shops of which two (*books.ch* and *ticketcorner.ch*) show signs of affiliate IDs in their URL, which indicates a greater potential for commercialization.