

# 'I URGE YOU TO SEE THIS...' CLICKBAIT AS ONE OF THE DOMINANT FEATURES OF CONTEMPORARY ONLINE HEADLINES

*Paulina Mormol*<sup>1</sup>

---

## Abstract

*With the arrival of the Internet the already-existing mass media have undergone a complete revolution. Among the most affected subtypes one could easily distinguish the press, which had to find its own place within the new medium. The fierce competition in the realm of online publishing has engendered a number of idiosyncratic linguistic devices used to lure the readers. One of the most popular ones is the phenomenon recognized as clickbait, i.e. an umbrella term for a number of techniques used to attract attention and arouse curiosity. In the following paper, we shall investigate the presence of the said phenomenon in online headlines. In order to do that we shall perform a corpus-based analysis of the data acquired from the most popular American social news outlets on the Internet, namely BuzzFeed, TMZ and E!Online. Apart from establishing the extent to which clickbait has dominated online headlines, we shall also pinpoint and discuss the specific linguistic techniques used to attract potential readers.*

**Keywords:** clickbait, headlines, digital media, online newspapers

---

## INTRODUCTION

The emergence of leading-edge technology significantly affected the world of journalism. Willingly or otherwise, the traditional news outlets had to get involved in the process of digitization, i.e. the way in which various facets of human life are rebuilt around mass communication and sundry Internet-based systems and services [Brennan and Kreiss, 2016, as cited in Duffy and Ang, 2019]. While the influence of digitization on journalism is, in many ways, positive, as it facilitates access, innovation, connectivity and search ability [Duffy and Ang, 2019], it is also viewed as a threat to the quality of the published content [Mompert et al., 2015, as cited in Garcia et al., 2017].

Naturally, the alliance of journalism and technology had an impact on both the read-

---

<sup>1</sup> Paulina Mormol, MA of English, PhD candidate at the University of Rzeszów, Institute of English Studies, Faculty of Philology, Rzeszów University, ul. Mjr. W. Kopisto 2B, 35-315 Rzeszów; e-mail: paulinamormol@onet.pl. ORCID: 0000-0001-9316-8440.

ers and news providers. Today, reading news online is an essential element of human life, as Internet users are supplied with seemingly unlimited online resources that offer all sorts of information [Chakraborty et al., 2016]. Because of that abundance, reading news became hurried and superficial [Jiang et al., 2019] – in fact, readers who are often lost in the thicket of both valuable and useless information base their reading choices solely on the accompanying headline. Supplying news for the society hungry for information and knowledge is a challenge for journalists, who have to excel in creativity, but also demonstrate strategic digital competences [Garcia et al., 2017]. Mastering the foregoing set of skills is crucial because of the cut-throat competition in the realm of online journalism, as well as the current business model which relies on reaping profit from the advertisements displayed on the publisher's website rather than subscription services or implementation of the pay wall. Simply stated, attracting readers who are willing to click on the links is of utmost importance, thus the content is usually adjusted to their preferences, frequently at the expense of its quality [Chakraborty et al., 2016; Iwasiński, 2018]. This leads to the publication of shocking, attention-grabbing articles that often obscure the boundary between reality and fantasy [Alves et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2015].

The following article aims to add to a growing body of literature on online headlines. In the discussion to follow, we shall scrutinize the presence of clickbait in online news titles. To that end, we intend to perform a corpus-based analysis of the relevant data mined from three online news outlets, i.e. Buzzfeed, TMZ and E!Online. The result shall shed some light on sundry linguistic devices used to lure audiences, as well as the extent to which clickbait governs online headlines in the domain of soft news.

## **ON HEADLINES**

The single most striking element of any article is its headline. Vividly described as vignettes of the news reports, headlines carry the weight of the published pieces of writing by constituting a bridge between the reader and the article [Palau-Sampio, 2016]. The scope of the investigated term remains a topic of vigorous scholarly debates; hence, for the purpose of the following article we shall adopt a working definition, according to which a headline is a distinguished graphic design, a short title above newspaper report or an online article, related to but visually separated from the rest of the journalistic work, consisting of at least one and a maximum of a few sentences. Traditionally headlines aspired to present a concise and factual account of the story described in the article or a summary of its key points, but they also stimulated and engaged the reader, as well as inspired him/her to challenge the existing world-view [Scacco and Muddiman, 2016; Jiang et al., 2019].

While a headline has always occupied a pivotal role in printed journalism, it grew to the position of supreme prominence in the age of online media [Garcia et al., 2017]. The blossoming of digital reporting transformed the form and functions of headlines [Scacco and Muddiman, 2016]. Currently, journalists responsible for composing news titles are preoccupied with one, fundamental question, namely “what makes the reader click?” [Blom and Hansen, 2015, p. 87]. The yearning for the greatest possible number of website visits combined with the sense of bitter rivalry in the world of the news media triggered a considerable change in the functionality of a headline, which now has to attract rather than inform [Jiang et al., 2019]. Consequently, headline creators have to be extremely careful with their word choice, since a well-chosen selection of lexical units guarantees high positions in web search results [Garcia et al., 2016]. And although journalists have always tried to devise effective techniques to lure the readers, more often than not, online headlines incorporate eminently questionable methods, referred to collectively as clickbait [Blom and Hansen, 2015; Garcia et al., 2016].

## **CLICKBAIT AND ITS FEATURES**

As hinted above, online headlines, which usually disguise hyperlinks to relevant arti-

cles, strive to deliver clicks in order to generate revenue. Even though ensnaring readers is not an easy endeavour, certain curiosity-inducing techniques can be applied to achieve success [Kuiken et al., 2017; Biyani et al., 2016]. Such measures, recognized as clickbait, have recently gained popularity among both headlines creators and linguists.

The available descriptions of clickbait do not succeed in providing a coherent picture of the phenomenon in question; still, we shall present some of its notable features. To begin with, clickbait is defined as an umbrella term with a fairly pejorative connotation, characterized by being deceptive, derivative and of poor quality [Kuiken et al., 2017; Iwasiński 2018]. What clickbait refers to, however, remains open to dispute. Specifically, Iwasiński [2018], Potthast et al. [2016] and Biyani et al. [2016] see it as a type of web content, Kuiken et al. [2017], Chakraborty et al. [2016] and Blom and Hansen [2015] view it as means of attracting website visitors, and Zannettou et al. [2019] and Garcia et al. [2017] treat it as a variety of online headlines. Despite the above discrepancies, the functional aspect of the discussed term is indisputable - clickbait aspires to capture attention by awakening one's curiosity and/or arousing emotions, so as to prompt the reader to click on the headline and maximize the financial profit of the publisher [Iwasiński, 2018; Kuiken et al., 2017; Blom and Hansen, 2015; Potthast et al., 2016]. Clickbait differs from regular headlines in several ways, one of them being the fact that various luring-oriented strategies adopted by regular headlines are justified by the actual content of the articles, whereas the content preceded by clickbait headlines is usually below par. For that reason, using clickbait is often equated with betraying the ideals of high-grade journalism [Lockwood, 2016].

From the cognitive perspective, the efficacy of clickbait stems from the so-called curiosity gap, a phenomenon rooted in Lowenstein's information-gap theory of curiosity [Potthast et al., 2016]. In short, the said concept is based on the assumption that any inquisitive individual is internally motivated to acquire information that he/she is missing, in order to minimize or eradicate the feeling of deprivation. The determination to fill in the existing knowledge gap is enough to entice the reader into clicking on any headline which alludes to events with undisclosed outcomes [Potthast et al., 2016; Chakraborty et al., 2016].

By and large, clickbait revolves around the notion of the unknown - "something unnamed is referred to, some emotional reaction is promised, some lack of knowledge is ascribed, some authority is claimed" [Potthast et al., 2016, p. 810]. Aside from being recognized on the basis of cryptic references, clickbait can be also identified via recurring linguistic and typographic features. As a rule, the effectiveness of such headlines is supported by the application of strong adjectives, adverbs (often in their superlative forms) and nouns, exaggeration by means of hyperbolic words, profanity, shortened forms, quotes, exclamations, formulaic chunks, capital letters and distinctive punctuation patterns [Biyani et al., 2016; Potthast et al., 2016; Alves et al., 2016; Chakraborty et al., 2016]. The granularity of the above-mentioned characteristics is substantial; however, clickbait also utilizes certain idiosyncratic techniques that are immediately associated with the term in question. Undoubtedly, the most prominent one is forward referencing [Kuiken et al., 2017; Potthast et al., 2016], which can be described as "referring to something with a demonstrative before introducing the referent (e.g. This is why you should read this article)" [Lockwood, 2016: 2]. In their in-depth study, Blom and Hansen [2015] distinguish two varieties of the discussed linguistic means, namely discourse deixis (i.e. references at discourse level) and cataphora (i.e. references at phrase level). Importantly, while forward referencing is a potent instrument in the panoply of clickbait techniques, as it highlights the unknown and gives the impression of unpredictability and anticipation [Scaccao and Muddiman, 2016], the readers who want to obtain the needed information solely from the headline may find it irritating [Blom and Hansen, 2015]. Another distinctive clickbait technique entails using interrogative forms [Kuiken et al., 2017; Lockwood, 2016; Scaccao and Muddiman, 2016]. Such a practice capitalizes on the curiosity gap,

since most readers assume that the answer to the question asked in the headline can be found in the main body of the article; however, in accordance with Betteridge's law of headlines „any headline that ends in a question mark can be answered by the word no.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, clickbait headlines abound in numbers [Kuiken et al., 2017; Potthast et al., 2016]. Using numerals is an element of a bigger phenomenon, known as culture-jacking, which boils down to the application of a fixed formula that consists of a number, a culturally-appealing allusion and a desirable kernel of knowledge (e.g. “Three Things Gandhi Can Teach You About Marketing”)[Kerswell, 2013, as cited in Alves et al., 2016, p. 204]. Needless to say, the combined persuasive force of numerals, which imply brevity and cultural references, which seduce readers by evoking prominent public figures and phenomena is tremendous. A fairly similar technique, which also employs numbers while supplanting cultural references with hyperbolic words (e.g. “13 Unbelievable Ways You Can Fry a Small Egg with a Sock”) is known as visualization [Kerswell, 2013, as cited in Alves et al., 2016, p. 205]. Here, the brevity of numerals is bolstered by the use of strong adjectives, which advance the process of creating a mental image of the article. Emotional appeal, the final technique we shall describe, relies on evoking contradictory feelings (e.g. “We Don't Hear Enough From Native American Voices. Here's an Inspiring Message from One”) [Alves et al., 2016, p. 206]. Often touching upon controversial, socially important issues, the emotional appeal technique consists in enticing both positive and negative reactions(e.g. outrage and uplift) from readers, which translates into popularity on social media [Lockwood, 2016].

Despite recent reports that clickbait is no longer effective, headline creators continue to use it [Lockwood, 2016; Potthast et al., 2016]. Numerous content publishers remain undeterred by the widespread criticism of the discussed phenomenon, which is condemned for being schematic, pervasive and most importantly, deceptive. As clickbait headlines fail to provide the promised content, they leave the readers feeling discouraged, manipulated and wary of any information published online [Alves et al., 2016; Chakraborty et al., 2016; Biyani et al., 2016; Iwasiński, 2018]. This seems particularly unsettling regarding the fact that many people view *clickbait* and *online journalism* as interchangeable terms. Unfortunately, not only is clickbait found in 8 out of 10 European news media outlets [Garcia et al., 2016], but it also expands into new territories, including academic papers [Lockwood, 2016]. Various efforts aimed at eliminating the problem cumulated in the invention of clickbait-detecting software, which blocks unwanted contents [Chen et al., 2015; Biyani et al., 2016; Chakraborty et al., 2016].

Historically speaking, clickbait is not a thoroughly modern invention, as it can be traced back to headlines found in *yellow journalism*, i.e. a variety of newspaper writing anchored in sensationalism and exaggeration, aimed at luring readers with its substandard content and appealing news titles[Alves et al., 2016; Zannettou et al., 2019]. A typical representative of yellow journalism is tabloid, i.e. an all mass-circulation paper that provides purely entertaining value. Oddly enough, yellow journalism seems to benefit from technological progress. Bytreating the Internet as a new platform for growth rather than a hostile party, yellow journalism makes the most of the World Wide Web, which ensures quick publication, large circulation and limited verification of the news [Alves et al., 2016].

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

At the outset, the following analysis is based on the assumption that headlines function as parts of bigger texts, yet at the same time they are individual entities, thus they can be analyzed in isolation [Fries, 1987]. The investigated headlines have been gathered from 3 universally popular American websites specializing in soft news (i.e.

2 <https://web.archive.org/web/20090226202006/http://www.technovia.co.uk/2009/02/tech-crunch-irresponsible-journalism.html>.

highly entertaining stories that often rely on exaggeration, sensationalization and fabrication and thereby clickbait), namely BuzzFeed, TMZ and E!Online. Data collection spanned 1 week, starting from August 1st to August 7th, 2019. The final corpus consists of 767 headlines, 354 of which have been derived from BuzzFeed, 147 from TMZ and 266 from E!Online (9799 words in total). It should be stressed that all headlines published within the above-mentioned time frame have been incorporated into the corpus, except for quizzes and sponsored articles. As regards the specific procedures, the corpus was accessed and analyzed manually, while the investigation focused on determining the prevalent linguistic aspects of click bait. In order to extrapolate click bait patterns in online headlines, a primarily qualitative approach has been adopted; however, certain elements of qualitative research have also been incorporated into the analysis, so as to show the prevalence of the investigated phenomena.

### THE ANALYSIS

By all appearances, the most common clickbait technique used in online headlines is the extensive use of numerals, as it was observed in 132 examples gathered for the study; however, the captivating effect brought by numbers is usually reinforced by other luring devices. Take, for instance, the following examples:

[1] 5 Things **You Didn't Know** About VS **Model Valentina Sampaio**[BF]

[2] **24Reactions** To **Zendaya** Singing In The "Euphoria" Finale[E!]

With the benefit of hindsight, the above headlines can be categorized as instances of culture jacking. This clickbait technique remains vastly popular in various online news outlets due to its remarkable potency. Specifically, the use of numerals proves useful for the readers, as it helps to assess the length of the article and needless to say, contemporary audiences opt for shorter, more compact texts. Mentioning the name of a culturally significant person, on the other hand, guarantees a substantial number of clicks. The above examples show two ways in which the name of a celebrity can be exploited. First of all, the headline may pledge to impart some previously unknown piece of information pertaining to a famous person. Second of all, the headline may promise to offer a kaleidoscope of opinions about the said celebrity; this allows the readers to confront their outlooks with the standpoints of other people. An interesting offshoot of culture jacking can be observed in the examples below:

[3] **Kim Cattrall Reveals** What Samantha Jones Would Think of Her New Filthy Rich Character [E!]

[4] **Paul Wesley Reacts** to Nina Dobrev's Confession About Their Vampire Diaries Relationship [E!]

Such headlines offer a twist on culture jacking technique by excluding numbers and introducing a new element, namely a verb, which suggests that the celebrity himself/herself will share a closely guarded secret or a personal opinion on a controversial topic in the main body of the article. In short, the foregoing method boils down to the application of the formula *X reacts/reveals/speaks out/reflects on Y*, in which X stands for the name of a famous person and Y stands for a culturally relevant topic.

Apart from culture jacking, numbers are often incorporated into the visualization technique, as can be seen in the foregoing examples:

[5] **24Precious And Hilarious** Animal Tweets Guaranteed To Brighten Your Day [BF]



[6] **27 Strange And Disturbing** Things People Have Actually Seen In Guys' Apartments [BF]

Visualization, as the name itself implies, aspires to establish a mental representation of the article in the minds of the readers. To that end, it employs numerals (which once again, are indicative of the potential terseness of the article) combined with colourful, both positively (e.g. *precious, hilarious*) and negatively (e.g. *strange, disturbing*) charged adjectives. Unlike culture jacking, visualization contains no reference to famous people - in fact; it is usually applied in headlines describing seemingly mundane details of everyday life. Using evocative adjectives in headlines not only renders the following piece of writing more attractive, but it also suggests that reading the actual content of the article will produce a sought-after emotional reaction, such as joy or bewilderment. The foregoing technique appears to be fairly popular, as it was observed in 77 headlines found in the corpus.

Headlines accumulated in the corpus also employ the technique recognized as emotional appeal, which was spotted in 27 headlines amassed for the analysis. In order to unveil its intricacies, let us zoom in on the following examples:

[7] **After Being Harassed** And Pushed Out Of A Shell Oil Refinery, **This Woman Pushed Back.** [BF]

[8] **Latino Man And His Nephew Went To Walmart** Together To Buy School Supplies. **Only One Came Home.**[BF]

Perhaps the best way to present different facets of the method in question is to scrutinize the foregoing headlines. The first example presented above can be considered a classic illustration of emotional appeal. Most often, such headlines can be divided into two parts that fulfil different roles - whereas the first segment of the sentence delineates the situation that arouses indignation; the following phrase reinstates a sense of reassurance. Articles advertised by such headlines are quite popular, since they satisfy one's curiosity and the need for uplifting news. Insofar as the second example is concerned, here the procedure is somewhat different. While the sentence starts with a description of an ordinary situation, the shocking result presented in the second part creates an emotional impact. Needless to say, the readers are willing to click on the headline to find out details provided in the article.

As a rule, online headlines involve both strong lexical units and hyperbolic words, as evidenced by the following instances:

[9] Here Are The 13 **Best** Horror Movie Jump Scares Of All Time[BF]

[10] 16 Fan Theories About Movies You Love That **Will Absolutely Blow Your Mind**[BF]

[11] **The Cutest** Thing You'll See All Day Is the Cast of Stranger Things Surprising Their Biggest Fans [E!]

[12] Pink Just **Epically Trolled** the Mom Shamers Coming After Jessica Simpson [E!]

[13] TIMES SQUARE PANIC

**TOTAL CHAOS** DUE TO MASS SHOOTING FEAR...

Dozens Injured After Motorcycle Backfire [TMZ]

[14] A\$AP ROCKY

RETURNS TO U.S.

## HOW ECSTATIC AM !?! [TMZ]

The corpus compiled for the purpose of the foregoing study contains countless examples of strong, hyperbolic lexis. To illustrate, the events, objects and people described in the headlines are *fascinating, amazing, hilarious, damn funny, infuriatingly gross, too pure for this world, seriously messed up, literally hysterical, unsettling, mind-blowing and groundbreaking*. Moreover, reading the article will *blow your mind, brighten your day, make everything better, confuse the hell out of you, challenge your view of the world or even have you screaming and crying at once*. It scarcely needs to be said that the foregoing expressions are just a drop in the lexical pool of deliberately exaggerated expressions amassed in the corpus. As might be expected, hyperbolic lexical units influence readers to a high degree, especially with regard to young audiences, which crave extremes.

Predictably, the corpus includes numerous instances of forward referencing; more specifically, 56 headlines incorporating the foregoing technique were found in the corpus. Some of the examples can be seen below:

[15] **Here's** Proof True Thompson and Dream Kardashian Are Living Their Best Lives This Summer [E!]

[16] **These** Journalists Are Facing Huge Threats And Injustice For Pursuing The Truth [BF]

[17] **This** Picture Is The Only Proof You Need That Henry Cavill Is Actually Prince Eric [BF]

Linguistically speaking, the above headlines incorporate instances of forward referencing at the discourse level, a widespread practice in the domain of clickbait journalism. Such headlines accentuate the presence of the unknown, which automatically foreground the existence of the curiosity gap. Sundry discourse deixis, such as *here's, these* or *this*, to name but three, shepherd the readers towards the actual content of the article, which could potentially offer comprehensive explanations one is looking for. Currently, forward referencing is prevalent in online headlines to a point where various combinations of discourse deixis can be seen as fixed expressions.

While the data gathered from BuzzFeed and E!Online are by no means visually peculiar, the typography and punctuation of TMZ headlines are distinctive, as evidenced by the following examples:

[18] KATY PERRY

ORDERED TO PAY \$550K FOR 'DARK HORSE' DEFEAT

...Capitol Hit for \$1.2 Mil!!!! [TMZ]

[19] SMOKEY ROBINSON

REPUBLICANS HAVE TO STOP TRUMP

...What Are They Afraid Of?!?[TMZ]

Quite exceptionally, TMZ headlines have a structured form which can be divided into 3 sections, namely the name of the person or the event the article refers to at the top, the main piece of information in the middle and additional details at the very bottom. Aside from luring the readers by means of diversified typography that includes a mixture of upper- and lower-case, TMZ headlines also utilize idiosyncratic patterns of punctuation. Even a cursory look at the relevant data is enough to notice the extensive employment of exclamation points, often mixed with question marks, which are used to indicate

strong feelings, express emphasis and sensationalize the presented story. Ellipsis, on the other hand, signifies unfinished thought or a slight pause, which makes the headline more dialogical and thereby appealing.

Finally, quite a few headlines in the corpus assume the form of a question:

[21] Meghan Markle Isn't The First Royal To Guest-Edit A Magazine - So Why Is Everyone So Mad About It? [BF]

[22] Just How Risqué Will the New Gossip Girl Be on HBO Max? [E!]

Various interrogative structures that appear in headlines are a force to be reckoned with, since they cull their persuasive power directly from the curiosity gap. Although such questions are often deceptive, the urge to discover the missing piece of information that ought to be included in the main body of the article is irresistible. However, due to over-use, interrogative forms are no longer sufficient; therefore, as evidenced by the above examples, they tend to revolve around figures and phenomena that are culturally impactful at the given moment. To make the headline even more tempting, the already-compelling message may be further improved by means of appropriate vocabulary that implies scandalous content (e.g. *risqué*) or the presence of antagonism (e.g. *mad*).

Regardless of the fact that the above-mentioned corpus was treated as a cohesive unit during the analysis, a brief look at its individual components may also produce interesting results. And so, a quantitative examination of the section derived from BuzzFeed reveals that traditional titles which simply summarize the content of the articles they precede constitute a minority - as a matter of fact, every 2 out of 3 headlines employ various clickbait techniques. This seems to be in line with claims made by Alves et al. [2016], who maintain that in recent years BuzzFeed became the epitome of clickbait. The analysis of the second part of the corpus, composed of headlines obtained from TMZ, shows that the process of attracting readers can be founded upon typographic and punctuation-related measures. Since TMZ headlines habitually include essential details of the described story in the headline, it can be assumed that the said website utilizes clickbait sparingly. Finally, the exploration of the data provided by E!Online exposes the presence of clickbait in approximately half of the collected examples. And although the foregoing quantity is appreciable, it must be stressed that for the most part the headlines published on E!online website are not blatantly deceptive.

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the paper was to provide an account of, as well as the motivations behind the ubiquitous use of clickbait in online headlines. Taken together, the results suggest that the discussed phenomenon remains prevalent in soft news titles published on the Internet and while certain luring methods are nearly universal, different websites adopt alternative approaches concerning the extent to which clickbait appears in their headlines. More to the point, whereas news outlets such as BuzzFeed, which built their current standing on the discussed technique, create headlines that are an overtly misleading preview of the article, others, such as E!Online, embrace more subtle tactics by using clickbait in moderation. Aside from the lexical level of clickbait mentioned above, the process of baiting the reader for clicks can be realized on the visual level, as evidenced by the diversified typography and punctuation of TMZ headlines - such a strategy can be seen as carrying the legacy of printed tabloids. Bearing these slight differences in mind, it should be stressed that all investigated websites utilize clickbait, as using it became an indispensable element in the process of adaptation to the new medium, i.e. the Internet.

Clickbait, however, would not exist without the language, which serves its objectives well. Miscellaneous techniques discussed and presented in the paper, including



forward referencing, culture jacking, visualization and emotional appeal (not to mention hyperbolic lexis and interrogative forms) are executed by dint of linguistic vehicles that evoke curiosity and trigger emotional reactions. Nevertheless, such methods are hardly ever used individually - a possible explanation for this might be related to the overuse of various clickbait constructions, which became fossilized over time and consequently, their effectiveness decreased.

Looked at from a broader perspective, the above-presented prevalence of clickbait in online media creates a number of implications for the whole field of contemporary journalism. Crucially, the widespread presence of the phenomenon in question can be treated as conclusive proof that the informative function of a headline became obsolete. The pursuit of global circulation paired with the quest for instant publication transformed pieces of news into commodities, which have to be sold in order to generate revenue -and needless to say, the potential profit arises from the perceived attractiveness of the headline rather than its informative qualities. Despite the undeniable usefulness of clickbait in the process of luring the readers, the ubiquity of the investigated term conduces to the act of pushing the boundaries of what is considered acceptable in the realm of journalism further and further. This, in turn, impinges upon the already-poor quality of the published content, thereby undermining the time-honoured traditions of the printed press.

#### References:

- ALVES, L., ANTUNES, N., AGRICI, O., SOUSA, C.M.R., RAMOS, C.M.Q. (2016). Click Bait: You Won't Believe What Happens Next!, *Fronteiras: Journal of Social, Technological and Environmental Science*, 5(2), 196-213.
- BIYANI, P., TSIOUTSIOLIKLIS, K., BLACKMER, J. (2016). "8 Amazing Secrets for Getting More Clicks": Detecting Clickbaits in News Streams Using Article Informality [in:] D. Schuurmans & M.P. Wellman [eds.], *Proceedings of the Thirtieth AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI-16)*, Phoenix, Arizona, February 12-17, 2016. Palo Alto: AAAI Press, 94-100.
- BLOM, J.N., HANSEN, K.R. (2015). Click bait: Forward-reference as lure in online news headlines, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 76, 87-100.
- BRENNAN, J.S. KREISS, D. (2016). Digitalization [in:] K.B. Jensen & R. Craig (eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Online Library, 1-11.
- CHAKRABORTY, A., PARANJAPE, B., KAKARLA, S., GANGULY, N. (2016). Stop Clickbait: Detecting and Preventing Clickbaits in Online News Media [in:] R. Kumar, J. Caverlee & H. Tong (eds.) *IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining (ASONAM)*, August 18-21, San Francisco, CA, USA, NJ: IEEE Press Piscataway, 9-16.
- CHEN, Y., CONROY, N.J., RUBIN, V.L. (2015). Misleading Online Content: Recognizing Clickbait as "False News" [in:] M. Abouelenien, M. Burzo, R. Mihalcea & V. Pérez-Rosas (eds.), *WMDD '15 Proceedings of the 2015 ACM on Workshop on Multimodal Deception Detection*. New York: ACM. 15-19.
- DUFFY, A., ANG, P.H. (2019). Digital Journalism: Defined, Refined, or Re-defined, *Digital Journalism*, 7, 378-385.
- FRIES, U. (1987). Summaries in Newspapers: A Textlinguistic Investigation [in:] U. Fries (ed.), *The Structure of Texts*. Tübingen: Narr, 47-63.
- GARCÍA, B.O., GALLUR, S.S., GARCÍA, X.L. (2017). Use of clickbait in the online news media of the 28 EU member countries. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 72, 1261-1277.
- IWASIŃSKI, Ł. (2018). Utowarowienie treści publikowanych w internecie. Społeczne aspekty problemu [in:] B. Sosińska-Kalata, P. Tańkowski (eds.) *Nauka o informacji w okresie zmian. Innowacyjne usługi informacyjne*. Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Bibliotekarzy Polskich, 49-58.
- JIANG, T., GUO, Q., XU, Y., ZHAO, Y., FU, S. (2019). What Prompts Users to Click on News Headlines? A Clickstream Data Analysis of the Effects of News Recency and Popularity [in:] N.G. Taylor, C. Christian-Lamb, M.H. Martin & B. Nardi (eds.) *Information in Contemporary Society: 14th International Conference, IConference 2019*, Washington, DC, USA, March 31-April 3, 2019, Proceedings. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 539-546.
- KERSWELL, J. (2013). 6 Reasons you always fall for Click-Bait (and the secret formulas publishers won't want you to see). [online: September 1, 2019] <https://messageandmuse.wordpress.com/2013/12/19/6-reasons-you-always-fall-for-click-bait-and-the-secret-formulas-publishers-wont-want-you-to-see/>.

KUIKEN, J., SCHUTH, A., SPITTERS, M., MARX, M.(2017). Effective Headlines of Newspaper Articles in a Digital Environment, *Digital Journalism*, 5, 1300-1314.

LOCKWOOD, G.(2016). Academic clickbait: Articles with positively-framed titles, interesting phrasing, and no wordplay get more attention online, *The Winnower*, 3, 1-13.

MOMPART, J.L., GUTIÉRREZ, J.F., PALAU, D.(2015). Los periodistas españoles y la pérdida de calidad de la información: el juicio profesional, *Comunicar*, 45, 143-150.

PALAU-SAMPIO, D. (2016). Reference press metamorphosis in the digital context: clickbait and tabloid strategies in elpais.com, *Communication & Society*, 29(2), 63-79.

POTTHAST, M., KÖPSEL, S., STEIN, B., HAGEN, M.(2016). Clickbait Detection[in:] N. Ferro, F. Crestani, M-F. Moens, J. Mothe, F. Silvestri, G.M. Di Nunzio, C. Hauff& G. Silvello(eds.) *Advances in Information Retrieval - 38th European Conference on IR Research, ECIR 2016, Padua, Italy, March 20-23, 2016 Proceedings*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 810–817.

SCACCO, M.J., MUDDIMAN, A.(2016). Investigating the influence of “clickbait” news headlines. [online: September 1, 2019]<https://mediaengagement.org/research/clickbait-headlines/>.

ZANNETTOU, S., SIRIVIANOS, M., BLACKBURN, J., KOURTELLIS, N.(2018). The Web of False Information: Rumors, Fake News, Hoaxes, Clickbait, and Various Other Shenanigans. *Journal of Data and Information Quality* 11(3), 1-26.

#### **ONLINE SOURCES (AVAILABLE ONLINE SEPTEMBER 2, 2019)**

<https://web.archive.org/web/20090226202006/http://www.technovia.co.uk/2009/02/techcrunch-irresponsible-journalism.html>.

#### **DATA SOURCES**

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/>

<https://www.tMZ.com/>

<https://www.eonline.com/>