

Melnung, Haltung und Selbstverständnis

ORF-Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter über ihren öffentlich-rechtlichen Qualitätsbegriff.



Added Value in Public Service Media

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The University of Vienna conducted a study that set out to answer the question »what is the overall contribution of the public service broadcaster ORF to the intellectual capital of the Austrian society«. We utilised the concept of intellectual capital because it allows to grasp all those intangible, yet visible and integral, dimensions of productivity, innovation and creativity that underpin a highly sophisticated organisation, such as the ORF.

Overall, Intellectual Capital means the active implementation of an enlarged definition of »Media and Culture«. The mission of the public service broadcaster is to address the needs not only of elites or the public in the interests of the advertising industry, but the needs of the whole of society.

Cultural diversity is a public service to the country's and Europe's diverse cultures. PSM provide a public space, a public sphere for citizens that supports democracy, the spirit of cooperation and peaceful coexistence. Unlike commercial media, PSM are directly linked with the social, democratic and cultural interests of people. Intellectual capital means to create, stimulate, support and empower the citizens' competence to participate in and contribute to society.

Intellectual capital can be optimally realised, when the ORF strives to incorporate this principle of universal representation in producing and delivering information and entertainment programmes.

The ORF delivers contemporary understandings of Austrian national identity through its entertainment and information programmes, within which the publics can »find themselves« nationally and regionally in a pluralistic way and in a variety of different mediatisations. The identity of a society is constructed through its relation to its own history and in a self-reflexive process. The ORF's intellectual capital contribution is of high significance in the production of fictional and factual thematisations of history and in particular of national history.

The public service broadcasting system has taken it upon itself to address the challenge of providing



»de-constructive« entertainment, that is entertainment which encourages and supports a critical approach to the social world among its audiences, by allowing more symbolic spaces for different social groups to see the relevance of stories, for example, in their own lives and construct their own meanings. This comes as a substantial and in many ways unique contribution of the ORF vis-a-vis »escapist« entertainment, which does not encourage the active construction of meanings for its audiences.

What PSM should perhaps do more about is the visibility of their contributions in society. The ORF should communicate more its international standing and place among the significant public institutions of Europe and the European Broadcasting Union. •