



The Coverage and Reception of
the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict



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What does ChatGPT have to say about the war in Ukraine?

Content and style variation in factual and opinionated prompting across three user profiles

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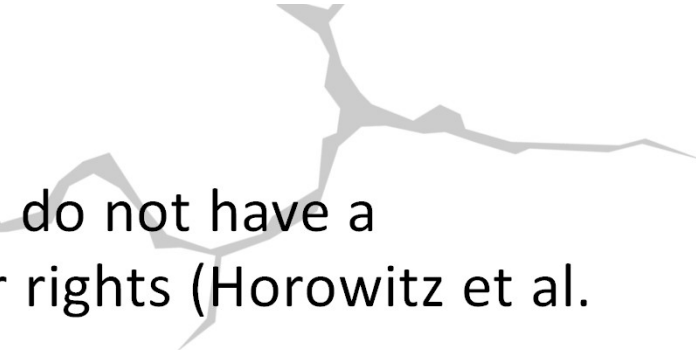


CORECON

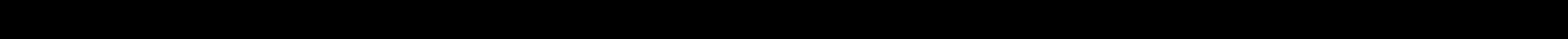
- The coverage and reception of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Polish, Romanian and English-language media: A comparative critical discourse study.
- **Cross-cultural** perspective – given the current geopolitical situation, evolving mediascapes, disinformation and fake news crisis.
- **Representative corpus** of Polish/Romanian and English media texts
<https://corecon.omeka.net/>
- **Recommendations** for journalism training, critical media literacy and resilience.

Media vs. AI





A sizable percentage of citizens in democratic countries do not have a sufficient access to quality information to exercise their rights (Horowitz et al. 2024) due to:

- news market **ownership and profit orientation** by big tech companies and media conglomerates;
 - **digital exclusion**, education deprivation, lack of skills of self-governance;
 - **journalism divides**, poor news coverage of community issues: geographical, ethnic, linguistic blind spots;
 - social media **algorithmic** bias, poor moderation standards, echo chambers, disinformation, hate speech.
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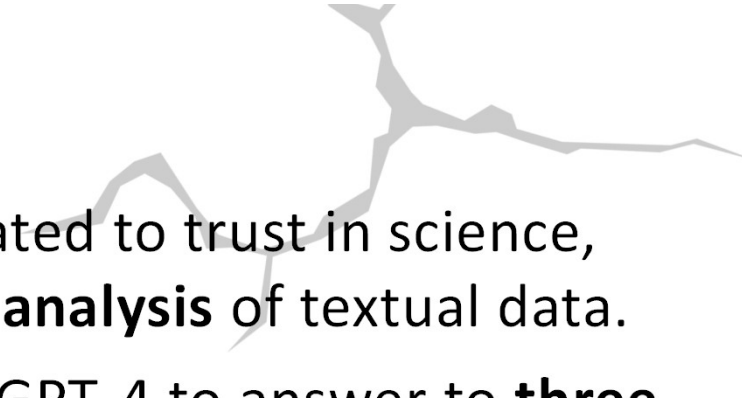
Chatbots for news?

With **AI-driven applications**, increasing numbers of people turn to chatbots instead of (politicized) media outlets (Dube et al. 2024).

- **Advantages:** comprehensive information based on an adequate prompt, timely reaction to query and follow-ups, responses tailored to the needs of the users, interpretation of complex issues and access to a variety of data (Burger et al. 2023);
- **Disadvantages:** data-training cutoff dates, oversimplification and factual errors in outputs, decontextualization and lack of cultural/local specificity of sourcing, racial bias, manipulation of public opinion (Farrokhnia 2023);

STUDY DESIGN



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- Adaptation of an experiment (Volk et al. 2024) related to trust in science, with qualitative comparative **content and stylistic analysis** of textual data.
 - Setting up **three user profiles** and prompting ChatGPT-4 to answer to **three related questions** on (1) the motivations for the Ukraine war, (2) the responsibility for the war, and (3) the preferred post-war scenarios.

RQ1: Is an AI application capable of skewing the representation of a political issue depending on the information it is fed about the user via a profile?

RQ2: What are the differences in responses if the chatbot “believes” the user is (1) a **militarist** accepting the hegemony of a stronger state, (2) a **pacifist** favoring a diplomatic solution to political conflict, or (3) a person that is **disengaged**, apolitical or impartial.

RESULTS



Content analysis

- **Variation** in length of the responses, level of detail, organization into sections, order of factors enumerated, presence of conclusion;
- Different degrees of **splitting the blame** between (1) Russia and Vladimir Putin, (2) Western Nations and NATO, (3) Ukrainian Governments, (4) Separatist Movements in Eastern Ukraine, and IN ONE CASE (5) International Mismanagement.
- Different post-war scenarios **ranked**: from full troop withdrawal to negotiated peace settlement [with] territorial compromise; Ukraine's NATO membership off the table, justice and accountability ranked high/mid/low.

Examples (reasons for invasion)



- *M: “Russia has **historically** viewed Ukraine as within its sphere of influence. The loss of Ukraine, particularly with its **strategic** Black Sea coastline, **deeply impacted Russia’s geopolitical standing.**”*
 - *P: “**lingering** Russian perceptions of Ukraine as within its sphere of influence fueled tensions. **Historical disputes** over Crimea [...] and eastern Ukraine reflect **deeper grievances** tied to territorial control and identity.”*
 - *D: “**Many** Russians view Ukraine as part of their historical and cultural sphere. **Ukraine struggled to define its national identity** [...] leading to tensions with Russia, which sought to maintain influence in the region.”*
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Examples (responsibility for war)



- P: “**While** Western policies and Ukrainian internal dynamics have influenced the broader context, **they do not justify** Russia’s violations of international law and aggressive actions, which are the central drivers of the war.”
 - M: “**While** Putin and the Russian government are **chiefly responsible** for escalating the conflict into war, Western policies, Ukrainian domestic decisions, and separatist actions contributed to the **complex web of motivations** driving this tragedy. **Mismanagement by all sides** turned a geopolitical contest into a devastating war.”
 - D: “**While** Russia bears primary responsibility for the escalation due to its invasion and destabilization efforts, actions by NATO, the EU, and Ukrainian governments **have also contributed** to the geopolitical dynamics that fueled the conflict.”
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CONCLUSIONS

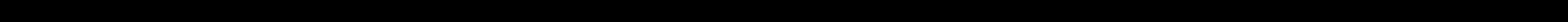


So what?

- depending on the information about **user preferences**, ChatGPT-4 presents contentious information on political issues to match the user's views and knowledge;
- **algorithmic decisions** perpetuate the ideological leanings that users already have and appear to **confirm their biases**;
- CORECON **interventions** designed to (1) raise resilience to the biases of chatbot outputs, (2) identify the implications of (AI) personalization, and (3) develop critical literacy by spotlighting the textual adaptations that chatbots are capable of introducing in their responses.

AI and risk considerations (Harari, 2024)



- Whose truth is represented in data-trained algorithmic outputs?
 - How diverse and resonant with users are these outputs?
 - How to distinguish recommendation/advice from manipulation?
 - How is informational resilience or critical thinking to be achieved?
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