SNACKING ON DIFFERENT VIEWS:
THE POTENTIAL OF TAGESSCHAU.DE IN OFFERING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN NEWS OVERVIEW ELEMENTS TO A YOUNG ADULT AUDIENCE
ABSTRACT

In this paper a news site’s potential of meeting conflicting needs is considered. Snacking - hence reading news in a quick selective style - is one trend among young readers which seems to be in conflict with assessing the credibility of news, which in turn depends on receiving multiple perspectives or viewpoints among the issues read. As young audiences neither want to be forced to put more effort into news reading, nor want to receive news in a single-layered way, satisfaction with the news is hampered. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate a current news site’s potential in complying with both needs: snacking on the one hand and receiving multiple perspectives on the other. As research case, the German public service news site tagesschau.de is investigated in two methodological approaches. In a content analysis the potential of the news site is assessed by analyzing ways of presenting perspectives in snack news element. In a reception study this potential is reassessed by a young audience sample. It was found that perspectives indeed are presented in snack news elements in direct or indirect forms, often represented by different sources than the journalist’s. However, it shows that these presentations of perspectives not always reach the audience. Members of the audience leave out many elements that could be snacked on, and stick to headlines for the main part. This implies that they miss multiple perspectives offered in elements suitable for snacking, such as hyperlinks. In order to offer multiple perspectives to snacking news readers, more controversy should be indicated in headlines, comparisons of perspectives should be made easier and links should be more relevant by leaving out aspects perceived as unnecessary and by representing sources in a better balance.

KEYWORDS: Online news, news overviews, young readers, multiple perspectives, tagesschau.de
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1. INTRODUCTION

In a changing news environment, newspapers and TV and radio channels of choice are no longer the only sources people receive information from. The Internet not only added to the possibilities, but offers the traditional versions of news media as online content alternatively. By that it contributed to a changing relationship with the news, in a sense that people tend to use several news media on a typical day, both online and offline (Pew Research Center, 2010).

Beneficial for the increase of media used per person is the fact that news sources are better available in terms of speed and overcoming of geographical distances, and that nearly all news sites are free of charge (Radev et al., 2005). Furthermore, the consumption style changed in online environments to a parallel structure where readers can go directly to sections of particular interest, rather than following the medium’s structure, like the order of articles in printed newspapers or reports in broadcasts (D’Haenens, Jankowski & Heuvelman, 2004). Next to advantages of saving money and time and having an alternative structure to print or broadcast, online news offer a choice between “just’ receiving the headlines”, and seeking out “all details of a news story, including audio, video and written text” (Deuze, 2001, n.p.).

The broad range of information also offers freedom of choice and access to alternative content and viewpoints. This however carries along disadvantages as well: Sunstein (2004) argues that in a broad range of information possibilities, it is easier to filter out information one was not necessarily interested in before. He claims that from a standpoint of democracy it is important to have people exposed to materials they would not have chosen in advance, hence with topics and points of view that were not sought out and perhaps are found irritating. The vastness of the Internet however provides enough room not to be in contact with those topics and viewpoints. Another danger is that when people visit several news media rather than one main medium, they tend to read the different media very quickly, or visit overview pages of news media only, in order to quickly select interesting from uninteresting news. The danger of this filtering however is that pieces of information are taken up, without necessarily considering related aspects and alternative viewpoints to the news issues. Costera-Meijer (2008, p.176) refers to this quick, selective consumption style as “snacking” news. She found that young people prefer this style above others because of its time-efficiency, individuality of choice and because they feel no need to be fully informed citizens but rather to have a broad and updated knowledge about the state of world affairs.

At the same time however, young, snacking media consumers, want news to offer multi-layered information. Not only feel they bored with single layered information, they also trust it less because “there is no single truth” (Costera-Meijer, 2008, p.179) and miss the opportunity to choose for themselves what they find important. The much used quote that young people “no longer want to be
told how to think” (Nibley, 2000, p.38) applies here, emphasizing the need for diversity of content. The demand for multi-layered information, or “multiperspectival news”, how Gans (1980, p.313) suggested already in 1980, combined with the demand for “snack” news that are easily conceivable from overview pages, is perceived as conflict of demands, as dilemma even. So far it is unknown how overview pages of news media can offer elements that are both suitable for snacking and transmitting multiple perspectives.

Some possibilities become apparent if hypertextuality and connected consultation aspects are considered. Overview pages of news sites typically contain news items with headlines that introduce news topics, but can offer additional material like pictures or links to related material. Studies found that such hyperlinks are very promising but not used to a considerable extent so far (Matheson, 2004). Hence, what seems like a clash between the young audiences’ own preferences – snacking and multi-layered information- might in fact be a chance for the media: combining headlines, links and pictures at news site homepages, also termed overview pages, which indicate different perspectives and views.

What remains unclear however is whether news sites combine elements in their news overviews in that way, and furthermore if young audiences indeed appreciate it. Therefore, this study is directed at investigating a news site’s potential of engaging young audiences by offering snack news elements on its overview page that indicate multiple perspectives. For this research aim tagesschau.de, a German public service news site is chosen as case of study. It is investigated in its potential, both in terms of the news site itself, and in terms of a young audience’s perception of it. The overall question directing this research is:

What is the potential of the tagesschau.de overview page elements in directing attention to multiple perspectives?

The relevance of this research is partly grounded in political aspects. Costera-Meijer (2001, p.198) argues that offering “alternative considerations and motives might make politics more interesting and news more informative”. Other researchers argue that contact with more information than what conforms existing attitudes is needed for political knowledge and turnover (e.g. Norris, 2001; Prior, 2005; Couldry et al., 2010), which is in line with Sunstein’s (2004) objections to the Internet’s selectivity. Habermas, founder of the well-known concept of the public sphere, claims that plurality in the mediatized public sphere functions as requirement for a functioning society and their democratic discourse (Habermas, 2006). Although it would be possible and certainly interesting to go deeper into democratic values, especially concerning young people’s engagement in the public sphere, political

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1 The concept of public sphere is grounded in Habermas’ (1990) book “Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit” (English: The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere) from 1962. The public sphere implies a spatial concept as social sites or arenas, where meanings are articulated, distributed, and negotiated.
aspects are left out of consideration in this research. This decision is made because this study is user focused, leaving out considerations of what readers *should* be in contact with, but concentrating on aspects that readers *want* to be in contact with, despite their restriction to single or shortened news aspects. In terms of audiences’ own interest however, news media or “broadcasters need to find improved ways of drawing audiences into a broader mix of news and a deeper understanding of it” (Hargreaves & Thomas, 2002, p.6).

Despite the focus on users, the goal of this research is not to increase consumption as such. Rather the aim is to help achieve a better understanding of how readers’ preferences and content aspects go together. Furthermore, in this study not the potential of the Internet itself or the overall quality of a news medium are investigated, but the potential of elements that evolve with the Internet, but have to be implemented carefully: elements on news overview pages which promise leading to different perspectives and voices. In the following several concepts connected to young people’s news consumption and preferences are presented, next to concepts about multiple perspectives in both traditional and modern news media. Departing from these concepts, the specific research questions for this research are set up and presented. Two research methods are used, which will be presented in terms of methodology, procedure and results. Conclusions will be drawn from the combination of the methods and discussed in the final part of the paper. First however, some aspects of the research background are presented.

1.1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

This research project is grounded in the urge to understand the media requirements of an audience group of young adults. This group however is very large and unspecified, therefore the focus was limited to one nationality. As the researcher has a German background, the focus was laid on a German audience group, and accordingly on a case study of a German news site.

In the European context, a German case might not be particularly outstanding, but the circumstances should be considered nonetheless. The German media environment is mainly characterized by a division between public service media, and commercial media (Kleinsteuber & Thomass, 2008). On the one hand there are the public service media, which are set up as independent and financed primarily by license fees. They include the two broadcasters ARD and ZDF. The public service broadcasters in Germany differentiate themselves from the commercial media by offering another quality of topic selection, in terms of more political news (Krüger, 2002). Next to independence, objectivity, impartiality and service to all, their duty is to secure diversity and respect for pluralism (Lowe & Bardoel, 2008).

On the other hand there are commercial media, including two broadcaster families (ProSiebenSAT.1MediaAG and Bertelsmann) and a large number of newspapers. On a national level a
small number of newspapers appear, which include the tabloid BILD, and the newspapers Südliche Zeitung (SZ), Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), Welt, Frankfurter Rundschau (FR) and Tageszeitung (Taz), which claim to be independent and “above parties” (quotation marks in original, Kleinsteuber & Thomass, 2008, n.p.). The division between public and commercial media also exists in the online news environment. The public service broadcasters ARD and ZDF offer the news sites tagesschau.de, respectively heute.de, while the national newspapers offer news sites after their own name (e.g. sueddeutsche.de, faz.net, welt.de). The most successful online news provider is the online version of the weekly magazine Spiegel (spiegel.de).

In Europe, including Germany, the technical and political access (in terms of censorship) to the available media is comparably high (Demoussis & Giannakopoulos, 2006). Furthermore young citizens in that area have generally obtained the knowledge and education that prepares them for being critical and comparing across different media (Kavoori, 1999). The use of online news is popular among young people in Germany (ARD, 2010) but certainly leaves room for improvement. In order to investigate the use of online news and the connected requirements by its readers, a pilot study was conducted among young German citizens. This pilot study is presented in the following paragraph.

1.2. PILOT STUDY

A pilot study in form of a focus group was conducted by the researcher to gain insight into the uses of news media by the target group of young adults between 18 and 30, their expectations and perceived shortcomings. It was conducted on December 4th 2011, in Münster (Germany) with two male and two female participants aged 23 to 26. The demographics of the participants are included in Appendix A.

The aim of the research was to investigate young adults’ use of online news, their requirements to the used sites and their opinions about improvement of those sites. The group discussion revealed that news sites across a wide range were used. The reason for the wide-spread use was that using single news sites was not found credible, resulting in the urge to compare news sites to others. Connected to this was a wish for multilayered information, which was not found on single news sites. The main reason for these two aspects of dissatisfaction was that hardly ever the time was taken to explore news sites carefully. Consequently multiple perspectives or proof for credibility would not be found. A more careful examination might solve those issues, but is not considered as an option. Instead it is demanded to be able to grasp the news content relatively effortlessly during quick visits at the site. These results were taken to a trichotomy of audiences’ needs in online news media: snacking, hence the possibility to grasp the news content by quick visits to the news site, multiple perspectives and credibility. On the grounds of these three needs, young audience’s media behaviour is further specified in the following part.
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. YOUNG READERS’ DEMANDS IN NEWS

A group specifically affected by a changing news environment are young adults, between 18 and 29 years (Pew Research Center, 2010). They are considered “digital natives”, because they grew up with digital technologies and can easily apply them, unlike “digital immigrants” who had to learn how to use Internet-related applications later in their lives (Prensky, 2001). For young adults, the use of news sites is a well-known means to fulfil their needs of instant updates and individually selectable news (cf. Costera-Meijer, 2008). Most news sites however originate from traditional media, hence had to be applied to digital purposes later in the process. While the implementation seemed successful and many people even beyond that age group use news online, it remains unclear which exact demands young adults have on news sites for their own purposes. For this aim, a focus group among young Germans aged 23 to 26 was conducted as a pilot study, which revealed three main concepts relevant for interest and satisfaction in news: snacking, multiple perspectives and (perceived) credibility. These concepts are presented with regard to scholar’s descriptions, definitions and research findings in the following.

2.1.1. SNACKING

Previous studies on current news consumption among various countries and age groups show a general trend of people under 30 towards either declining news or consuming them in a snacking way (e.g. Hargreaves & Thomas, 2002). “Snacking” is a term used by Costera-Meijer (2008, p.176) to describe the brief news checking by young audiences; “scanning” is used by Seibold (2002, p.52) for roughly the same behaviour: quickly sifting through the material, stopping only at elements that catch the reader’s attention immediately.

This behaviour is framed by the complexity of its context: In news overview pages often a multitude of features is present, like a range of news items, each divided into headlines, subheadings, pictures and possibly fragments of text and links to each news item. This amount of features however endangers the overview, and heuristics are needed in order to reduce the effort of selecting information (Schweiger, 2001; as cited in Seibold, 2002). Therefore the user “does not go through each option separately but scans all of them, until an object is found whose attributes seem acceptable” (translated from Seibold, 2002, p. 26). A range of heuristics apply, for example primacy-effects, if items are placed at the top of a news site. Most attention however seems to be directed at headlines. Hargreaves and Thomas even refer to young people as “spotlight chasers” (2002, p.5) due to their preference for headline reading.
For features on the news site’s homepage, the term overview elements will be used, while for the behaviour style the terms snacking is used. This includes the notion of scanning, but implies a superficial level whereby getting deep is not necessarily the reader’s aim. While scanning can be considered the deliberate search for relevant information, snacking reflects the efficiency of quick updates (Costera-Meijer, 2008). In snacking, needs are satisfied instantly, skipping ‘useless’ information but choosing individually which news items to check in more detail. News sites are often visited in processes of “multitasking”, hence engaging simultaneously in multiple media activities (like listening to the radio or checking e-mail) (ibid, p. 176). By that Newman (2010, p.592) defines a ‘snack’ culture, “an entire generation of media audiences as inattentive multi-taskers, unlikely to devote more than a few minutes at a time to any kind of activity”.

The consumption style of a demographic group such as young people should not be generalized, and in fact carries some conflicting aspects. Hujanen & Pietikäinen (2004, p. 385) expect positive outcomes of news in online contexts for young people:

“Young people are [...] believed to be interested in new technologies, enthusiastic to try new forms of media and capable of quickly learning the necessary new skills. Consequently, their everyday use of the new media within the context of journalism could indicate possible future developments and changes.”

The technical skills should allow for active and wide-reaching involvement with news sites. Indeed a lot of young people seem to use online news (ARD, 2010, among German citizens, aged 14-29). The popularity of it however seems not to be necessarily grounded in technical exploration. Costera-Meijer (2008) found among Dutch citizens that news on the Internet gained popularity because most young people prefer snacking the news several times a day and across a wide variety of information sources to time-intensive, scheduled news. Participants from the pilot study confirmed snacking as preferred way of media consumption and described it as “fast-food reading”. Participants are aware of the downsides, and miss the depth of their media consumption. However, they lack a solution to the problem, because they are not willing to compromise on the fastness of checking news. “I want to make up my own picture, the easiest, yes, the fastest way” (Charlotte, 26) is what best describes the situation: being able to make up one’s own picture, but without increases in time-investment.

2.1.2. MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES
The focus group findings about snacking show that fastness is not the only criterion, but that being able to make up one’s own picture and coming to own conclusions plays an important role. Pictures and videos are considered helpful, but also carry disadvantages like videos being time-consuming and forcing to concentrate, while pictures are often distrusted, as they can be manipulative or even manipulated. Costera-Meijer (2008) found related issues: that young people want programmes that encourage reflection, discovery and lived experience. It is desired that news presentations leave room
for readers’ reflections upon the presented issues, encourage them to discover things and allow them
to identify with views and lifestyles in other cultures and countries (ibid., p.171). This is in line with
young people’s worldview, which she describes as “multi-voiced”. Therefore, she considers
“multivocality” or “multiperspectival news” (ibid. p.178) as fitting best to their needs, hence news media
which represent as many perspectives as possible (Gans, 1980). According to this approach, different
opinions should be gathered by journalists and compared or even contrasted in the news. The
integration of several viewpoints in news issues will be in the following referred to as multiple
perspectives.

In that sense, it is not only a democratic value to bring citizens into contact with multi-layered
information, as Sunstein (2004) suggested, but also a demand by audiences themselves. The most
important aspect seems to be that news is multi-layered, but also that embodied experiences are
offered, hence that people present their viewpoints directly. When this happens, the presentation is
often defined as “voiced” (Costera-Meijer, 2008, p.181), hence the person’s voice can be heard. When
snack news prohibits the lengthy presentation of viewpoints, at least the indication can be considered,
hence if an alternative viewpoint, different layer, or even voicing is announced.

An important aspect about the notion of multiperspectival news is that not necessarily “objectivity” is
strived for, but rather a traceability of the storytelling. Therefore Chouliaraki (2010, p.305) presents
“testimony” as concept, wherein users directly feel with the presented people and live their
experiences with them. Traceability in turn is connected to credibility, which is presented in the
following part.

2.1.3. CREDIBILITY
The last major finding of the focus group was that young audiences lack confidence in most media,
especially online media, in comparison to newspapers. That they still prefer online news to print news
is grounded in their preference for snacking news which is less time consuming, and the fact that most
online news sites are for free. However, they do take the time to check out different news sites, a
behaviour also described as grazing (cf. Hargreaves & Thomas, 2002; State of the media, 2010). The
pattern seems to be that because they are not willing to read articles carefully to check for the truth
potential in the news story, they check out different media about the same issue in order to define a
credibility level for themselves.

Turner (2010) finds that audiences lose faith in the traditional version of journalism, and presents
online news media as potentially more trustworthy in the eyes of the audiences. However, he stresses
that the upcoming of new platforms not necessarily renders the journalism “better, more reliable or
diverse in terms of its political perspectives and sources of information” (Turner, 2010, p.72). Diversity
in terms of political perspectives and sources hence might enhance credibility. To achieve this diversity,
different possibilities should be available for consultation. McMillan (2002, p. 247) describes this as “consultational interactivity”, stressing the importance of user’s own choice within an existing selection of pre-produced information. Bucy (2004, p.111) argues in that relation:

“Net news operations can enhance media credibility. Beyond stimulating interest in the news and keeping users captivated, interactive experiences may cultivate impressions of news responsiveness and informativeness, at least for young audiences.”

Nielsen (as cited in Matheson, 2004) claims that links gain credibility for the news because more than the news reporter’s own work is presented. News credibility is a concept about the content in terms of perceptions and opinions from readers (Kiousis, 2001), for example perceptions of aesthetic presentation (Slater & Rouner, 1996) and writing styles (Chartprasert, 1993). Diversity of content might be a crucial factor because it makes no claim to the truth, but leaves readers to make up their own opinion (Matheson, 2004). Hence, links can give a feeling of a more complete picture because the full content is present in a related site (or an internal part of the site). Furthermore the original sources can be tracked. Both completeness of information (Johnson & Kaye, 1998) and original sources -which in turn can be assessed for their trustworthiness (Bucy, 2003) - are indicators of credibility. Matheson (2004) found that therefore links are used to gain credibility for news products and even considers the diversity in hyperlinks as “possibility to ‘reengage an increasingly distrusting and alienated audience’” (2004, p.444 referring to Pavlik, 2001).

Readers hence assess the credibility of news issues by comparing different sources, either within or across different media. The ability to compare sources within one news medium is described as ‘multiple perspectives’ in the previous chapter. Offering multiple perspectives in one medium thus can enhance the perceived credibility in turn. This relationship between the concepts allows concentrating on multiple perspectives, whereby perceptions of credibility are considered as possible outcome. So far, there has been research on the increasing and decreasing trust of young audiences in online media, but what seems to be lacking is research on the impact of diversity in overview elements, such as hyperlinks. The perception of completeness and original sources provided by snack news elements - even if they are not being tracked down for real- should therefore be investigated in its potential to engage audience members by evoking perceptions of credibility.

Before coming back to the impact on credibility, the general potential of multiple perspectives should be investigated. Levels of credibility are thereby implied. This investigation will be done with respect to the changing context of news media since the demand for multiple perspectives appeared.
2.2. NEWS PRESENTATIONS IN A CHANGING MEDIA CONTEXT

2.2.1. MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN A TRADITIONAL NEWS CONTEXT

The main reason for paying attention to news items has always been personal relevance (Graber, 1988). However, other factors affect the choice and perception of news, such as emotional appeal, societal importance and interestingness of a news story. In 1980, the demand for more ‘multiperspectival news’ was introduced by the sociologist Herbert Gans. It was claimed for news with two sides to a story, because they were considered as more objective and often even more dramatic. Hence, multiple perspectives can enhance credibility and maybe even interest in his view. He further described how journalists choose stories that interest the readers because people should know what is going on in the world. He considered problematic however, that journalists choose stories rather than sources. Sources are actors whom journalists observe or interview, including interviewees who appear on air or who are quoted in magazine articles, and those who only supply background information or story suggestions, hence “provide information as members or representatives of organized and unorganized interest groups, and yet larger sectors of nation and society” (Gans, 1980, p.80). The representation of these groups of sources however was highly criticized by Gans. He suggested several aspects of how to improve news to being more multiperspectival. Next to being more relevant to citizens by more national news, service news and output news (directed at processes and outcomes rather than politician’s suggestions), he demanded news to offer more bottom-up views and to be more representative. By that he stressed the importance of the “ordinary people”, who should both be represented in terms of activities and opinions and be used as sources (ibid., p.313). Departing from this description, representation is taken as core value of multiple perspectives in news, wherein the ordinary people are under-represented. Representation is also used by Murdock (1999, p. 13) who among others claims for a need to ask “who is entitled to speak for and about others”. Later support for the notion of representation comes from Hargreaves and Thomas’ (2002) research among British citizens: traditional news provider television news was not trusted to represent society adequately and despite all the choice offered, only a minority found television news to represent all sections of society fairly.

Gans (1980) found it problematic to have as many sources as possible included, as they would lead to a considerable increase in the sheer amount of news. In his time of writing, 1980, he found that the media could not handle this increase. As news had to be printed or broadcasted, adding information necessarily added to the length of text provided to the audience. While adding to an article’s length increases notions of importance and thereby predicts readership (McCombs & Mauro, 1977), the total capacity of the medium itself could not be exceeded. This shows that multiple perspectives are also dependent on presentation, hence on ways of finding out how to integrate those perspectives within the given media outputs.
In traditional media the main location to present sources is within news reports and articles, hence presentation takes place in a text, rather than as trigger to get the audience's attention. By that, sources can be used to render the news report more interesting and credible while watching or reading. In this sense, sources are seen as competitors of information space within articles. In a changing media context however this presentational style could be fundamentally changed.

2.2.2. MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN A CONTEMPORARY NEWS CONTEXT

In 2011, Gans considered the context of his demands for news media drastically changed with the upcoming of news on the Internet, and therefore reconsidered his concept of multiperspectival news. He found that the Internet had changed certain aspects of news towards an expanded amount and diversity of targeted information, but in principle still lacked representation of many groups of people (Gans, 2011). This implies that aspects of representation are still relevant to consider for present news media.

Concerning the news in general, also Chouliaraki (2010, p.308) stresses the importance of “witnessing of the citizen” as opposed to the “witnessing of the journalist”, which is rather objectivist but lacks the authenticity and emotion necessary for many kinds of engagement. Therefore, ‘the person on the street’ is considered the “most appropriate voice to tell the story”; while journalists as presenter of news stories fade into the background. The historian Nolte explains in an interview that “the Internet serves as a huge equalizer, breaking down hierarchies. Experts don’t get to say that much anymore, journalists are not worth that much anymore” (translated from Bambule, 2012, n.p.). Instead audiences are interested in a variety or representatives.

What is more, the presentational style of different perspectives has gained a whole new importance. Gans’ (1980) apprehension that more sources lead to more content is less severe in online contexts, because content can be divided on subpages, hence takes no space away needed for other reports. Content often needs a trigger to be read, as in the increased choice of content not everything can be read. Presentational style hence has gained importance in getting readers interested in news issues. Especially in a snacking context, possibilities of representation are limited to issues that are chosen to be read, or to quick presentation in overview elements. Perspectives and sources hence can be indicated in an overview page, rather than presenting them in full length right away.

The Internet serves as an ‘overview medium’, meaning that newspapers are still considered the main medium for depth, while the Internet – together with television news - is considered a main medium for overview (Schrøder & Larsen, 2010). However it is argued that news on the Internet can be used for both, overview and depth. Deuze (2001, n.p.) portraits online journalism managing a split “between those who are happy with ‘just’ receiving the headlines [...] and those who want to seek out all details of the story, including audio, video and written text”. For the provision of depth and background, the
Internet is most relevant among young adult groups (Schrøder & Larsen, 2010). Even if the Internet is not used for depth, the use of hyperlinks is one possible means of how different viewpoints can be ‘promised’ to be witnessed. Deuze (2003, p. 212, refering to Nelson) describes hyperlinks as meant to "open up and make available all kinds of documents (content) as much as possible". Hypertext as such is defined as “text that branches and allows choices to the reader” (Nelson, as cited in Landow, 1997, p.3). Hypertext provides an "infinitely recenterable system whose provisional point of focus depends upon the reader, who becomes a truly active reader in yet another sense" (Landow, 1997, p.36), meaning that the reader continually shifts the center or focus of investigation.

Gans did not refer to hyperlinks or overview elements in his updated version of his claim for multiperspectival news in 2011, but it seems relevant to test and explore possibilities of those elements in this context, and thereby possibly approach ‘better’ news in the future, hence news that would fulfill both audience’s needs for more diversity and credibility and getting into contact with issues from different viewpoints.

2.2.3. INDICATIONS OF MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN SNACK NEWS ELEMENTS

One of the possibilities for transmitting perspectives is to gain sufficient interest to the news issue that the whole article is read. In this case, different perspectives can be presented in the text, just as in traditional media. However the formal display of the overview elements should have “substantial impact on what online news consumers actually read, and what they ignore” (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2010, p.298), as the article length is not visible before having clicked on it and thereby drops out as indicator of importance and predictor of readership (cf. McCombs & Mauro, 1977). As few news sites however have headlines of different typeface and use thumbnail-sized illustrations to accompany every headline (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2010), news consumers receive hardly any indication of importance and reason to select a specific news item in current news sites. Transmitting perspectives within an article hence carries the risk that the reader misses the fact that different sources or perspectives are presented.

A second possibility therefore is to offer different perspective at a first glance, for example by names or quotes in the headline. In this way readers can catch different viewpoints without making much effort. It remains questionable however, whether these presentational styles can be implied several times in a range of news items, without endangering their overview character.

A third possibility is to indicate perspectives in other overview elements than headlines, for example by pictures or links to viewpoints. In this way, readers can not catch at a first glance what the different viewpoints precisely are, but they get informed about the presence of these different viewpoints. In this third possibility arguably the full contact with different viewpoints is not provided, unless the content is actively clicked on and read, but appears promising nonetheless. Support for this aspect
comes from research about interactivity elements. Interactivity in general has been suggested by many scholars as means to engage the audience, but it was found that interactive features were not used extensively (Chung, 2008). Larsson (2011) however found that even if interactive features are not used, they often are appreciated, which particularly holds for links to similar content. Therefore, outcomes should not be measured in usage alone. Gerpott and Wanke (2004) for example found that sophisticated interactivity features stimulate interest and cognitive involvement. If it is lacking, hence if audiences are denied multiple perspectives, those who are interested will start zapping and scanning various media and news sources (Costera-Meijer, 2008).

So far, Matheson (2004) found that the Internet, despite its high potential, lacks the diversity in links that would be needed especially for younger and underrepresented target groups. Hyperlinks could be used to let readers explore news content and make up their own mind about the issues, but few news media actually implement hyperlinks of that nature. Instead, online news often resembles the traditional print or broadcast news, just the content moved to news sites additionally. Therefore, he proposes a change in journalism to what he calls a "site of multiple knowledge and of breadth of knowledge of the world" (ibid., p.460). Hence, he considers the best news medium to be a website where the user is able to choose "from an existing selection of pre-produced information". This means that hyperlinks are used to take readers "further in depth to an item, or to related stories or websites outside the news site for further information" (ibid., p.454). Matheson claims that "the truth" cannot be "channelled exclusively through one news text" (ibid., p.457). Therefore, knowledge should be considered as process, in which users are allowed to participate in "constructing knowledge about events in the world" (ibid., p.455), with "less of a claim to know what users want or to know what an event means" (ibid, p.458), and the Internet’s vastness and lack of hierarchy has the potential to surprise users with the unexpected and previously unknown (Rogers, 2002; as cited in Matheson, 2004). According to Costera-Meijer (2008), this participation in constructing knowledge and exploration is precisely what young audiences want. Therefore, "unless the information is clearly marked as 'snack news', it should provide variety in images, a range of different views, angles and experiences, and it should equally cater to male and female viewers, urban and rural viewers, as well as viewers from all ethnicities", Costera-Meijer argues (2008, p.178). In this research however it is argued that even in snack news, different views and angles should be presented, so that readers who use the site for snacking purposes get interested in the news items. By indicating perspectives in overview elements, it is argued, readers are informed about the presence of perspectives and accordingly better able to assess the credibility of the news in terms of completeness and original sources.
3. CASE STUDY TAGESSCHAU.DE

It shows that online news media not yet offer news that would significantly differ from traditional formats. That this is needed however is shown by different examples in the literature (cf. Matheson, 2004, Costera-Meijer, 2008) and a focus group, which revealed needs for snacking, multiple perspectives and credibility. It can be argued that multiperspectival links in snack news contexts offer some potential, because links to alternative viewpoints can increase perceived credibility but also interest in general. To gather more understanding for this potential, research is needed that explores the potential in a broader sense. Therefore, it is chosen to explore the potential of one news site in a case study, both in terms of content and audience opinion about it.

As material, snack news elements from the website tagesschau.de are chosen. The news site is the online version of Tagesschau (translated: show of the day), the leading news report in German television, from the main Public Service broadcaster in Germany, ARD. The online version also gained a lot of popularity and even young people have it among their range of frequently used news sites (result from focus group and ARD, 2010). From the website up-to-date news, quality journalism, background information and deepening information are expected. Hence, while snacking might not be the main purpose of the site, combined possibilities of snacking and multiple perspectives would be valuable for meeting the readers’ expectations. It is furthermore praised for being Germany’s second best online portal in quality after Spiegel Online (Wellbrock in Tagesspiegel, 2011) whereby quality is judged in terms of being up-to-date, relevant, accurate, comprehensible, diverse, complete and unbiased. It is also claimed to be offering the most serious news and offering the largest range of opinions (Aserto, 2009).

The official rating however is not necessarily shared by audience members, especially the young. The perceived credibility might differ from official standards or credibility; and also quality is rather subjective. It is therefore important to gather direct responses to the site also. In this study the focus is on audience reactions to a specific kind of content: the news items of tagesschau.de.

“Through its varied and balanced content, choice of reliable links and interaction possibilities, tagesschau.de offers orientational help on the Internet and supports the users’ media competence in technique and content.” (translated from ARD, 2010, p.41).

It remains to be tested whether and to which extent “varied and balanced content”, and “choice of reliable links and interaction possibilities” also means that news are presented in a multiperspectival way, and whether young audiences recognize those as chance to be engaged with different perspectives on the overview page already.
4. RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS

The present research is focused on getting insight into both the potential of snack news elements’ content and audiences’ reactions to those. The potential of the news site is investigated in terms of representation, presentation and variety of perspectives: which sources and perspectives are mentioned, how they are presented, and how different perspectives are added to each other within one news item. The focus on representation is grounded in Gans’ (1980) claim for more representative news, where ordinary people’s voices are being heard, and Chouliaraki’s (2010) distinction between ordinary people and journalists as presenters of news stories. Hence, it is analyzed whether ordinary people are represented and which other sources compete with their opinions and perspectives. However, it is not only investigated whether the sources are mentioned but also how they are shown, hence which presentational styles are used. As Costera-Meijer (2008, p.178) argues that young people want “a range of embodied voices and experiences”, it is of special interest whether sources are ‘voiced’, hence whether the snack news elements give an indication on whether the actual voice is being heard, or the original phrasing of the source can be read or traced after. Costera-Meijer (2008) also argues for the multitude of those, hence that young people want opinions from multiple angles and not in a single-layered fashion. Therefore, it needs to be considered how different perspectives are added or even compared to each other, in order to assess the variety of perspectives.

The following three research questions are put up to investigate those differences in presentational style, representation and variety:

1. Which sources and perspectives are represented in the overview elements on tagesschau.de?
2. Which ways to present the sources and perspectives are offered in the overview elements on tagesschau.de?
3. How is variety of perspectives created in the overview elements on tagesschau.de?

These three questions seek answers to how perspectives can or might be perceived potentially, based on what is offered by the material. Three more questions are put up, aiming at what actually is perceived. Hence, it is considered if differences found in the content also lead to different reactions by audience members. Of special interest among the reactions are interest and perceptions of credibility. These are expected to be influenced by different forms of multiple perspectives. The awareness of multiple perspectives however needs to be taken into account as well, as audience members might have their own opinion about the relationship between multiple perspectives, credibility and audience engagement. Both the importance of multiple perspectives and the perceived performance of the site on that matter, need to be investigated. Finally the visit of a news site like tagesschau.de cannot be considered in isolation, but is usually part of a larger process, involving different news media. How this
complies with the perception of the content hence has to be included in the research. Therefore, the following three questions are added:

4. Which reactions are shown towards the overview elements on tagesschau.de?
5. How is the content considered as carrier of multiple perspectives?
6. How is the content in the sense of multiple perspectives considered in the larger context of news media?
5. METHODS

To answer the posed questions a combination of content and audience focused methods is needed. Research questions 1 to 3 are concerned with content diversity, which asks for a content focused approach. Research questions 4 to 6 however are concerned with audience reactions towards the content, which is why a reception study is used additionally.

5.1. CONTENT ANALYSIS

A content analysis is conducted in order to categorize elements of snack news in a way that allows comparison of different forms of content and reception. Content analysis, as it is defined by Berelson (1952, as cited in Neuendorf, 2002, p.1), is “a research technique for the systematic, objective, quantitative description of the manifest content of communication”. The manifest content, hence the directly visible rather than the latent content is considered important in this part of the research. However, it should be noted that Berelson’s definition of content analysis was taken further to that of a “summarizing, quantitative analysis that relies on the scientific method [...] [which] is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented” (Neuendorf, 2002, p.10). Hence, it should be kept in mind that more than the manifest and measurable content is involved when considering the characteristics of a medium. Still, the fact that manifest content can be measured, makes the method applicable for the categorization of snack news.

Other types of message analysis might have been applicable: for example a discourse analysis could have helped at typifying media representations (Neuendorf, 2002). However, representations were considered in the present research without regard to ideology or power representations, which characterizes discourse analysis, but would go too far for the present research, which is directed more at the occurrence of groups of sources, than at the actual depiction of those.

As content analysis is defined as scientific method, aspects of a priori (before the fact) design should be considered. Neuendorf criticizes the practice of choosing and measuring variables after the messages were observed. Instead, a codebook and coding form must be constructed in advance. If the development of coding schemes is included in the process, the “entire process may be viewed as combination of induction and deduction” (ibid., p.12). “The goal of any quantitative analysis is to produce counts of key categories, and measurements of the amounts of other variables” (Fink, 1999; as cited in Neuendorf, 2002, p.14). In order to achieve numbers of categories for the news material on tagesschau.de, first an inductive stage has to be run through in which key categories of the news material can be defined. This step is recommended if there is not enough knowledge about the phenomenon (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007), as in this case of multiple perspectives in snack news elements.
In the present research this is done by a thematic analysis, which will be presented in the following paragraph. The second stage, which is deductive and includes the quantitative data of the research, will be presented in a later step.

5.1.1. THEMATIC ANALYSIS
The goal of the present research is primarily on finding categories within the content, whereas counting those categories plays only a minor role. The focus therefore lies on the inductive stage of the content analysis wherein categories are gathered. To the knowledge of the researcher there are no previous research examples of categories of news elements on overview pages. Therefore, categories have to be found by the researcher. Not departing from predetermined notions but observing the material from an empirical level for creating typologies however might limit the reliability of the research. This inductive step is considered valuable nonetheless, and guided by previous examples of content categorization with different material. Boyatzis (1998) and Leonhardt et al. (1999) provide theories about the process of finding categories, termed thematic analysis. The primary goal of the thematic analysis is to discover themes and patterns in snack news elements that might indicate multiple perspectives. Boyatzis (1998, p.3) suggests it as a means to finding “a pattern, or theme, in seemingly random information”. Finding patterns or themes is the first step according to Boyatzis, after which it can be continued to classifying or encoding and finally interpreting the pattern. Leonhardt et al. (1999) suggest finding and forming categories that can be used for a coding scheme. With the help of the coding scheme, a new sample of the research material can be analyzed in a content analysis. This coding scheme is presented in Appendix C. In the current sample the focus is on finding thematic patterns in representation, presentation and variety of perspectives. As this step is inductive, the focus is on finding all relevant aspects, not the quantity of them.

5.1.2. CODING STAGE
The variables found in the thematic analysis should be applied in a deductive stage. The predefined variables hence could be tested in a second sample, which will be described below. The purpose of coding a second sample of tagesschau.de material was to have defined categories of content, which could be compared to audience reactions. For aspects of reliability, the coded material was a different sample than the material the typologies were drawn from. Another reason was that outcomes of the second sample could be directly combined with results from an audience reception study. In terms of validity, the coding of content might have its limitations because the research tool could not be pre-tested. The audience reception study hence will serve as means for testing the qualities of the research tool.
5.1.3. MATERIAL

The unit of data collection consists of overview elements from the website tagesschau.de. The overview page contains four parts: a header with navigational elements to categories other than news and three columns underneath. The first of these columns contains navigational elements within the news (news categories and broadcasts), the second column contains news items underneath each other, and the third column contains related material like lottery results, comments and blogs. Only the actual news items from the second column were considered. Those usually consist of a headline, picture, article summary and related material like internal or external links. These text lines and pictures which are short and can be captured at one glance, are summarized as elements of the news items. By clicking on a headline, picture or article summary the full article can be read, which however would not belong to snack news, and is therefore not considered. In the snack news context, only elements are considered that are visible without clicking on anything.

Image 1. News items from tagesschau.de. The items contains the elements in the order of appearance: (1) subheading, headline, picture, summary, 5 (internal) links with symbols for links and video; (2 and 3) picture, subheading, headline, summary, 1 (internal) link with a symbols for video, respectively link.

Seibold (2002) lists the following website features as elements for this kind of context: words that stand out by length or text formation, formal elements like headlines, subheads, textboxes, tables and enumerations, and graphics and pictures. These elements are considered as material in the sample of news items. As visible in image 1, the applying elements on tagesschau.de are subheadings, headlines, pictures and links. Summaries, due to their length are excluded after Seibold’s definition. After considering the elements separately, the news items as a whole are considered as well, thereby focusing on the variety of perspectives.

In many ways these elements can be considered as manifest content, hence “physically present and countable” (Gray & Densten, 1998, p.420). Names, faces or symbols like quotation marks or video cameras for example are physically present and can be counted or categorized as such. However there are also less recognizable elements, especially if one considers representation, which is often dependent on more than a name. Gray and Densten (1998) promote the integration of quantitative and qualitative analysis for content with latent constructs. By means of the thematic analysis, the latent
constructs included in the presentation elements can be considered as part of the content for which categories need to be found. By this means, perspectives implied by latent features can be included.

**UNITS OF DATA COLLECTION THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

Leonhardt et al. (1999) suggest taking a representative sample from the complete data material, from which all statements about the research topic are extracted. In the case of overview elements from tagesschau.de, there is no complete data material, as news items are updated several times a day. News items are taken from the data material in a close time frame but at random times, to make the sample reliable. Also it is chosen to take more than 100 news items for this purpose. Therefore, news items were gathered from the overview page (homepage) of the tagesschau.de website from 11 days in February 2012, resulting in a sample of 105 news items. The news items were split into the single overview elements: headlines including subheadings, pictures and separate links (internal or external). Other snack news elements like out-standing words or tables were not found. The elements, hence text lines and pictures, 523 in total, were analyzed, and a coding scheme in form of a codebook was drawn from the aspects found in this sample (see Appendix C).

The 11 days of data gathering were marked by a range of political issues, like the financial crisis in Greece, the consideration of a Syria-deployment, elections in Russia, a strike at Germany’s major airport and the scandal-influenced resignation of the German president. No major news event however happened that would have taken the news out of their context of daily news snacking. Therefore, the sample seemed representative for a snacking context.

**UNITS OF DATA COLLECTION CONTENT ANALYSIS**

A second sample was drawn, consisting of 121 items, which in turn contained 603 elements in pictures and text lines. In that way it was principally the same material as in the first sample, but had a different context: participants of a reception study (presented in the next section of this paper) were directed to the website and exposed to a number of news items. Those items that the participants were exposed to were captured and taken as second sample. The unit of data collection hence was not determined by the researcher, but by the time and date the interview took place, and by the participants’ individual reach across the news site. These items served as the ‘actual’ unit of data collection, hence the items on which each variable was measured (cf. Neuendorf, 2002). The codebook from the first stage was applied to this material.

**5.2. RECEPTION ANALYSIS**

Theorists argue that content analysis necessarily has to be complemented by reception analysis “in order to determine the subjective understanding of information” (Kepplinger, 1989, p. 177). This highly
applies to the current research where the audience’s subjective understanding of the news information is crucial to determine the actual potential of snack news elements.

“Reception research is premised on the belief that neither the semiotic analysis of media texts nor questionnaire-based analysis of media gratifications is capable of grasping the complexities of the media experience” (Schrøder et al., 2003, p.122).

Therefore, reception research in the form of qualitative interviews is used to grasp the complexities of media use beyond the formalities of its content. As “reception research regards meaning as a joint product of text and reader” (ibid. p.124), this approach seems very suitable for understanding the potential of a news site from a reader’s perspective next to the content perspective.

5.2.1. METHODOLOGY

Researchers suggest to assess perceptions of news content directly as they occur, rather than relying on reflections of past media behaviour (Bucy, 2003). Therefore, in this research a reception analysis is conducted among potential users of the news site material, tagesschau.de, in form of an interview about the perceptions while respondents visit the actual website. The research is conducted as small scale research because the interest is directed at the opinions and explanations to the potential of the news content; not at a significance of the relationships between the variables. The reception analysis is conducted in form of semi-structured interviews after Berger (2011), including some observation aspects, to control for the snacking context and clarify answers by behaviours. Looking at news items and clicking on them is registered in order to capture interest in certain news items. Observation however cannot be the main focus, mainly because a snacking context is expected where illuminating behaviour would be uncommon. First of all, in a context of snacking, most behaviour is quick reading that needs special equipment to capture. Secondly, under observation behaviour is often distorted, due to social pressure of the researcher’s presences. The other reason is that interviews enable researchers to obtain information that cannot be gained by observation alone, such as clarifications why respondents do things, what motivates them and what anxieties they have (Berger, 2011). For these reasons, interviews are chosen to clarify reasons, emotions and opinions of people of the target group.

The interviews are conducted one-on-one because group interviews like focus group carry the danger of socially desired answers or group conformity (Schrøder et al., 2003). In this case however it is important to get the participants’ independent disclosure on maybe less socially desired acts like snacking and leaving out multiple perspectives. For the same reason it is desirable not to have the researcher’s direct presence while participants are visiting the website. To achieve a setting wherein participants can visit the website relatively free from social influence, but wherein their behaviour can be observed and registered nonetheless, the interview is conducted via Skype. Skype is a software
application for phone calls, which many young people in Germany have installed at their computers (no statistics available). The software allows recording the spoken interview, and to view the respondent’s computer screen while calling, in a setting called screen sharing. On the one hand this method implies that interviews are not conducted face-to-face, hence lack capturing nonverbal behaviour such as facial expressions. On the other hand the participants’ setting is more natural, sitting individually at their own computers, in their own rooms.

The content was registered that was watched or clicked on. The registered material subsequently was analyzed with the coding scheme which evolved from the thematic analysis. Content analysis was used already by Gans (1980) for observing recurring patterns in the news, and was added to this study in order to make a “systemically and inter-subjectively reproducible description of formal and content characteristics of messages” (Früh, 1991, as cited and translated by Rössler, 2000, p.302). By coding the content it can be described in a way that makes it easier to work with the material and relate it to statements made by participants. Hence, by observing behaviour and asking for indications of interest, quantitative data could be combined with those of the content analysis. The main part of the second research however was the gathering of opinions and explanations about the potential of the news site. For this purpose, qualitative data in form of comments were gathered.

Qualitative research carries the risk of subjective bias (Schröder et al., 2003). Therefore, the reliability of the research might be endangered, as the researcher developed typologies, the coding scheme and the interview questions. Also follow-up questions, which are not pre-defined, carry the risk of the researcher’s bias. In order to reduce this risk, this research is made as transparent as possible, including all aspects of questions asked and the research procedure. This will be presented in the following part.

5.2.2. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

12 German citizens (7 female, 5 male) between 20 and 30 years of age (mean age = 24.83) were recruited in a “snowball technique” (Schröder et al., 2003, p.162). Friends and family members were asked to contact people from their networks, who live up to specified characteristics. In this study the specifications were age (with a range of 18 to 30 years) and nationality (German). Most of the participants are university students, except for two work apprentices and one welfare worker. Furthermore most participants are frequent online news consumers. Seven participants indicated to use online news regularly and to be familiar with that form of news, while five indicated not to use online news regularly and to be familiar with online news more in theory than in practice. Five of the participants indicate to use tagesschau.de as one of the main sources of news. A table of the demographics is included in Appendix A. It should be noted that the first respondent served as “pilot interview” (Schröder et al., 2003, p.163) in order to check for the quality of the interview questions and the procedure. A few questions were adapted after the test interview, but as it was not “hampered by
grave shortcomings” (ibid, p.163), it was included in the study as “first interview”. A few of the participants appeared in groups, hence were interviewed in a close timeframe and were therefore exposed to the same news sample. The interview itself however was conducted in an isolated room, hence free from each other’s influence.

All interviews were conducted between April 1st and 17th 2012 and lasted 12 to 25 minutes each. After establishing a Skype connection with screen sharing, respondents were shortly introduced to the topic, informed about recording of their answers, and sent to the website tagesschau.de. They were asked to use the site in a ‘normal’ context, hence in a way that conforms best to the respondent’s habit of using (news) websites. Respondents were then interviewed in a semi-structured way about three different aspects: (1) reactions towards the content, (2) perceptions of multiple perspectives, and (3) the influence of their own news context. Questions in the first aspect were rather fully structured, evoking yes and no answers for the specific reactions, but then including “probes” (Schrøder et al., 2003, p.157), hence letting respondents freely explain the answer’s background as follow-up question. All reactions were gathered, but participants were specifically asked about their inner reactions in terms of interest and perceived credibility. Questions in the second aspect were directed at opinions about the presence of multiple perspectives in the news items. The subject area ‘multiple perspectives’ is extremely vague and unspecified for many news users, and needed clarification before statements could be taken. Therefore, participants were asked how they define the term and if differences with the researcher’s definition (multitude of viewpoints to the same topic) appeared, those were clarified with the participant. Questions in the third aspect included background information about the participants’ typical and recent media use. Here it was asked how recent media use could have affected the directed visit of tagesschau.de. In all aspects participants were explicitly asked about their own opinion and possible explanations for their answers. The explicit questions are enlisted in Appendix B.

5.2.3. ANALYSIS APPROACH
The analysis of the results follows Berger’s (2011) suggestions of analyzing interviews: the interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy. The written record then was analyzed in detail and useful material extracted.

Answers were grouped after the three aspects presented above: (1) reactions towards the content (including interest and perceived credibility) (2) perceptions of multiple perspectives and opinions about it (in terms of presentation and representation), and (3) the role of multiple perspectives within and across news media portals. All answers were used as explanatory material for why the current website structure may or may not work for the target group. As the answers often refer to direct material, hence news items that caught their attention somehow, the material was captured after tracking what participants saw, via the screen sharing which items were looked at.
6. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

As in the Methods chapter, analysis and results for content analysis and reception analysis are presented separately. The quantitative data of the content analysis however are combined with the reception analysis. Therefore the data will be presented briefly in the content part, their impact however will be analyzed with regard to audience reactions. The outcomes of the combined methods are presented in the Conclusions chapter. The present chapter serves in presenting the procedures and results of each method, referring to the research questions asked in Chapter 4.

6.1. CONTENT ANALYSIS

6.1.1. THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The 523 elements, hence text lines and pictures gathered as unit of data collection, were analyzed with regard to indications of multiple viewpoints, specified by differences in presentation and representation. The combination of those elements in the 105 news items was subsequently analyzed with regard to the variety of perspectives indicated in the news items. Four steps were run through in order to gather these aspects and combinations of them. In these steps, perspectives in general (step 1), presentational styles and specific sources as representations (step 2), combinations of those in elements (step 3) and finally the variety of those perspectives across different elements (step 4) were analyzed.

In step 1) the material was run through in order to gather all forms of indications of multiple viewpoints. This descriptive step was used to analyze text lines and pictures in terms of whether different perspectives were mentioned. This could be the journalistic perspective for example, which should be objective, but as full objectivity can never be achieved, will be referred to as ‘normal’ perspective in the following. By that it is meant, that no specific viewpoint from any of the concerned parties is taken. Specific perspectives can be taken, but they are not always explicitly stated. For example it was found that background perspectives are taken, describing the situation from a larger angle. Similarly future perspectives are taken where the long-term effects of a situation are anticipated. Furthermore, passive perspectives are taken, where a viewpoint was given, but the active source representing the perspective was missing. Polls were found as indication of perspective, representing the citizen’s possibility of giving a viewpoint. Pictures were also considered as indicators of perspectives, because the presence of a person suggests the presence of a viewpoint. This could be either the person’s individual viewpoint, or the general viewpoint of a party or interest group, which the person belongs to. Passive and larger perspectives, polls and pictures of persons hence were found to imply a perspective, but in an indirect way, as no sources for those perspectives were mentioned in the overview elements. Direct perspectives were those where a viewpoint was reported, in combination
Table 1. Typology of perspectives found in news overview elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal perspective</td>
<td>No viewpoint included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description of the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive perspective</td>
<td>Claim, question or comment without clear source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger perspective</td>
<td>Perspective directed at background or future or explanation of the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poll</td>
<td>Opinion question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture perspective</td>
<td>Perspective indicated by picture of a person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject or group with recognizable features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct perspective</td>
<td>Viewpoint by directly named person or party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In step 2), the presentation material was analyzed. For this step the complete material was run through again, in order to find all styles of presenting perspectives and representing sources. For *presentation styles* a range of categories was found that all 523 elements from the sample could be attributed to: sentences (words only), video, audio, polls, external links and picture series indicated by icons next to the text, dossiers and interviews (indicated as such next to the text line), quotes (indicated by quotation marks) and files (indicated by the format of the file). The 105 news items on the other hand could be attributed to styles of “normal” news items, comments or contrasting presentations. Comments were separate news items, belonging thematically to another news item. Similarly, contrasting presentations belonged thematically together, but were put next to each other, unlike the normal news items. Those are put underneath each other and are not connected in any sense. For *representation* a range of groups of sources were found, presented in table 2. Categorization of people is always problematic; therefore the groups in this example serve as mere indications of how people can be seen in the context of news. Officials belong to this group because they have to represent a certain viewpoint in terms of their profession, hence the institution they belong to. Experts on the other hand are expected to have comprehensive background knowledge rather than a personal opinion. A similar function comes to journalists, who are expected to have gathered all available material and present it relatively free from personal opinion. Accused people on the other hand have an opinion that is personal, but also deviant from the ‘normal’ view. Those people who are presented as accused by the medium itself are categorized as such in the coding process. ‘Ordinary’ people as last group, have an opinion related to their situation. Hence, ‘people’ are those of one nationality, if
nations are affected by a certain issue, or those of one occupation group when the occupation sector is affected, and so on.

Table 2. Typology of sources found as representatives of viewpoints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group of sources</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officials</td>
<td>Politician, institution, parliament, ministry, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>Expert or scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalists</td>
<td>Journalist/reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accused</td>
<td>Person depicted as causing outrage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>‘Ordinary’ people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groups of nationalities, occupations, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A problem arose with the differentiation between sources, hence presenters of viewpoints, and actors. The main criterion for being a source was that a name or direct depiction was included in the snack news elements. Names however could also stand for actors rather than sources. In the sample the following words were taken as indication for a source rather than actor: about, against, wanting, claiming, bemoaning, regretting, resenting, fearing, opposing, showing confidence, refusing, feeling and hoping for. The following examples illustrate the impact of these indications in a news line on the placement of a perspective: ‘The president about the situation in Libya’ or ‘Thousands of Russians against the new policy’. The representation only applied when sources were actually given, hence in pictures and when perspectives were presented directly by names or titles of people, parties or interest groups. For those it mattered also how the source was presented, hence which presentational style was given. Therefore, in a third step, the material was run through again, in order to find combinations of perspectives with certain presentational styles.

In step 3) combinations of perspectives, their presentational styles and representations were considered. From the range of presentational styles found in the second step, the following applied to the direct mentioning of sources: video, audio, interviews and quotes. The reason why these differ from other presentational styles such as sentences alone, is that in these presentational styles sources are given their own voice. While in sentences alone only a summary is given of the person’s viewpoint, in audio and video the source can be expected to be heard talking about his or her viewpoint him- or herself. In interviews and quotes, no voice is heard, but the direct words the source used are given. By this presentational style and the groups of sources, the perspectives presented in the beginning of this chapter were expanded: ‘direct perspective’ was divided into ‘unvoiced’ and ‘voiced’, meaning that the source was presented with or without material implying the source’s own words (quote, interview,
audio or video). The complete typology of perspectives, defined by their presentational styles, and if applicable representation, is presented in table 3.

Table 3. Perspectives in elements as defined by presentational style and representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Presentational style</th>
<th>Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal perspective</td>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive perspective</td>
<td>Sentences, comments</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger perspective</td>
<td>Sentences, dossiers</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poll</td>
<td>Polls</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture perspective</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>Officials, experts, journalists, accused, people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct perspective - unvoiced</td>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>Officials, experts, journalists, accused, people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct perspective - voiced</td>
<td>Audio, video, interviews, quotes</td>
<td>Officials, experts, journalists, accused, people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Representation is not applicable (n.a.) for normal, passive and larger perspectives and polls because no sources are mentioned there.

For the lines where perspectives were normal or indirect, inclusion of presentational styles did not add to the comprehension of how perspectives are presented. Symbols for polls and the like might stress the presence of these elements but are no further specification of the nature of the perspective or source.

In step 4), the results found for the separate lines were taken together for the whole news items, in order to assess the variety of perspectives. Hence, the lines like headlines and links were coded according to their inclusion of perspectives and if possible representation and presentational style. Then for each news item the categories of the lines were compared to each other. If several perspective indications were found for one news item, the item was considered to contain ‘multiple perspectives’. Here it was divided between ‘indirect’ and ‘direct’, according to whether items included several indirect perspectives or at least one indirect perspective next to normal lines, or even direct perspectives among others (normal or indirect perspectives). If perspectives were even put in contrasting presentation to each other, these news items were coded as ‘contrasting perspectives’. Hence, the variety of perspectives was either determined by the differences of perspectives in elements (indirect or direct) or by indicating a variety if news items were put together, hence contrasted themselves. The forms of variety including specifications and explanations are shown in table 4.
Table 4. Variety of perspectives across elements in news items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety of perspectives</th>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No variety of perspectives in elements</td>
<td>Single perspective</td>
<td>Same perspective across news item elements (e.g. only normal perspective)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple perspectives in elements</td>
<td>Indirect perspectives</td>
<td>Indirect perspectives among others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of perspectives by presentational style</td>
<td>Direct perspectives</td>
<td>Direct perspectives among others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contrasting presentation</td>
<td>Contrasting presentation, news items side by side</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two variables for news overview elements – perspectives by presentational style and representation - and their characteristics were taken into a coding scheme, which is to be found in Appendix C. After coding the single elements according to their characteristics in perspective presentation, the complete news items were considered, hence the characteristics of the single elements compared.

6.1.2. QUANTITATIVE DATA

After having found the ways of presenting perspectives in the elements and items of the tagesschau.de overview page, and having constructed a coding scheme accordingly, a new sample of elements and items could be coded. Those items and their elements were coded that participants of the reception study were exposed to, hence could have considered.

The coding of this material revealed that most news items could be defined as multiperspectival (83 out of 121). Within that group, items with indirect perspectives were the largest group (55 compared to 28 with direct perspectives). News items with a single perspective, hence elements with normal perspective only, were found 28 times among the material. Contrasting presentations were found only 10 times.

Concerning representation, it was found that officials were the most represented group among the items that participants were exposed to (51 out of 82 sources). Experts and journalists were relatively rare among the range of items: experts were found three and journalists four times. Accused and ordinary people were found 12 times each in the material.

6.1.3. RESULTS

The analysis of this first sample revealed different aspects of representation, presentation and variety of perspectives. As for representational aspects, hence referring to research question 1, the following conclusions can be drawn: five main groups are represented in the news items, among them journalists and ordinary people, as suggested by Chouliaraki (2010). The other main groups are officials, experts
and accused, hence people depicted as causing outrage and demonstrations. It was also found that perspectives are not always indicated by sources, but often indirectly, hence without the mention of a source.

The presentation of those groups or other perspectives differed widely, hence a range of conclusions could be drawn to research question 2. Indirect presentations were often defined by passive claims, questions or comments, larger views or polls. Direct presentations however differed in terms of being voiced, hence if an indication of hearing or reading the sources original words was included. Direct presentations and pictures of persons could be combined with results from representations; hence it could be compared whether different groups of sources are presented with or without their own words.

Relevant for research question 3 was that one presentational style among the news elements was found that might have special importance to the perception of multiple perspectives: contrasting presentations. Here related news items seemed to be compared to each other, implying a certain multiperspectivism by itself. But even if not presented in this style, the addition of different sources and different presentations of perspectives to each other is considered as potentially invoking perceptions of multiperspectivism among audiences. Direct or indirect perspectives were found to be combined with other perspectives (e.g. the ‘normal’ journalistic perspective). The actual effect however remains to be tested for the reception analysis.

Coding the second sample according to the defined categories revealed that multiple perspectives occurred relatively often among the news site. Most news items however were defined by indirect perspectives such as larger views, polls or perspectives indicated by pictures. Most sources were found to be officials, whereas all other groups were represented to a minor part.

6.2. RECEPTION ANALYSIS

6.2.1. REACTIONS TOWARDS THE CONTENT

Reactions found towards the material were consideration of the material, interest and statements about the credibility. These will be presented in the following. Also an analysis of reaction differences in respect to differences in participants’ backgrounds is included.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MATERIAL

Participants were exposed to 9 to 29 news items each while checking the news site during the interview. These news items, 121 in total, were taken together as second sample of analysis. Even though participants hence had a chance to see 121 items in total (which in turn contained 603 elements), only 25 were considered. By ‘considered’, it is meant that participants reported interest or reflection or actively clicked on. The observation revealed that the material taken as sample by the
content analysis covered with the material considered by the participants. Mainly news items from the second column of the overview page were considered, whereas the side columns with mainly navigational elements were largely left out of consideration. A couple of participants clicked on domestic news, foreign news, and dossiers in the left column, but in the following considered news items in the second column within that category.

Even though items of single perspectives were frequent among the material, they were considered only twice, which results in a consideration of only 7.1 per cent. Contrasting presentations on the other hand were rare among the material, but were considered 3 times, which results in a consideration of 30 per cent. Direct and indirect perspectives were rather even in their consideration, they were considered to 23.6 resp. 25 per cent of the amount of items of those groups. Hence, items with multiple perspectives (indirect or direct) or even contrasting perspectives were considered more often than items with single perspectives. The amount of items in each category found by the content analysis, the amount of considered items among those and the subsequent percentage can be found in table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of considered items among the categories of variety of perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Items found in sample</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered within those</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in per cent</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The abbreviations are standing for the categories of variety of perspectives: I = single, II = indirect, III = direct, IV = contrasting.

Concerning representation it was found that items with journalists as sources were not considered, even though journalists appeared as direct sources four times in the material. Items with officials and accused were seldom considered, relative the amount of those items in the whole material that could have been considered. When experts and people were included in the items however, the items were relatively often considered (33.3 per cent in each category. In the case of experts that was only once as experts were among the sources only three times). Table 6 shows the distribution of consideration among the news items containing different groups. The total number of 82 is the number of sources found among the 603 elements, that participants could have considered. As they considered only 25 news items of the whole range, consequently only 16 sources were included in the considered news items.
Table 6. Distribution of considered items among representation groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sources found in sample</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered within those</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered in per cent</td>
<td>17,6</td>
<td>33,3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16,7</td>
<td>33,3</td>
<td>19,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Representations are defined by the sources abbreviated with: A=officials, B=experts, C=journalists, D=accused, E=people.

The distribution of content among considered items alone should of course not be taken as support for the effectiveness of different perspectives on interest. Comments made by participants however support the notion that items of multiple perspective gain more interest and representation by experts and people desired. These will be presented in paragraph 6.2.3., in terms of the specific presentational styles and representation.

NOTIONS OF INTEREST

As shown by the consideration of items that were coded according to the coding scheme, not many news items were shown interest to. To 25 out of 121 news items in total, participants reported an interested or had clicked on. As those results are neither representative, nor meaningful on their own, interest and other reactions were further investigated during the interviews.

These revealed different forms of reactions. First of all, aspects of explicit non-interest were found. Two respondents replied not to find anything interesting until something really stands out and gets the attention. Hence, interest would be an exception. One respondent said that she did not find anything interesting because she did not read anything carefully.

Among the aspects of interest was found that a personal connection with the news should be present. For two respondents this meant that a local connection was present, for two others that friends or family members were involved in the depicted situation. Furthermore categories rather than single news items played an important role for interest. Most were interested in foreign and domestic news, others also in weather, culture, sports, knowledge, science and nature. Special categories of interest included dossiers like Japan after the tsunami, juvenile criminality and a visit of the Pope. Single news items played a role only for some. These included news items about the situation in Syria and Libya, and about the trial of the Norwegian Breivik. Also future issues like the food of the future and epidemics seemed to be of interest for some.

The relatively high consideration of contrasting presentations indicated a certain interest in this kind of presentational style. The comments however made clear that no direct relationship can be concluded. In one example the news items of contrasting presentations were considered because they belonged
to a single perspective item about Yugoslavia where the topic was found interesting. In another example the participant was interested explicitly only in one half of the contrasting presentation items.

A similar presentational style however, which was missing in the content analysis, was the line-up of related news items, hence not the direct contrast when putting news items next to each other, but the “normal” presentation of news items underneath each other. If those were related however, participants seemed to be interested, as was the case in dossiers or when comments were put under the main news items. This shows that 1) the coding scheme was not complete, and should be supplemented with an extra category of related items in the variety of perspectives, and 2) that adding related content to each other might have more effect if not presented in a contrasting presentation. The interest in items with certain sources as representatives however covered well with the interview results. These are presented in the representation part of paragraph 6.2.3.

STATEMENTS ABOUT THE CREDIBILITY
Perceived credibility was expressed by a general trust towards tagesschau.de or even towards news in general, which is best summarized by the quote: “I have no reason to doubt tagesschau.de” (Theresa, 23). However, also some general distrust in news, or in parts of the news, was expressed. Some expressed distrust in pictures, because they reflect one side of an issue, others in choice of topics and presentation of it.

“I generally think that everything is depicted in an exaggerated way and therefore I approach the news skeptically from the beginning. And I don’t believe everything they say, at least not to the extent how they depict it. And I believe that many areas are left out, what concerns positive things [...] therefore I’m careful. Not, that it’s not true, but it does not have to be that extreme like it is depicted. Or maybe it is presented only from one side” (Katrin, 29).

Specific aspects of perceived credibility of the news were direct connections, hence being able to compare, and direct sources including possibilities to look up original phrasings and check for journalists’ accuracy. This possibility was considered important, even though participants acknowledged not using these possibilities. Indications of credibility towards specific news items were not made. Rather the estimation of tagesschau.de by political neutrality and balance and overall presentation seemed to define participants’ estimation of credibility. Being asked whether if and why he found the news credible, one participant stated:

“... departing from the presentation, yes. To really assess the credibility of news item I would read [...] the text itself. But on the first glance I would say that it is credible. [What would determine the credibility for you?] The way the text is written, whether it is simply an announcement or a politically motivated text, whether it is a text with different [political] colorings, whether a certain aim is pursued [...] Very often certain media sites want to transmit something and put that on the most prominent places to make sure you read it. Mostly these news sites are the online program of newspapers and most newspapers have a certain political
background, there you can read from the texts that they want to transmit something to you” (Martin, 26).

Another participant had a similar impression from the website’s credibility:

“I have the impression that they are relatively independent, politically. Of course, you cannot be one hundred per cent independent, but by being a public service channel, they have the broadcasting mandate at their tail. Therefore, they have to report in a balanced way somehow, and well, maybe it is naive to believe but I hope that they report relatively neutrally and balanced” (Greta, 26).

Hence, ARD as a public channel rather than newspaper as provider of the information and presentation of sufficient text and abandonment of putting certain news in prominent places seems to summarize the perceived credibility of the news for the participants.

DIFFERENCES IN PARTICIPANT’S BACKGROUNDS
As visible in the demographics (see Appendix A), the participants’ backgrounds differed not only in age, gender and academic background (most participants were university students). Some participants reported being frequent online news readers, while some indicated to be familiar with online news but not using them regularly. Those ‘infrequent’ users spent more time on the news site than ‘frequent’ online news users, which could be either a sign for being less familiar with snacking news, or compensating their general lack of interest in online news in the interview context. Conclusions about interest in news items hence might be hampered by these demographic differences. Other indications about interest, in comments and clicking behaviour however were comparable to those of frequent users. Furthermore, infrequent users had comparable opinions about the credibility of the news, and about the lack of multiple perspectives, which will be presented in the next paragraph. Here it could even be explained for some part, why some readers choose not to read online news frequently.

It was also assessed whether participants had tagesschau.de among their range of used news media. This background aspect showed not to have an influence on interest, consideration or perceived credibility of the news sample. Non-users of the site reported comparable opinions about the general trustworthiness of tagesschau.de as a public service medium. The context of other news sites is assessed in the final part of this chapter. It can however already be noted that frequency of online news usage and general tagesschau.de usage showed not have an impact. All users used (even if infrequently) other news sites as well, and felt influence by this context in a similar way.

6.2.3. THE ROLE OF MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES WITHIN THE NEWS SITE
One of the most striking findings about multiple perspectives in the tagesschau.de news items, was that half of the participants reported not having perceived any at a first glance. Only one participant reported having perceived multiple perspectives to a certain degree. “[Did you see examples where
different perspectives were shown?" Yes. After all there were pro’s and contra’s given.” (Lisa, 20). Other participants however commented otherwise, lacking perspectives that were expected to be found:

“[Did you find examples where different perspectives were shown?] No. I believe I didn’t see any here. There are two political news items where I would expect... I don’t know in which direction ARD is oriented, but here I could imagine that it is written from different perspectives [...] but actually I would say no, I didn’t see anything particular” (Phillip, 26).

Some participants found it hard to judge whether perspectives were present or absent and one perceived them as present, but to a lesser extent than in other news examples. One participant described about the depiction of the trial of the Norwegian defendant Breivik: “Well it is difficult to argue for the side of the mass murderer, but this morning I heard a report about who for example his defenders are” (Greta, 26). Hence, in comparison the presentation was perceived as rather one-sided even though several sides would have been possible, in the participant’s opinion. As the participant limited the example herself however, and no further comments in that direction were made, it is likely that levels of multiple perspectives are not necessarily very different from other news sites, but are perceived as low in general.

In stark contrast to this negative evaluation of performance however, almost all participants found it important to have multiple perspectives. Participants reported an importance of getting to know different perspectives in order to being informed, having a realistic picture and even to form an opinion, for reflection and for putting into perspective one’s own standpoint. One participant described the importance of multiple viewpoints referring to a possible interview included in a news issue about Palestine:

“When the interview reflects my opinion or my viewpoint in a certain way, I would of course be more interested. Eh, but in the same way as well if it is the exact opposite. What I can’t do anything with, is when it is sort of something in between, ‘wishi washi’, because I can figure that out myself, but when extreme viewpoints are offered, then I like reading it through. On the one hand to know what the opposite side has to bring forth, on the other hand what ‘the own side’ has to bring forth” (Martin, 26).

One participant found it a crucial factor to read the news in the first place and refused to read them because she found a lack of multiple perspectives.

“I have to say, I don’t read that many news, among others probably out of that reason, because after all everything is that one-sided. If you want to have different information you search yourself to death. That’s when you look for other opinions” (Monika, 24).

One participant however stressed that she wanted multiple perspectives only for controversial topics, and one found it not important at all because he argued that different viewpoints can be obtained via other, additional sites (see below for multiple perspective across different media).
Further comments about multiple perspectives within the news site were mostly attributed to categories of presentational style and representation. Some additional aspects about presentation units came up, that were not considered in the content analysis. As the aim of this research was finding out the potential of the news site in general, upcoming aspects needed to be included and investigated in the readers’ considerations about them. These new aspects will be presented first, containing comments about headlines, pictures, summaries and the text itself, links and date indications. Presentational style includes comments, polls, videos, direct sources and contrasting presentations as in the content analysis, but also the order, compactness and peculiarity of the news. Representation includes experts, politicians, journalists and citizens just like in the content analysis, but also the category of victims and offenders.

PRESENTATION UNITS

Headlines are the elements read by almost all of the participants, in most cases even the main element. However they seem not to offer multiple perspectives and are criticized for not using it more as a trigger to get the attention and as provider for multiple perspectives. Participants seem to understand a dilemma between a need for headlines to be catchy and get the attention, but at the same time being the most important place for indicating multiple perspectives.

“I find it difficult when really only scanning through and reading the headline, and maybe a subheading, to grasp what the perspective is. Because sometimes headlines are put a bit more provocative and journalists throw with catchwords and so on. Sometimes it makes it difficult to grasp this perspective if it does not say like: The Pirates say Colon We need more transparency in the Internet. Like that, then it is relatively clear but sometimes it is difficult to grasp perspectives via the first scanning through, then one should read further into the article.” (Greta, 26).

In the quote, the term “the Pirates” is used as a party that is directly presented as source, and even voiced, stressed by the outspoken colon. This direct claim, which would be a ‘voiced direct presentation’ in the coding scheme, hence might serve as way to both keep the headline catchy and provide a clear perspective. For this purpose also familiar names and questions in the headlines are mentioned.

Pictures are considered in a rather controversial way. They are extremely appreciated by some of the participants while others argue strictly against them. One reason is that they are not always recognizable; another is that they seem to present one perspective.

“I believe pictures provide you with an attitude. Even the selection of the picture has an influence. [...] You can present the people with the police, that would really put you off, like that was really bad; but you could have made the picture just like that. [...] that alone gives you a perspective already” (Katharina, 25).
About the article summary, participants commented that this is the place where multiple perspectives should be given, but that this is not the case as no different perspectives are recognizable, here. Also it should offer more personal relevance and could be longer, according to the interviewees. Other participants argue that the text itself (where the summary leads to) is the place where according to some participants multiple perspectives should be offered. These however were the participants who tend to read beyond headlines regularly.

About links some controversies appeared. They are considered by most of the participants as theoretically good but practically not. Also one participant likes them when they offer video while another one ignores them precisely because they contain mostly video and audio. Some want to have links at the overview page, others rather in or under the actual article. Further requirements are that they are recent and offer a sentence as explanation.

“It is touched on briefly; maybe one could write another sentence about it. Well to some of them {[the links]}. […] You know, just a second sentence, like: this is what the article is about. Or, I don’t know, as the next one is an interview maybe somehow ‘Interview with that person, that topic...’ in order to have, like I said, a bit more information” (Anna, 27).

Also they are requested to link to other sources, meaning other newspapers or media organizations, or to full speeches or interviews. So far appreciated in the links offered at tagesschau.de are the symbols (e.g. for video or audio) and the dates referring to the age of the connected articles. However no direct comments about the potential to provide multiple perspectives were made.

Date indications in links were appreciated by many, but were also criticized for being rather old. That older articles are not necessarily perceived as a problem however was indicated by one participant who liked reading back older articles because she checks the news irregularly. Other participants however found the articles no longer relevant when they were not recent any more.

PRESENTATIONAL STYLES
Comments underneath related news items did not get much attention, but were appreciated when directed at, because one can read further, beyond the daily report. However, they would not be desired for all kinds of articles, only for the controversial ones, according to one participant. Also they are suggested as means to put the opinions of different people against each other, as explained in the following:

“It could be worked with comments to the issues. That would be interesting, actually. But then it should be different ones, hence from different authors. And it should be included who these authors are. Because I don’t really know them that much, hence who the authors are. And if one of them for example has a background in persecution, then I’d know that. And I’d be better able to integrate that into the situation” (Tim, 20).
Annika Willers

Snacking on different views

Master Thesis 2012

The same applies to dossiers, which received a lot of attention by participants, as dossiers also serve to put viewpoints against each other. In an example of three articles in a dossier, the participant found that it could have been even more. Hence, the line-up of related material is very appreciated.

Polls are appreciated but should include data on their participants. Also they are perceived as rather ‘hidden’, because they are often at the third column where they are not visible if one is just scanning through the website, focusing on the second column where news items are presented.

“I think it’s good when also citizens from the area are questioned about the topic. Yes, like in surveys. But one does not know who participated because not everyone clicks on it or gets asked. But when it is included who gave the answers, that is alright” (Lisa, 20).

About videos it was said that they are appreciated because text is considered as “blablabla, and one does not know who is who. I think it [the video] gives a little more insight” (Phillip, 26). Another found videos important when it comes to citizens’ representation and the direct covering.

“I know from experience that when I go over the site, and sometimes it is cut together in 2 or 3 minutes and the topic is provided with citizens and with live pictures, and a news presenter, well when I know that the guy is directly at the site, I would prefer the film” (Katharina, 25).

Direct sources are indicated to be generally appreciated. However it should be different ones in an article, according to some. For others they should include voice elements, in order to check for hidden aspects like irony. Other participants however explicitly stated not to need voice elements. Also it was mentioned that names are less important, but pictures play a role, and by some it was even said that direct sources are not important at all. Critique was also given by saying that direct sources already pull the reader to a certain side. “It appears more interesting, but it is not important, it is something to make you look at it. It makes you being pulled into the story, but by that you also get pulled to a side” (Theresa, 23).

News items next to each other, hence in contrasting presentations, did not convey perceptions of multiple perspectives. One participant even found that the way of presentation makes the news items appear less important than the others. One other participant however missed a similar presentational style in her own news example.

“It would be interesting to get to know the other side. [How would it need to be presented to get attention?] Either next to each other in one report, or that you can see it in the headline [...] or two boxes next to each other, like a table” (Katrin, 29).

Some participants were dissatisfied with the order of the news. Preferences go after quickly finding the most recent news, and after having thematically arranged news. This in turn has to do with the compactness of the news, which almost every participant had a comment about. Half of the participants longed for more overview. One participant even expressed that multiple perspectives
should not be added because it might threaten the overview, which however stands in contrast to another participant’s comment that perspectives should not be cut in order to make room. Some participants are rather satisfied with the compactness as it is, but there are suggestions like bookmarks or arranging after preferences, and to build it up like former Google news° or netzeitung.de°. Also the other German Public Broadcaster’s website heute.de seems to be built in better overview.

“It is arranged in a neater way. It is sorted by topics and they have clips, hence the normal news in little clips again, sorted by topics. That is really good at theirs. There you can chose what you want.” (Katharina, 25).

Also the layout used for applications for mobile devices⁴ is appreciated and suggested to implement for the normal website as well.

As a last aspect among presentation, peculiarity was mentioned. Participant Katrin (29) said about the presence of a second article or second opinion that “if it is not made recognizable, you'll overfly it, won’t notice it”. Therefore, she suggests to have a second opinion already mentioned in the headline or to have it next to each other (like ‘contrasting presentational style’ in the coding scheme). Boxes of contrasting presentations hence might get attention, but they also seem “not important enough to get their own big column” (Greta, 26). Another one suggests working with colors and exclamation marks “for the visual people” (Thorsten, 22). Positive are found the little symbols for audio and video because they are eye-catching. A negative side of too much peculiarity was also expressed. If there are too many eye-catching elements one gets easily distracted and looses focus, is what one participant found. Also another one says not to wish for more eye-catching elements because one has to find relevant information for oneself.

**PRESENTATION**

Not many comments were made about representation. Most participants considered variety of sources in terms of news media, hence other channels or newspapers. Thereby some of them considered the political course of each medium and tried to balance that with another medium, hence another political course. Within the medium most participants were focused on having a balance between the different parties concerned in general, more than which specific parties these have to be. A range of

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²Google News (2012) is an international (but nationally adjustable) news portal, summarizing and linking to news from different websites, mainly online newspapers. Formally news items were arranged thematically, while now they are arranged after recency, according to a participant.

³NZ Netzeitung GMBH (2012) is a German news portal, summarizing and linking to news from different German websites, also mainly online newspapers. Formally the order was defined by journalists, while now they are arranged automatically, according to another participant.

⁴The application for mobile devices (short ‘app’) at tagesschau.de offers principally the same content as the Tagesschau website (Tagesschau, 2012). A better overview is created by leaving out the side columns and making visible only news items, which are placed in the second column at tagesschau.de.
sources, in terms of this research definition, was still mentioned: experts, politicians, journalists, citizens, victims and offenders.

**Expert** opinions are considered important by several participants. Two comments by one participant show that expert opinions in controversial cases and in politically delicate topics are considered as support for multiple perspectives:

> “Everyone has a commonplace opinion, but to have someone like an Israeli politician or someone from the Jewish council as interview partner; that would be exciting to compare”

> “I find it super important not to have only an anti-Grass attitude in this case, but to interview political representatives from Israel, and maybe a scholar of literature who has considered the poem more carefully. This applies to topics that need clarification” (Greta, 26).

Another participant considers expert opinions important when he is involved in the topic to a lesser extent. More important than the source however seemed to be the balance of sources:

> “People who are more involved in a topic, if they give their opinion, you at least get a deeper insight. I appreciate that. [...] But then it has to be balanced, not from one direction or one party, but several directions. Then at least you get an expert opinion if you yourself are not involved that much” (Philip, 26).

**Politicians** are also mentioned but mostly with the concern that it should not be a politician’s opinion alone. “In my view one could work more with opinions of different parties, for example politicians. If they are mentioned in the text, that makes it more credible as well” (Tim, 20).

**Journalists** as sources are considered rather skeptical. For example, when asked how to relate to the term multiple perspectives, one aspect that came up frequently among the participants was that journalists can be biased. Also journalists’ names under news reports are valued even though participants say not to know those names. But it serves as reminder that the article can reflect an opinion already, and therefore it is wanted.

> “If I don’t know the person it is like it could be Meier-Schulze\textsuperscript{5}... exactly like the abbreviations below. But you know that the one who has written it, probably has put in his own judgment” (Katharina, 25).

**Citizens** serve as trigger of interest, but need to be shown directly like in video material. Also it is suggested to consult citizens from the area more often or show polls. Here as well the visibility seems to play a role. It is indicated that information about who took part in the poll should be included.

**Victims and offenders** are mentioned rarely but it is valued by some participants if they are able to speak to the public. Also pictures of offenders are appreciated because they offer support and give the reader an image.

\textsuperscript{5} Explanation: standard name in Germany
6.2.3. THE ROLE OF MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN THE LARGER MEDIA CONTEXT

As mentioned before, many participants claimed not to have found any aspects of multiple perspectives in the snack news elements of tagesschau.de, but find the presence of multiple perspectives important nonetheless. Therefore, it seems, most participants tend to gather multiple viewpoints by consulting additional news sites.

“[So you would say that here at the site news were presented from just one perspective, basically?] Yes, because they would have to make different reports for the same topic. That would not make any sense for the operator of the site. To have three times the same report only presented a little different. [Might it be nonetheless missing somehow, to have different perspectives offered?] No, I don’t think so. Because when you’re interested you can canvass other sites, you don’t have to go just to this site” (Thorsten, 22).

The visit of other news media is considered to have an influence on the perception of the news at tagesschau.de and in total the process is seen as sufficient in gathering multiple viewpoints for many of the participants. By that it even seems more relevant than the provision of multiple perspectives on tagesschau.de alone. Some participants indicate to compare the news internationally, hence to compare topics and presentations of the national news to foreign examples. Even the same news report is considered on different sites by some, therefore news portals where a direct overview of different newspaper’s presentations is given are appreciated, like Google news or netzeitung.de. One participant actually compares news items across different media when it concerns controversial topics, another one in general because it is fun and uncovers differences in quality and reporting style.

“I really like comparing one and the same topic across different media. About Günther Grass I always checked what FAZ says, what SZ says, what Spiegel, what Tagesschau, because I find it really exciting how different media treat one and the same topic, especially controversial ones. In that sense it would totally influence me if I look at Tagesschau.de and know: gosh, Spiegel depicted this much more extensively or better ... something like that would have an impact on me” (Greta, 26).

Other participants however stress that they are not willing to compare across media, either because it is considered too much work or because it is not believed to reveal new aspects. Comments by one participant show that some controversy adheres to this aspect.

“Mostly when you look at a news site it doesn’t really make sense to look at other news sites as well, because news get passed on so quickly that most portals have the same news. Partly they even have the same pictures” (Martin, 26).

However he also describes the following:

“Say I’m at the Süddeutsche site and look at the news there, am done with reading and go to another site, then mostly I already only skim through the second one and look if there are any other perspectives, other headlines, or whether it is more or less the same. If it is the same, then I quit, then I don’t even read, but when it, the text, has a completely different objective then I would read it through. [...] If I come to the conclusion that it needs more balance then I would
check other news sites, and if that’s not enough would search via search sites, and if that still
does not bring the result, via blogs or NGO sites which are engaged in that field of topic”
(Martin, 26).

Having had contact with other news media in addition to the visit on tagesschau.de hence has an
impact on the participants. While most found tagesschau.de to have added aspects to their knowledge
about the news, or to have heard about new or different issues, some found the addition of viewpoints
rather restricted. Not only Martin who wishes to find news reports with a different objective (see quote
above), but also others are not convinced of tagesschau.de as provider of relevant new viewpoints. On
the other hand tagesschau.de is perceived as more comprehensive than other news media. Therefore,
attention to topics is often gathered at other news media, but a deeper understanding about the issue
is then gathered at tagesschau.de.

Participants also mention their own ability to handle the news, hence their independence from
indicators of multiple perspectives and the like. One participant describes that she compares what she
reads to her own worldview, hence her existing knowledge, and thereby comes to conclusions of
credibility of the news.

6.2.4. RESULTS
By the analysis of participants’ behaviour and statements answers could be given to the research
questions 4 to 6. About research question 4, which reactions are shown towards the content, it can be
concluded that interest and trust, but also explicit non-interest and distrust were among the reactions.
Interest was mainly shown in future issues and personally relevant issues. Also interest was higher in
certain categories than in single news items. Dossiers for example were supported, both by verbal
indications of interest and clicking behaviour. Consideration of items predefined as containing multiple
or contrasting perspectives was higher than of items predefined as containing a single perspective.
Especially consideration of indirect perspectives was supported by comments about polls, pictures and
larger perspectives. Interest in direct perspectives was supported by positive comments about quotes.
Finally indications of distrust and trust were found as reaction towards the content and served as
indicators for the credibility of the medium. Distrust was shown towards pictures for example, as they
can pull the reader to one side of the story. Also the journalists’ objectivity was generally rather
distrusted, as they were considered as potentially biased. This however did not seem specific to the
news site, as it was generally rather trusted, as part of a public service broadcaster. But it became clear
that articles presented by the journalist’s view alone, were found less credible than articles where a
balance of different viewpoints was made.

Concerning research question 5, how the content is considered as carrier of multiple perspectives,
conflicting answers about the importance and the performance of it on tagesschau.de were found.
While the importance of multiple perspectives was found extremely important, the performance of tagesschau.de on that issue was considered rather unsatisfying. Participants stated that indications of multiple perspectives needed to be in headlines to get the attention, because they would be missed otherwise. This shows that participants understand the dilemma between snacking news and multiple perspectives. They find however that if the attention to the issue is drawn by the headline, multiple perspectives could also be in the summary and the text. Getting the attention however was perceived as not achieved by the current news site, therefore participants argued that tagesschau.de could perform better on that issue. Possible aspects of drawing the attention to an issue of multiple perspectives were directly voiced presentations like “The Pirates say: We need more transparency in the Internet”, familiar names and questions in the headlines. Other suggestions were more colors and contrasting presentations, but those were considered with ambiguity. While some participants argue in favor of these attention-getting devices, others argue against, considering that the site should not be loaded with information and signals, but that readers should be able to choose information themselves. Framing certain news items differently than others would transmit values of importance, for example contrasting presentations might be perceived less important due to their narrowed structure in comparison to the other items. Pictures on the other hand are not perceived as satisfying aspect in this sense either, because they pull the reader to a side. The same accounts for direct sources. By this it becomes clear that readers wish for balance in representations, both in pictures and in worded presentation of sources. As most represented sources in the news examples were officials, it seemed that experts and ordinary people were appreciated as evening-up for the much represented officials. Hence, more important than presentation of direct sources was the balance between them, in order to get a more complete picture and not being pulled to either side.

Furthermore, improvements were suggested about how the site should be built up in order to receive interest from the young audience, and consequently become interested in certain issues, like controversial ones. First of all links, which were rather neglected in the example, should be more recent, offer more explanation and be more relevant to the readers individually, hence should not always contain video or audio for some and link to other sources or to full views of interviews, speeches and the like. Also the site should be built up in a better way. For the participants this meant more overview and more individual adjustment. The structure used for the Tagesschau application for mobile devices, without the side columns at tagesschau.de, was thereby considered as improvement.

Concerning research question 6, how the content is considered in the sense of multiple perspectives in the larger context of news media, it was found that the fact that a visit of tagesschau.de is not isolated but embedded in a broader media environment, plays a major role in the perception of multiple perspectives. Many participants find it more important to have different viewpoints across different
media examples than within. While some reported having obtained new aspects from the visit at tagesschau.de, adding to their previous knowledge, in total it becomes clear that tagesschau.de should offer more information that is different from the rest. In terms of the participants’ answers this would mean that different questions should be asked and different points of view portrayed. Furthermore it seems that participants get interested in issues often via other media, like radio or e-mail homepages, and actively use tagesschau.de to get a deeper, more comprehensive view about the issue. In that sense tagesschau.de could play more on the fact of being considered comprehensive, and stress comprehensive background features or future anticipations.
7. CONCLUSIONS

This research consisted of two different steps: the first step was investigating the existing elements of snack news from the tagesschau.de case for potential of multiple perspectives, while the second was the opinion about these elements by an audience group for its actual potential in having snacking readers considering multiple perspectives. In the first step, some potential of multiple perspectives in the snack news elements of tagesschau.de was found in the aspects representation, presentational styles and variety of perspectives within news items. Perspectives were indicated by several sources, mostly however by officials. Also it was found that when multiple perspectives were presented within news items, those were mostly indicated indirectly, hence without clear sources. If clear sources were presented, it was considered in the content analysis whether these sources were given a summary of their viewpoint or whether their actual words could be read or heard. In this case a direct voicing would be present, which was considered particularly strong for transmitting viewpoints. Considering news items in total, items with multiple perspectives in headlines, pictures and links, and items with contrasting presentations were found as main possibilities of multiple perspectives for readers.

While some aspects of representations and presentational styles were found to have an influence on audience perceptions of multiple perspectives, the reception analysis revealed that very little of the potential was actually acknowledged by the audience sample. It seemed to matter to participants only for a minor part whether sources were voiced or not, and contrasting presentations received little or ambiguous attention. It could be confirmed that officials were perceived as overrepresented. Participants wished experts and ordinary people to be represented more. What seemed to be more important to participants however was the fair balance of sources, rather than the single representation of specific sources.

The potential found by the content analysis was based on the joint consideration of different snack news elements. The reception analysis showed however that news items are not always considered as a whole, but that often only headlines are read. Therefore, it is possible that most news items which were considered as multiperspectival ones by content analysis were not considered as such by the audience. Instead headlines and pictures were considered as main carriers of attention, and by that also as main elements of multiple perspectives.

The audience sample showed not to consider multiple perspectives as main reason to read news issues, this was rather personal relevance, but were nonetheless disappointed by the perceived lack of them. By this, the relevance of multiple perspectives in snack news could be confirmed, but it implies that changes are needed in the way perspectives are presented. So far, readers seem to expect being triggered into news stories by appealing headlines, and finding multiple perspectives and balanced sources within the news articles. What readers not seem to expect is the possibility of finding multiple
perspectives in overview elements already, hence in headlines directly or in other elements such as hyperlinks. While it might not always be possible to present perspectives in headlines, hyperlinks seem not to be considered worth snacking on. Following from these results a range of suggestions are put up that might help utilizing the potential of the news site in a better way.

Readers might be pulled into news stories by headlines that already contain aspects of controversy. Questions for example are considered useful for this approach by participants. Showing perspectives in other snack news elements such as hyperlinks, has some potential which is not entirely acknowledged by readers so far. Therefore, readers should get used to the relevance of these links. In order to achieve that, links have to be relevant for the target group in the first place. As the content analysis detected mainly indirect perspectives or representations by officials next to the 'normal' journalistic presentations, they might not fulfil requirements of relevance at the moment. By reducing normal perspectives, links could be rendered more relevant, which in turn might lead to more attention to links on the long run. This would also advance the overview character of the site, which was often criticized by the audience members. Also, it would allow possibilities of comparing content, which is so far possible mostly in dossiers, where related news items are presented together, and by grazing on other news sites. While nothing is wrong with that in general, it implies effort, which is conflict with needs of snacking. Presenting - and making relevant - comparable material on news overviews is therefore recommended. Comparability is also needed for links, as their relevance is also defined by the balance of provided material. Therefore, sources indicated in links should be offered in a fair and balanced way in order to allow finding one’s own standpoint in between the presented viewpoints. By this opportunity, readers might find the news more complete and traceable and thereby more credible.
8. LIMITATIONS AND DISCUSSION

This research projected was grounded in the urge to understand the media requirements of an audience group of young adults, and the potential of a news site in meeting those requirements. The research conducted for this aim had a range of limitations which are presented in the following. These limitations should be considered in order to assess the validity and reliability of this research. Despite these limitations the research was successful in expanding the knowledge and insight into changing news consumption and its accordance with current styles of presenting the news on overview pages. Where this paper could not give answers or was restricted in its reliability, future research projects are suggested. A critical discussion of the aspects contributed by this research and how they match with existing research findings is included in the final part of this paper.

First of all, this research had its limitations in the methods used for assessing the potential of a news site. Considerations about the content analysis are presented, followed by those about the reception analysis and the combination of both. A content analysis can be considered less suitable for investigating the ways of how perspectives are offered in a news site. By having an extended focus on the inductive stage of the method however, it was possible to find typologies within the content that made the use of perspectives more clear and definable, but it implied that the deductive stage, the actual coding of the content into categories, faded into the background. The coding of the content resulted in aspects partly confirmed by the audience. For example, it was found in the deductive stage of the content analysis that mainly officials were used as sources. Combined with the comments about a required balance in sources used, it could be concluded that officials were over-represented in the news items. This seemed to result in participants’ dissatisfaction with the news, and possibly even the non-consideration of hyperlinks, as readers from experience would not expect them to contain balanced representations of different sources. The category presentation style covered to a minor extent with the participants’ comments, which shows that the content analysis did not entirely fulfil its goal of pre-testing the possibilities that participants can refer to. This relates to the build-up of the study: The content analysis was built up in a relatively individual approach by the researcher, as guidelines from existing research were lacking. No previous investigations about categories of presentational style or representation in online content could be found. By finding categories individually however the reliability and possibly even validity of this research were impaired, as the tools could not be tested on their accuracy. Possibilities to solve this problem might have been a pre-test of the coding scheme, and a second coder for coding the categories in the participant’s sample. This was not possible in the time frame of this study, future studies in this context however should consider these aspects. The way it was used in this research, the reception study took over the role of pre-testing the categories of the content analysis. Even though some limitations for the reliability of this research resulted, the validity of the tool is thereby improved for future issues. Using a qualitative
method as triangulation provides some depth, which makes it stronger on validity (Schrøder et al., 2003). Also, by combining observation of participants’ clicking behaviour, indications of interest and the coded content, valuable information about the interest in certain content categories could be obtained. For indications about what was missing to satisfy audience members’ needs however a different method was needed.

The reception study by form of interviews served well for this aim. Indications of interest were mostly grounded in personal reasons (cf. Graber, 1988), while the role of multiple perspectives could not be detected in those indications, at least not the conscious role. While news items with multiple perspectives showed to be considered more than items with single perspectives, participants indicated not to have paid attention to the links, hence denying the influence of multiperspectival links on their interest. On the one hand this shows that consideration of coded content alone cannot confirm the role of multiple perspectives in snack news elements. On the other hand, the influence might have been subconscious, as it is unlikely that participants did not see links - single lines furnished with symbols - at all. In the build-up of the reception study however the consideration of single elements could not be measured. Instruments for tracking eye-movements might be helpful for this aim. Therefore, for future research it is suggested to use psychological tests for the assessment of snacking news elements’ influence on attention and interest. While the assessment of precise elements of attention remained impossible for this research, an overall impression of which items receive interest could be gained. The software application Skype was considered valuable for the approach of relatively unobtrusive observation of clicking behaviour. For future projects however it should be tried to find ways of even more unobtrusive measurement, and subsequent face-to-face interviews at the same time. Also it should be tried to have participants in a natural snacking context. In the present context, participants were asked to visit a certain website at a certain time. The natural individual choice of visiting a news site might have revealed even more insight and would have rendered the study more reliable. To achieve some levels of generalizability, the coding scheme and a protocol were included in Appendix C. As the news sample and the selection of participants however were not entirely random and representative, it cannot be expected to obtain the same results in a replication of this study.

The sample taken for this study was considered as case study, hence not representative for other news sites by definition. As it is considered one of the leading German news sites in terms of quality and diversity of sources however, results might give insight into the potential and requirements for other news sites as well. The audience sample however was small and heterogeneous, and should not be taken as representative for an audience of young German adults. For the accuracy of the research it was valuable that the interviews could be conducted in both the researcher’s and the participants’ native language. Their comments needed to be translated to English however and cannot cover the
participants’ statements to their full extent. Another problem was the self-selection of participants (Ostertag, 2010), who had to agree to take part in an interview of approximately 15 minutes. Participants however did not know about the research topic beforehand. This shows that they were not self-selected for an interest in media. As shown in the demographics, not all participants seemed to be frequent online news users. Nonetheless they all had to say a lot about online news and their expectations about it. This shows that the topic is very relevant for the target group. However, it needs to be said that most participants were students, hence from a certain academic background. A critical attitude hence can originate from the participants’ backgrounds.

Results about the sample showed that Tagesschau’s own description of varied and balanced content was not confirmed by audience members for a snacking context. Tagesschau.de might be a single case in this sense, but as participants could not refer to other news sites that perform substantially better, the findings about tagesschau.de should be considered for other news sites as well. Only in terms of credibility, tagesschau.de seemed to be substantially different than others: tagesschau.de is trusted because part of a public service broadcaster, which has the mandate to secure diversity and respect pluralism. Possibilities in checking accuracy for oneself however were missed even here. Results in general showed that the news site has some potential in offering multiple perspectives in snacking news, but that this potential is not fully recognized by the audience. It showed that he dilemma of meeting several demands (snacking, multiple perspectives and credibility) still exists and was understood by the audience themselves. Despite the limitations, the research presented in this paper could contribute some insight into why the dilemma still exists and where possibilities for improvement are to be found.

Snacking as introduced by Costera-Meijer (2008) could be confirmed by the reception analysis, however the news site tagessschau.de was not found entirely suitable for this consumption style. In snacking, relevant information should be found fast and relatively effortlessly, but the load of information and lack of overview seem to hamper this. Therefore, Seibold’s (2002) notion of need for heuristics applies, which in the case of tagesschau.de seem to be fulfilled only be headlines, as elements that stand out from others and indicate relevance to the readers. From the findings of this research it is therefore recommended to indicate controversies already in headlines and to offer less ‘irrelevant’ information, hence lines that give just another journalistic view.

Also perspectives could be confirmed in relevance, supporting Gans’ (1980) notion of more multiperspectival news even in today’s media. Some potential for perspectives was found in overview elements by the content analysis, which however was disproved by the audience sample because hyperlinks as main carrier of perspectives were not considered. This supports Hargreaves and Thomas’ (2002) notion of “spotlight chasers” and limits Matheson’s (2004) suggestion of offering alternative
material in links. However the filtering of information seemed not to be defined by ideological reasons, such as implied by Sunstein (2004). As claimed by Nolte (in Bambule, 2012), audiences are less aligned with political or ideological directions than before and seek out information that is not in line with present views. This was confirmed by the receptions study, wherein participants indicated a wish to realign themselves and find their own standpoints by comparing different views in the news. For this aim directly comparable material might be helpful, and a fair balance between different sources is desired. While ‘ordinary people’s’ opinions are desired to be represented more, their presence alone seems not to be appreciated, as suggested by Chouliaraki (2010). Gans’ claim for having less of a purely journalistic view however was confirmed.

The findings support that credibility can be enhanced if material is offered that is perceived as complete and traceable, as suggested by Bucy (2003, 2004). In this research the importance of multiple perspectives received more focus than their impact on the credibility of the news, also by the participants of the study. However, it was confirmed that news is considered credible when objective and neutral, both criteria that participants attributed to the news site tagesschau.de. The flaw detected by the participants however was that in snack news elements no direct perspectives were visible, whereas a presentation of different sources, but in a balanced way, would have been perceived as valuable. Hence, the offer of balanced information to choose from is desired in snack news elements, which supports Nibley’s (2000, p.38) notion that young people “no longer want to be told how to think”. Instead they desire a depth of information to choose from. Even if the choice is not actually used, hence not clicked on and read, offering relevant choices should be appreciated, which is in accordance with Larsson’s (2011) findings about interactivity units. He showed that units offering own exploration are appreciated, even if they are not used actively. The same seems to apply to choices in news sites, restricted however by the fact that most readers seem not to read those units. Participants agreed that they would appreciate links to original material or full speeches, in order to be able to check for the accuracy of the news report, even if they most likely would not use them.

This shows that a development is needed wherein readers get used to their own possibilities. Being used to the way links are offered at the moment, mostly to ‘normal’ journalistic or officials’ perspectives, no attention is paid to any link (according to the participants). If readers encounter more links that confirm their needs of balanced representations and possibilities to check for the news report’s accuracy however, they will expect more links of this kind and will start looking for them, so it can be argued. These notions confirm other researchers’ findings (e.g. Matheson, 2004) that journalism seems not to be truly adopted to modern times yet. Participants of this study showed not to expect multiple perspectives in snack news elements, but requested the news site to find ways of triggering them into the story, where in turn different perspectives can be detected. Ways of
presenting or indicating different perspectives within the snack news elements already were not seriously expected by the audience. Audience members however stress their need to be in contact with different perspectives as they want to re-align their own positions. This is why many rely on grazing on other news sites, in order to gather different perspectives or ways of presenting the news. While for some audience members this grazing consumption style might be appropriate, some audience members take the perceived absence of perspectives as reason to refrain from using online news. This shows that news sites should be modernized in terms of easily conceivable perspectives in snack news elements, despite audience members not being used to this presentational style yet. As digital natives, they are expected to be “enthusiastic to try new forms of media and capable of quickly learning the necessary new skills” (Hujanen & Pietikäinen, 2004, p. 385). If news sites changed their presentational styles, young adults could be expected to adjust to the new circumstances quickly.

The future will certainly bring forth new technological devices that are capable of changing news contexts again. That news sites are not fully adapted to the current level of technological possibilities however shows that journalism styles are not changing as fast as their contexts. Young readers are possibly those who are most frustrated by the slow development, but by gaining insight into their needs and requirements, adjustments can be made. Further research is needed about how precisely multiple perspectives can be implied in snacking news elements as the present research was only aimed at suggesting aspects of potential for the combination of those needs. Other news sites and audience samples should be researched additionally, in order to receive a more complete picture. One development should be mentioned for rounding off this paper: New technical devices such as smartphone applications are already part of young people’s news contexts. Also the embedding of news in social media such as Facebook or Twitter are usual snack news encounters for them. While this will certainly increase young people’s interest in snacking news, and might enhance possibilities of grazing (having updates from several news sources, just as in Google news and netzeitung.de), the danger of leaving out multiple perspectives persists. As websites turn more and more adjustable, it should be possible in the future to have settings that enable individual styles of ensuring overview on the one hand and offering multiple perspectives on the other. For those who perceive audio and video material as irrelevant information that needs to be filtered out, links should only offer alternative viewpoints or background material in written form. Others appreciate possibilities to check for source’s original phrases or speeches, and should be offered links to those in overview elements. By having less effort in filtering out information not perceived as relevant, more attention to aspects of multiple perspectives and credibility of the news can be drawn. To achieve this aim, news sites should adapt their usage of links and their possibilities of individual adjustments. Readers on the other hand need to accept these changes and redirect their attention in the news overview elements.
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# APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS

## Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Online news usage</th>
<th>Tagesschau.de usage</th>
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<td>22</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>university student</td>
<td>infrequent</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrin</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>university student/ergotherapist</td>
<td>infrequent</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>welfare worker</td>
<td>frequent</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>university student</td>
<td>frequent</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>apprentice</td>
<td>frequent</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>apprentice</td>
<td>infrequent</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greta</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>university student</td>
<td>frequent</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monika</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>university student</td>
<td>infrequent</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>university student</td>
<td>frequent</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**mean age = 24.83**  
7 (female): 5 (male)  
3 (non-student): 9 (university student)  
5 (infrequent): 7 (frequent)  
5 (user): 7 (non-user)

*Note.* Names are changed due to anonymity reasons.

## Pilot study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>university student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lukas</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>university student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moritz</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>university student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>university student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Names are changed due to anonymity reasons.
APPENDIX B: QUESTION SCHEME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes - answers</th>
<th>No - answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there any news items that you find interesting?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For every answer: why interesting? Specific aspects?</td>
<td></td>
<td>why not? Are you missing something?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any news items that you think further about?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>which? For every answer: why is that one item you think further about? What are your considerations?</td>
<td></td>
<td>is there a reason why you would not think about any of those? What kind of content might make you think further about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any news items that you feel inclined to click on? (maybe did not, but would if enough time etc)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>which? For every answer? Why would you click on it?</td>
<td></td>
<td>why not? Would you feel inclined to click on if something was different? What would that have to be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you find credible what you saw?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there specific aspects that made the content credible for you? Which? In what case would you have more doubts about the content?</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>which aspects were credible, which not? What is the reason for the differences?</td>
<td></td>
<td>What did you not find credible? Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification: I come to a different aspect now: do you know what I mean when I talk about news from multiple perspectives? Can you briefly describe what you think it means? (aspects involved that should be mentioned: different viewpoints, alternative or opposing depiction of the same aspect, not one truth but multiple sites. If none of those given, researcher gives a brief description with those aspects)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter cases in the present news example where multiple perspectives were shown?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>which items or elements are that? How would you describe how multiple perspectives were presented here?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarify: so you think that the news were always presented from one perspective only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think of that? (in general)</td>
<td></td>
<td>What do you think of that the news are presented from one perspective only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you perceive it (the presence of multiple perspectives) as influence on your interest, reflection, clicking further or notions of credibility (applies to previous answers)?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do you perceive the lack of multiple perspectives as influence on your interest, reflection, going deeper or notions of credibility (applies to previous answers)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think of the mentioning of direct sources (e.g. names of people)?</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do direct sources - and who those sources are - contribute to you interest, reflection, clicking further or perception of credibility?</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think of the presentation of sources? (hence the ways of how the source is allowed to speak to you)</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does it matter if you think that you will hear the person’s voice or read the person’s words?</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do (different) presentation styles contribute to you interest, reflection, clicking further or perception of credibility?</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your opinion in general about the mentioned aspects and the effect it has on you, in the context of looking only briefly at the content?</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is visiting news website something normal/familiar to you?</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clarification: Now just a few short questions follow to clarify your background
14. Have you visited this or another news site lately?
   Yes/no

15. Which other news media have you had contact with lately?
   open

16. (if not none) how do you think the encounter with other news media affected your encounter with the tagesschau.de website now?
   open

17. Do you think that your perception of multiple perspectives is affected by other perspectives you encountered on the same news issue?
   If yes, how?

18. What is your age?
   18-30

19. What is your profession? (e.g. student)
   open

Note: More follow-up questions are asked according to participants’ answers.
## APPENDIX C: CODE BOOK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unit of analysis</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example (German)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>News item</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Normal perspective; description of the situation</td>
<td>Morgen Streik am Frankfurt Flughafen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>News item</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Passive perspective; claim, question or comment without clear source</td>
<td>Presseschau: “Ein lebendes Mahnmal für kommende Politiker”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Larger</td>
<td>Future, background or explanatory perspective</td>
<td>Dossier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poll</td>
<td>Opinion question</td>
<td>Schwächt Gaucks Nominierung die Kanzlerin?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Picture</td>
<td>Subject or group known, or with recognizable features</td>
<td>People wearing uniform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>News item</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Direct perspective - unvoiced*; source mentioned without indications of hearing or reading original phrasing</td>
<td>Jemen: Präsident Saleh schliesst Rücktritt aus Word list!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Direct perspective - voiced*; source mentioned in combination with personal elements as quotes, interview, video or audio indications</td>
<td>Interview mit Parteinforscher: “Gauck wird keine eierlegende Wollmilchsau”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>News item</td>
<td>Contrasting</td>
<td>Contrasting presentation; side by side presentation of different news items</td>
<td>Abstimmung im Bürgerkrieg --- Assads Männer fürs Grobe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.*Represen-tation</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Official; politician, institution, parliament, ministry, etc</td>
<td>Staatsanwaltschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Expert or scientist; expert or scientist</td>
<td>EU-Expertengruppe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Journalist; journalist/reporter</td>
<td>Deppendorf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Accused; person depicted as causing outrage</td>
<td>Strauss-Kahn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>People; groups of nationalities, occupations etc.</td>
<td>Demonstranten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Representation applies only to e, f, g. Pictures are either a or e

**Protocol:**

Code single elements first, then accordingly code news item. Hence if 4 elements included in 1 item, which are all coded as normal perspective, the news item is coded as single perspective. If one of them is coded as indirect perspective (passive, larger view, poll or picture perspective), the item is coded as indirect perspective. If however one is coded as direct perspective (instead of indirect or in addition to), the item is coded as direct perspective. If two news items are put next to each other, both items are coded as contrasting. When elements are coded as picture perspective or voiced or unvoiced direct perspective, representation groups are coded in addition.