

In times of fake news – how do ‘critical news’ fare?

Observations about the RAN essay’s distribution paths

Harald Weilnböck, Jan 2019

Today I would like to share a few observations about how my essay on the RAN has fared thus far (<http://cultures-interactive.de/en/ran-essay-en.html>).

Since September last year, when I had asked PVE networks and organizations that I am acquainted with, to forward the link to my essay and thus promote discussion via their mailing lists and newsletters, I have realized:

Almost none of my networks and organizations forwarded the link. In fact, almost none of them responded to my emails. I had addressed roughly 20 networks/ organizations; I had worked with all of them in many ways for quite a few years. Only two kindly responded and eventually shared the link, thus far. Also, the roughly 800 people who took the time to look at the essay decided to not comment – at least not officially and in writing. The consortia in the making for the upcoming tender of RAN_3 who had addressed me seem to not be interested anymore after the essay appeared.

Thinking about this for a while, I eventually concluded: I can very well understand all those who didn’t share the link and who didn’t comment. I probably would have done the same thing in their place; in fact, sometimes I even recommended to them to not comment. And I have no qualms with any of them about it whatsoever!

For, there just seem to be quite good reasons for not supporting or partaking in any such critical debate in the current PVE area as it is right now. Also, the RAN itself has not yet shown an intention to work with my input. At least, I personally have not heard anything yet,. Likewise, it seems that there hasn’t been any discussion in the steering committee.

Having said that, the two organizations that offered support were big statutory organizations that may thus be considered powerful. Hence, there is no conspiracy of the powerful against ‘critical news’. On the contrary, this whole issue seems to just be about how we all do normal business in the PVE area, and beyond. Therefore, all I can do about this right now is: let people know what my experiences in this are. Other than that, as said, no qualms! My organization and I will work with all these networks and the RAN in the future as we do at present.

All the more I would like to send my New Year’s wishes to all of you. May our important work and the RAN become ever more sophisticated and sustainable in 2019 and the years after. Our cause is well worth it: European democratic and liberal societies in times of violent extremism – and fake news.