



**Call for papers for the 55<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the German Communication Association (DGPUK) from May 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> 2010 in Ilmenau**

## **Media innovations. How media development changes society's ways of communication**

The term media innovation addresses a number of recent improvements in the media sector. Besides new communication technologies, media innovation includes new financing and business models for media, the involvement of new social groups into the development, production and reception of media products and the formation of a new (global) communication culture. Last but not least, media innovations can be coined by new forms of media content and media design. They cover very diverse areas, have many facets and particularly they have consequences. To describe, explain and predict the social changes triggered by media innovations and analyze the causes and conditions that made them possible is one of the central challenges of media and communication studies.

The conference objective is to structure this broad subject: How is the term innovation defined? Is everything new also recognized as innovative? How are current innovations best described – digitalization, virtualization, individualization? From which perspectives can and shall media innovations be studied? How do these perspectives complement each other? How do results obtained from different scientific perspectives vary? Which research desiderata can be identified?

Furthermore, it must be critically analyzed whether media and communication science approaches and investigates the topic in an adequate mode: Are we too easily fascinated by new developments, losing sight of long-lasting, basic interrelations and fundamental processes of communication? This in turn brings up the questions: Are adequate theories available to explain revolutionary innovations and predict their effects? Or are the current theories only designed for the „normal case“ and at best suited to include an evolutionary change? Do media innovations not consequently necessitate theoretic innovations?

To ensure a diversified discussion of the topic during the conference, we invite you to send us submissions on the following topics:

### **1. Innovations in media production**

Innovations do not only change the media itself, but also the process of media production. What forms of innovation are of importance in the different sectors of media? What effect do these innovations have on the required qualification profile for staff members? How do they affect the costs and the time schedule of production processes? Do the products themselves or the production processes offer more innovation potential for media businesses?

### **2. Economic potential and economic success of media innovations**

Many promising media innovations have failed resoundingly, while seemingly inconspicuous innovations have surprisingly and quickly led to great success. However, a high number of users does not guarantee for economic success. Which factors distinguish the user related potential and the economic potential of a media innovation? Which factors determine the user related success and the economic success? How is a user related success led to an economic success? Are media economic studies prepared and able to answer these questions?

### **3. Challenges of media innovations for journalism**

Journalism is undergoing a period of change. Those who solely cling to traditional journalism do not stand a chance on the recipient market. Weblogs, podcasts, vodcasts, micro-blogs – web innovations and crossmedial methods define the new journalistic media strategy. Which chances and risks do the new communication methods bear and how are they perceived by recipients and senders? Do the altered production requirements and standards of journalistic content production have influence on the quality of journalism? Are the current theories, criteria catalogues and methods of media studies sufficient to adequately study the quality of new journalistic products?

### **4. Media policy for media innovations and the use of media innovations in politics**

The role media plays in the political process is a permanent topic of communication sciences. Again and again, media innovations have inspired studies about the influence of media on the relationship between politics and the public. What is the result of these studies? What do we know today about the role of media innovations in political communication of citizens and institutions?

Media innovations are also subject to political influence and governance – which can hardly keep pace with development in the media sector, however. How does media policy affect the process of media innovation? Does it act repressive, is it meaningless or does media policy lay important ground rules for the social acceptance of innovations?

### **5. Media innovations as milestones of communication history**

Media innovations are often characterized by an ever-changing and contradictory course. Hence, an analysis must always include the social context. This comprises the social and technological factors that laid the ground for the development of the innovation as well as the effect that the use of the innovation has both on the individual and the society as a whole. What course did innovations of the media sector take? What role did the current standing of technology and the social context play? What impact did the implementation of media innovations have? What characterizes successful and failed media innovations of the past? Which theories and models can describe and explain these developments?

### **6. Development and adoption of media innovations concerning gender and diversity aspects**

Gender specific differences of media adoption are taken more and more seriously when developing new media products. But what gender specific traits are associated with media interaction? How are they relevant for the different media innovations? For example, how can the social media gender gap be adequately described and sensibly bridged? What is the percentage of male and female employees

in the different sectors of media business and R&D departments and how can this be explained? Concerning diversity aspects, media innovations offer the chance of increased participation and empowerment, but also create new forms of social exclusion and discrimination. What do we know about the usage, benefits and dangers of different media innovations by and for people with handicaps, migration backgrounds or different sexual orientation?

### **7. Methodical challenges in media innovation studies**

Media innovations influence the methods of researchers, even when the innovation itself is not the object of research. New methods of data acquisition and analysis have become available for archive research, surveys or content analysis during the last few years. Which new data bases (e.g. for analyzing social networks) have become available through media innovations? Which possibilities do new methods of computer based data acquisition and analysis offer? How do new methods influence research results (e.g. of surveys)? Then again, studying innovations demands a critical review of current methods to ensure whether they are suited to analyze communication processes altered by innovations or must be modified themselves. How can the volatility and complexity of digital/mobile communication be adequately observed? What approaches are available to solve the sampling problem of online surveys?

### **8. Change potential through media innovations for PR and organizational communication**

Almost every (technological) media innovation has initiated a debate about the future of strategic organizational communication. Media innovations are of special importance for communication between organizations and their stakeholders (communication management) and the associated chances and risks for the organization's reputation. The question is if this has a relevant effect on organizational communication and which lasting trends can be observed. Have the relationships between the organizational senders and the recipients changed due to media innovations? Which changes occur for PR and communication managers? Which impact on the recipients can be observed (reputation)? Can theories of PR/organizational communication offer valid descriptive and explanatory approaches?

### **9. Media innovations as a challenge for media ethics and media education**

Media innovations have always promoted hopes and wishes, but also fears and worries. They feed utopias as well as dystopias. Media ethics can criticize media innovations, suggest norms for handling media innovations and morally legitimize such norms. But which role do media innovations actually play in debates of media ethics? Which specific contribution can media ethics offer as a normative guideline for dealing with media innovations? Apart from discourse in media ethics, media innovations pose as a real-life challenge for media education: How can media innovations that evoke a critical discussion and worries among parents and teachers be dealt with on an educational level?

### **10. Social and cultural changes through media innovations**

Media innovations are in a complex relationship with social and cultural change. Many media innovations such as cable television, mobile phones and internet have become an inherent part of everyday life. But how can the social role of media innovations be correctly understood? How can social and technological approaches and perspectives be effectively combined in this context? Changes are imaginable for many areas of everyday life: What effect does the increasing shift of social contacts towards the internet have on established social structures? What potential do media innovations, especially in the field of online communication, have on the establishment of new forms of community? What effect does permanent individual availability through mobile communication services have? Are media innovations motors of social change or is social change much rather a precondition for innovations?

## **11. Media innovations: New language? New images?**

New media create new forms of expression and of communication. The text message is only a (prominent) example for this. The authenticity of an image is not only questioned by virtual images in computer games. Images in advertising, images of an electron scanning microscope or profile pictures of social networking sites show the extremely complex nature of images between an idealized fantasy and a more or less realistic picture. Has the iconic turn already occurred or are we in the midst of a steady process of image alteration? What new language and image worlds can we expect in the second decade of this century and which consequences will this have on media communication?

## **12. Users of media innovations**

How is media usage changed by innovations? Are the usage times, usage types, social usage constellations and selection rules changed by media innovations? Are there typical early adopters of media innovations? What characterizes them? Are they different from early adopters of other innovation sectors? Can combining media use and diffusion research help answer these questions? If patterns of innovators and early adopters become apparent: How can such insights assist the development and assessment of media innovations? What effect do multipliers have on the diffusion of media innovations? What consequences does an asynchronous dispersion of media innovations have on society?

## **13. Media innovations in international and intercultural communication**

There is hardly a company that does not operate on international markets; there is hardly a medium that does not need to prove its intercultural competence. The field of international and intercultural communication demands innovations more strongly than ever before. Media plays a major role in this sector, be it an international employee magazine, a binational, multilingual television channel or the use of web based media for public diplomacy. What are the characteristics of these new media? How are they distinguished from nationally and culturally confined media? Is this a new or only an enhanced form of already existing communication methods?

## **14. Innovation communication: How communication accompanies the development of (media) innovations**

Innovation communication is no longer constrained as communication *about* innovations. Communication is increasingly used strategically during the early stages of innovation processes, e.g. as user-innovation-communication that serves to include user expectations. What role does communication play in which stages of innovation processes? How can parallel innovation and communication processes be coordinated? What meaning is assigned to the social web and collaborative media in innovation processes?

## **15. Neglected innovations**

We especially encourage submissions on current topics of media innovation that the conference organizer may have forgotten to mention.

## **Paper submission**

Proposals for papers in the form of extended abstracts (4.000 – 6.000 characters including spaces and references) on the above mentioned aspects of the conference topic are invited to be submitted no later than

**October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

via the online abstract management system that will be online at <http://www.dgpuk2010.de> by September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. There you will also find additional information concerning the online submission process. Questions concerning the review process can be sent to [review@dgpuk2010.de](mailto:review@dgpuk2010.de).

The conference languages are German and English.

### **Open Panels**

Since a few years, so-called „open panels“ are part of the annual conference of the DGPuK. The objective of these “open panels” is to put current research results that are not linked to the conference topic up for discussion. Only complete manuscripts (no abstracts) with a maximum of 40,000 characters (with spaces) are requested for the „open panels“. The final date for submission is February 15, 2010. Details on the submission procedure can be found in the call for papers “open panels”.

### **Local organization**

The conference is organized by the Institute of Media and Communication Science (IfMK), at guidance and responsibility of the departments for

Media Management (Prof. Dr. Andreas Will)  
and

Communication Research/ Political Communication (Prof. Dr. Jens Wolling)

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