

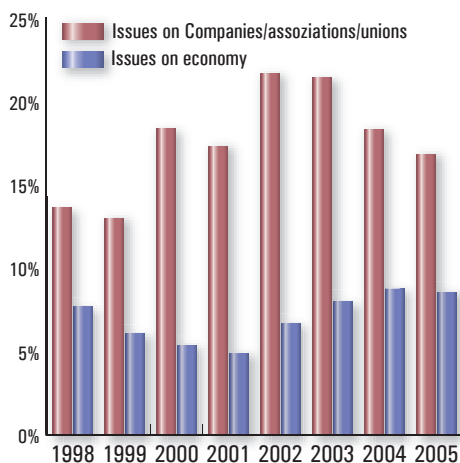
Change comes at a price

How the tageszeitung attempts to re-position itself

By setting the terms of the public agenda, news outlets can not only influence public opinion, but can also drive sales of their product. In that regard, it can pay off for news media to consider Media Tenor's findings in order to keep track of current trends in the thematic structure of the overall news coverage as well as to monitor the standing of each respective medium in the ranking of most frequently quoted media.

Those who are responsible for communicating with the public in politics, associations, corporations and NGOs evaluate the usefulness of individual media not just by their ability to produce news reports with the help of pointed questions and newsworthy exclusive interviews. Media outlets also have to be able to market their news. Only then can messages that are intended for specific target audiences surpass the awareness threshold. This effort could also be described as cross-border communication. It allows leaders in politics or business to achieve their goals in public communication with the least necessary amount of effort. Media that facilitate the creation of this value added are rewarded with better access to exclusive information. That creates opportunities for media to distinguish themselves – as long as their editorial independence can be safeguarded. News editors thus have to make sure, more than that the news reports they publish are not only relevant, but are also perceived as such

Chart 1: „Companies/assoziations“ und „Economy“ in reporting of taz



Share of news stories

Source: Media Tenor
02/01/1998 – 06/30/2005

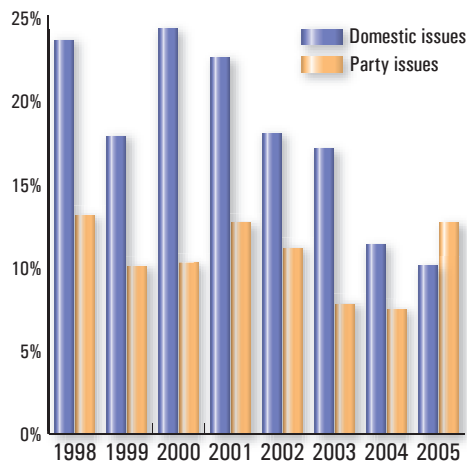
Basis: 20.881 new stories
about those topics

(see MT Nr. 140).

The **tageszeitung** (**taz**) is certainly among the publications whose news stories and original reporting reverberate through the German media landscape on a daily basis and is thus regarded as a highly relevant news outlet by many communications executives. For over 25 years, the **taz** has been representing a part of the German society and has been trying to gain attention with alternative takes on current events. "A central impulse in the founding of the **taz** was a desire for more critical news coverage of the economy, the church, the military and institutional politics. That has not changed in 25 years and will not change in the future," Bascha Mika, editor in chief of the **taz**, wrote in a message to readers of the paper's arch enemy, the tabloid **Bild**, on the occasion of the **taz**'s 25th anniversary on September 27, 2003, when Kai Diekmann, editor in chief of **Bild**, along with others, was in charge of editing the **taz** for one day.

But the impulses that led to the publication of the **taz** in its founding days are not as readily recognizable these days. The transformation of the **taz** into a limited liability corporation not only entailed the consolidation of its finances, but also led to a clearly visible change in its editorial interests, with added emphases on the economy. As **chart 1** shows, the coverage of companies and the economy at large has changed significantly between 1998 and the first half of 2005. An average 18% of all articles since 2000 focused on economic issues, a reflection of socio-economic developments on the **taz**'s editorial choices. In an interview with **MT** in April of 2004, Bascha Mika commented: "We have recognized that public

Chart 2: „Domestic-“ and „Party issues“ in reporting of taz



Share of news stories

Source: Media Tenor
02/01/1998 – 06/30/2005

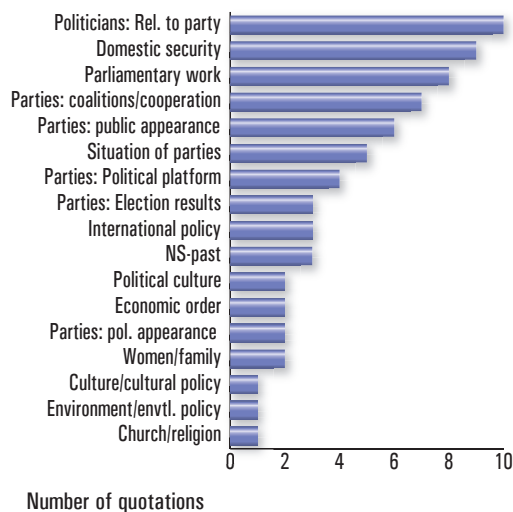
Basis: 23.459 new stories
about those topics

Research Links:
<http://www.taz.de/pt/nf/home>
<http://www.taz.de/pt/etc/nf/ueberuns/ueberuns>

The transformation of the **taz** into a limited liability corporation not only entailed the consolidation of its finances, but also led to a clearly visible change in its editorial interests, with added emphases on the economy.

The taz gained greater attention with party-political issues in 2005. Can the taz be satisfied with that?

Chart 4: Topic structure of quotations of taz in first half year



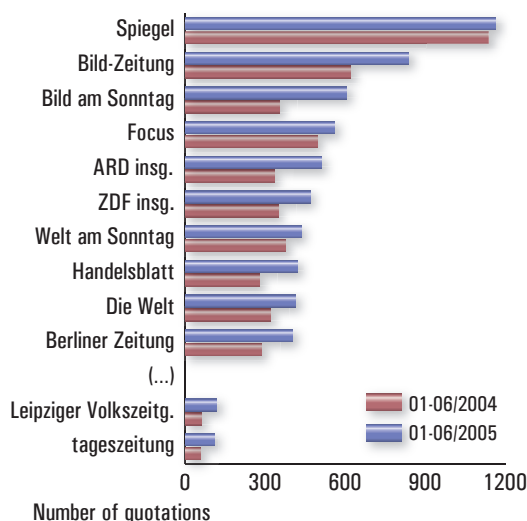
Source: Media Tenor
01/01 - 06/30/2005

Basis: 44.449 quotations over all in 39 media/112 taz

discussion has increasingly turned toward economic developments in recent years and that economic questions have an impact on all areas of society ... the taz is dependent on its ability to change ...”

There are opportunities aplenty for the taz to lastingly distinguish itself from other media, particularly in the coverage of companies – sustainable production methods, environmentally friendly technology, innovation and globalization are just a few of the issues that could help cement the paper’s status as a widely-regarded opinion-leader.

Chart 3: Quotations of taz in first half year 2004 and 2005



Source: Media Tenor
01/01 - 06/30/2004/01/01 - 06/30/2005

Basis: 56.162 quotations over all in 39 media

How can the taz continue to be an essential news source in the future?

Another example for the changes at the taz is the muted presence of domestic politics in its news coverage. Since 2001, increased emphasis on economic issues has relegated issues like legal policy or news on immigration and foreign residents in Germany to the sidelines of the paper’s coverage. For instance, while the government’s policy regarding foreign residents was among the key leftist issues in the taz’s coverage in 2001, its importance in subsequent years has waned. The same goes for environmental issues. The taz certainly continues to be the newspaper with the most consistent focus on the environmental problems of our time, but other media have also increasingly put the environment on the public agenda.

One example: In 1998, other media primarily used the taz as a source for reports on environmental and energy-related news reports. Nuclear energy, in particular, was an issue the taz frequently reported on in the past, generating constant attention for the paper. That has changed in recent years. The share of the taz’s coverage of key issues for Germany’s left, like environmental protection and alternative energy, has been declining. A look at the list of individual issues on which the taz reported and which led to quotes in other media in the first half of 2005 further illustrates those changes (chart 4). Compared to the previous year, original reporting from the taz generated more attention in other media in the first six months of this year (chart 3), and the paper was quoted increasingly by other media, especially by the Welt, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and the Süddeutsche Zeitung. But what were the issues that garnered the most attention? The interview with Joschka Fischer at the end of June generated much attention for the taz’s coverage, particularly with party-political observations – even in media that are usually not wont to make recourse to the taz as an exclusive news source. Only a few of the taz’s original pet peeves are left in the list of the most mentioned issues in quotations of the paper in other media in 2005. The taz will likely face more pressure in the future to continue expanding the breadth of issues it covers in order to gain attention and to reach new audiences.

Basis:

Media: Taz

Time: 02/01/1998 – 06/30/2005

1999: january until april missing, 2001: january until september missing, 2002: january until february missing, all reports in political and economic section related to Germany and Europaen Union