
For many decades, content analysis was mainly known in journalism and newspaper studies. In the last decades, an increasing number of media and a corresponding multiplication of media documents have made content analysis one of the most important research methods for the social sciences at large.

Krippendorff’s *Content Analysis* (1980) was for long the primary sourcebook for the history and core principles of content analysis as a research method. Although welcome because of its profound discussion of assumptions, framework and logic of content analysis procedures, this first edition is mostly remembered by my students as an unattractive bundle of rather dense text. In contrast, the revised edition must be praised for its clear organization and readability. Much effort has been made to give the book an attractive layout. Also, although only a handful of substantive paragraphs have been added, the message is brought in twice as many pages (188 pages in the first edition versus 411 in the second edition).

The (same) chapters are now grouped in three main parts. Part I, *Conceptualizing Content Analysis*, starts with an overview of the history of content analysis. In Chapter 2 a definition of content analysis is discussed that gives the method a distinguished place between other methods of social scientific inquiry. Chapter 3 gives an overview of some of the ways in which content analysis has been applied.

The chapters in Part II, *Components of Content Analysis*, outline the procedures used in content analysis. In Chapter 4 designs for content analysis and their procedural logic are discussed. Chapter 5 addresses the units of analysis relevant for content analysis. Chapter 6 is devoted to an overview of the sampling techniques that can be applied. Chapter 7 describes the process of recording and coding, the core process of data-making in content analysis. Chapter 8 and 9 discuss the transformation of raw data with the use of data languages and analytic constructs.

The chapters in Part III, *Analytical Paths and Evaluative Techniques*, are devoted to several practical content analysis procedures. Chapter 10 discusses different statistical techniques that can be applied. Chapter 11 discusses the procedures to evaluate the reliability of the coding process, and Chapter 13 develops a typology of validation efforts that the content analyst may utilize. Strangely enough, Chapter 12 separates the two chapters devoted to methodological evaluation. This chapter is devoted to the use of computers and computational techniques in the research
Krippendorff introduces content analysis as a method designed to study symbolic phenomena. Its most important methodological advantage is its unobtrusiveness: The raw text materials (such as news reports, video clips, graffiti, meeting minutes, police records, television comedies, or billboard advertisements) are produced in everyday social situations, out of any kind of researcher control. In contrast to the participant observer, interviewer, or survey researcher, who has to deal with the reactivity of their method, the content analyst uses natural documents that already exist. Moreover, content analysis processes documents that are produced according to the aims and criteria relevant in these everyday situations. These documents in turn allow the researcher to make inferences to the contexts relevant for their production.

In short, in Part I Krippendorff presents content analysis as a method for systematic inferential research on symbolic materials. In his view, all reading of texts is qualitative (16), but the protocol the analyst has to follow should be systematic. In discussing his analytical perspective on content analysis as a research method, Krippendorff has reformulated and reordered the core concepts of his framework for content analysis. *Data, context, knowledge, target, inference* and *validity* are now reformulated in terms of *texts* (in regard to data, this was also used in quite another sense in the logic: Data-making), *research questions* (instead of...
the ambiguous term target), context, analytical constructs (instead of
knowledge), inferences and validating evidence. In discussing the forms
of content analysis (Chapter 3) he has reformulated some of his inference
models too. The system model for inferences is now termed extrapola-
tions, and the communication model has been reformulated conversa-
tions. These revisions have clearly contributed to the readability of the
text.

Although Krippendorff underlines in his conceptual perspective on
content analysis the interpretive basis of the method, the procedures in
the rest of the book follow the protocols for systematic-quantifying re-
search designs. Qualitative approaches are mentioned (as alternative
ways for exploring texts systematically) but in the elaborations of the
components of the content analysis (logic components), qualitative pro-
cedures are not systematically discussed in terms of an integrative logic.
But the same holds for quantifying procedures: The book gives an over-
view of alternative procedures for sampling, recording and analysis from
an analytic methodological perspective, but does not choose integrative
protocols. The book provides a palette of alternative procedures with
their pros and cons for each component of the research design, but some-
what neglects the coherence between chosen elements in one design.

Perhaps that is why the chapter on the observation instrument (the
coding scheme as basis for each type of content analysis) has been left
out. In order to find relevant data to obtain answers to research ques-
tions, the analyst should translate the conceptual model into observa-
tional terms that fit the document text. In content analysis, operationali-
ization of concepts means the definition of topics, characteristics and
related categories, but also related recording and context units and in-
structions to use units, topics, characteristics and categories. All these
are discussed in the book, but scattered over several chapters (Unitizing,
Recording, Data languages and Analytical constructs). The instrument
itself, the coding scheme, is only discussed in analytical terms. Even in
the practical guide (Chapter 14) the coding scheme as the instrument to
be applied is only discussed in terms of developing categories and record-
ing instructions (such as operational definitions). The practical aspects
of developing and using the coding scheme, its relationship with the
conceptual framework and analytical constructs, are not illustrated. It is
a book for architects, not for builders.

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