

Media Convergence, Mediated Communication, and the Transformation of the Public Sphere

October 21st - 22nd 2003

at the University of Copenhagen,
Njalsgade 120, conference room 23-0-49
2300 Copenhagen

Media convergence follows from the ongoing digitalization of the traditional mass media, all of which are developing additional, interactive modes of communication. For instance, broadcast TV stations develop web sites for online program activities, archiving functions, and extra information; and individual programs are integrated with chat, debate, and other communicative functions. Newspapers, similarly, still appear on paper, but also become available online, including their huge archives of current information. And, beyond the level of individual media, convergence and digitalization appear to promise a much more profound change of the entire communications infrastructure, as symbolized by the internet as a global communication network which supports communities and public spheres across national boundaries as well as other social and cultural divides. Both of these developments - within and across traditional mass media and the internet - may entail altered and potentially more interactive relations between media, citizens, and consumers. At the same time, old social hierarchies die hard. New technologies are never a sufficient condition of social change. Moreover, the concomitant individualization and fragmentation of communicative practices might threaten the public sphere as traditionally understood. Whether or not a public sphere of coherent and sustained debate ever existed, or whether it might rather be an ideal of democratic deliberation, new digital and convergent media will certainly influence the way in which citizens reflect on democracy, community, as well as the public sphere as such in the future, challenging existing forms of both national and global institutions of politics and media.

The aim of this conference is to place the ongoing transformation of communication, community, and the public sphere at the center of attention - with special reference to convergence and digitalization as key features of the new media environment. The contemporary scene may be described, on the one hand, as a move towards a more differentiated and complex public sphere, comprising a plurality of sub-spheres catering to special interests, and resulting in fragmentation which will include only some while excluding others. On the other hand, these very developments may be said to give citizens and their everyday lives pride of place in both politics and mediated communication. In addition, new media and convergence are closely linked to processes of globalization. The challenges to traditional media and to conventional forms of political deliberation arise not just from new media forms, but as much from the emergence of transnational networks of communication and political interaction. Communication in the network society likely will serve to redefine the interrelations between media and media users, between experts and lay persons, between political elites and citizens; networked communication is already transforming the interrelations of the local, the national, and the global. Furthermore, the relation between private and public has changed profoundly with the rise of the mediated, globalized society, in at least two ways: what was former considered private is now exposed widely in the media, and the relation between the public media sector and the private media sector

especially in Europe has changed.

The conference covers general theoretical issues of media convergence and the transformation of the public sphere in the network society; it also presents case studies of current media developments and of the implications of globalization for media and democracy. The conference is organized in three main thematic sessions:

Theme I: Communication, Public Spheres, and Democracy in the Network society, examines basic questions of community and communication, addressing both classical and recent theories of the public sphere and examining the media as conditions of democratic deliberation. This session will give special attention to news and journalism and to the role of the internet for political communication and the public sphere as such.

Theme II: Public Service Media, Media Convergence, and Digitalization explores the future of the European tradition of public service broadcasting in a more competitive, globalized, and digitalized media environment. Within this general theme, the session will cover aspects of media policy, programming strategies, interactive television formats, as well as the role of public service and private media in sustaining democracy and cultural diversity.

Theme III: Globalization, Transnational Communication, and Communities takes up general aspects of globalization and the mediatization of transnational communication, and also addresses concrete issues relating to the challenges of creating a European/global public sphere, and to the potential effects of media as they increasingly embed global events in everyday life.

Participation is free. Registration by e-mail to modinet@hum.ku.dk

Program

Tuesday 21/10

13.00 - 13.15 Conference opening

Theme I

Communication, public spheres and democracy in the Network Society

Keynote I

13.15 - 14.30 Professor John Durham Peters, University of Iowa, USA:

Conversation, Democracy, and Communication Technology

14.30 - 15.00 Coffee break

Panel I

Moderator: Professor Ib Bondebjerg (University of Copenhagen, MODINET)

15.00-15.20 Professor Peter Dahlgren, (Lunds University, CMCE):
The Internet and the Public Sphere: No Quick Fix for Democracy

15.20-15.40 Associate Professor Lars Torpe (Aalborg University, MODINET):
The Internet and local communities

15.40-16.00 Discussion

16.00-16.20 Break

16.20-16.40 Professor Anker Brink Lund (University of Southern Denmark, MODINET):

The News media and the public sphere

16.40-17.00 Professor Jørgen Poulsen (Roskilde University, MODINET):

*The Use of News - The social construction of citizenship and belongingness to society
by consumption of media news*

17.00-17.30 Discussion

Wednesday 22/10

Theme II

Public service Media, Media convergence and Digitalisation

Keynote II

9.00 – 10.15 Dr. Georgina Born, Fellow of Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge

Envisioning Media Futures: Digital Television and Public Service Broadcasting in the UK

10.15 – 10.45 Coffee break

Panel II

Moderator: Associate Professor Niels Ole Finnemann (Aarhus University, MODINET)

10.45-11.05 Associate Professor Henrik Søndergaard (University of Copenhagen, MODINET):

Media Convergence and the Future of Broadcast Media. Public Service in a Digital Media System

11.05-11.25 Professor Frands Mortensen (Aarhus University, MODINET):

Media Politics and Digitalisation

11.25-11.45 Discussion

Theme III

Globalisation and transnational communication and communities

Keynote III

13.00 – 14.15 Professor Roger Silverstone, London School of Economics and
Political Science

Contrapuntal cultures: From minorities to moralities in European media

14.15-14.45 Coffee break

Panel III

Moderator: Professor Klaus Bruhn Jensen (University of Copenhagen, MODINET)

14.45-15.05 Assistant Professor Anders Esmark (Roskilde University, MODINET):
On Europeanization of public spheres

15.05-15.25 Associate Professor Lilie Chouliaraki (Copenhagen Business School,
MODINET):

Media events and globalisation

15.25-15.45 Associate Professor Henrik Bødker (The Aarhus School of Business,
MODINET):

Popular Music and the Internet

15.45-16.15 Discussion