



Interpretation and use of Internet weather forecasts

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Calls and e-mails to the Norwegian Meteorological institute indicate that people not always put the same meaning in the forecasts as the meteorologists do. This can be a problem because most people use weather forecasts to make a decision, and if they put too different meaning in the forecasts, they could make bad decisions. Good decision making is necessary for the protection of people's interests, life and property. Beside the quality of the forecast, decision making also depends on how people interpret the weather forecast. Unfortunately, there is limited knowledge about how people interpret the information they get from weather forecasts, and this can hamper good communication.

The aim of this study is to learn more about which interpretations of weather forecasts and uncertainty information that exists, and what information that is used in these interpretations. Understanding how people interpret and use weather information is crucial for later on finding forms of presentation that enhance communication. This study focuses on the web-service yr.no, the Norwegian Meteorological institute's main channel for publishing forecasts to the public, and how these forecasts are communicated, interpreted and used, seen in a user-perspective.

This study has a qualitative research approach, with semi-structured interviews. To get known to many different interpretations, a sample as varied as possible is chosen, with respect to the demographic variables age, education, residence and occupation. Twenty-one persons from three different areas in Norway have been interviewed. When analyzing, meaningful sequences of the transcribed interviews are given codes, and then divided into main and sub categories containing similar codes.

The results show different ways of interpreting and using the information on yr.no. It seems important to have suitable forms of presentation that can help people put the same meaning in a forecast as the publisher. This can help people making good decisions.