Technology and Text in Journalistic Writing

The electric telegraph was one of the most innovative technologies that shaped press and journalism in the 19th century. It enabled a faster communication of messages, even from great distances. It also induced changes in journalistic news production like the integration of dispatches in the newspapers. Especially the news agencies used this communication tool to organize their work, their cooperation and the news circulation on an international level.

In this project, I focus on the entanglement of the development of news writing and the technological development, as well as on their mutual influence. How does journalistic writing shape the use of technology — and vice versa?

By analyzing the 19th century press I try to better understand some processes of today’s journalism. It is, of course, not appropriate to compare the 19th century telegraph with today’s Internet. But, for example, news agencies in the 19th century started first approaches of live coverage of certain events, what today has become an everyday practice. So, questioning today’s and former journalism allows us to grasp a general understanding of the relation between technology and text in the field of journalism.