

## REFERENCE FOR ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

by

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**Justine Toms** has made significant contributions to the development of the digital industry and academic environment in Bulgaria, particularly in the areas of digital marketing, communications, and new media. Her work combines theoretical research with practical applicability, establishing her as a valuable authority in academic circles. Below is a detailed review of her academic contributions during the last 15 years:

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### 1. Introduction and establishment of "Digital marketing" as an Academic discipline in Bulgaria

- Justine Toms is among the first academic teachers in Bulgaria to introduce courses and programs dedicated to digital marketing and online communications.
- She has developed curricula that integrate contemporary theories and practices, providing students with up-to-date knowledge about the digital transformation of communications and business.

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### 2. Scientific research and publications

- Justine Toms is the author and co-author of numerous scientific articles and studies covering topics such as:
  - The impact of the internet on communication models.
  - The role of content in the digital age.
  - Brand development in the context of the digital environment and social networks.
  - Behavioral aspects of online users.
- Her publications frequently combine empirical research with analysis of global trends, making them valuable for researchers and practitioners alike.
- Among her key contributions are monographs on online content, focusing on corporate blogs, podcasts, and content marketing.
- **In her dissertation**, Justine Toms identifies key features, functional specifics, and development potential of corporate blogs. She outlines trends specific to blogs in the Bulgarian language and references significant works by both Bulgarian and international scholars on corporate communications in the online environment, particularly blogs as a corporate communication tool.

## **The dissertation's main contributions include:**

- **Scientific Contributions:**
    1. A pioneering historical overview of the Bulgarian blogosphere and the evolution of Bulgarian-language blogs.
    2. An analysis of blogs' roles within the corporate online presence ecosystem.
    3. A proposed classification of blogs.
    4. A definition of the structure and content of corporate blogs.
  - **Scientific-Applied Contributions:**
    1. Proposals for good distribution practices and metrics for tracking corporate blog success.
    2. A framework for the essential components of blog posts and blog architecture.
    3. *A Handbook for Corporate Blogging*, outlining the key steps in creating and maintaining a corporate blog.
  - In her monograph "*Podcasts – The Voice of the Internet*," Justine Toms conducts the first in-depth study of the Bulgarian podcasting space. This work includes:
    - A historical overview of the development of podcasts globally and in Bulgaria.
    - A detailed analysis of Bulgarian podcasts from their inception to 2022.
    - Interviews with creators of leading podcasts and communication experts on the role of podcasts in the communication mix.
    - A pioneering survey on user attitudes and expectations for podcast content in Bulgaria.
    - *A Guide to Podcast Creation* accompanying the monograph.
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### **3. Participation in academic conferences and projects**

- Toms regularly participates in national and international (Europe, Asia, Africa) scientific conferences, presenting her research on digital marketing, media, and communications.
  - She is a recognized speaker and moderator of discussions on the development of new media and their societal impact.
  - Justine Toms has been involved in numerous international research projects, including:
    - *EUMEPLAT (2020–2024)*
    - *Information Matters (2022–2024)*
    - *ERUA*, among others.
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### **4. Author of books and educational materials**

- Justine Toms has authored educational resources and guides used in university education, covering key aspects of digital media.
- Her works are written in accessible language, emphasizing the practical application of theoretical concepts.

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## 5. Preparing students for academic and professional careers

- As a lecturer, Toms plays a pivotal role in preparing students for academic careers and professional success. Many of her students have achieved significant accomplishments in digital marketing, media technologies, and business strategies.
- She encourages an interdisciplinary approach to education, inspiring students to integrate knowledge from various fields.

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## 6. Development of the scientific community in Bulgaria

- Justine Toms actively contributes to building a strong community in digital marketing by organizing seminars, workshops, and discussions for knowledge exchange. She is the initiator and organizer of the *BG Site* contests (1998–2015) and the *Site of the Year* competition (2018–present).
- She supports collaborative research between universities and business organizations, fostering integration between academic science and industry practices.

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Justine Toms' academic contributions focus on establishing digital marketing as a scientific discipline, combining theoretical foundations and practical skills. Her research and teaching activities have a significant impact on the development of communication sciences and business education in Bulgaria.