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# Critique, Democracy and Philosophy in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Information Society

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Parallel session 1A title: Tales and Theories of Commodification and Ideology: Informational Capitalism and Capitalist Media Today

**KAARLE NORDENSTRENG**

University of Tampere

**In Search of Historical Roots of the Information Society Concept**

**ABSTRACT:** The concept of information society emerged in the 1970s as part of scholarly visions of post-industrial society (Bell 1973; Masuda 1980). Although the question about the role of knowledge in a national economy already had been articulated in the early 1960s (Machlup 1962), it became a vital issue only in the mid-1970s when computers had expanded so much that both scholars and politicians began to see the rise of a new stage in socio-economic development. At this time international think tanks such as OECD and IIASA ([http://www.iiasa.ac.at/docs/history\\_short.html?sb=3](http://www.iiasa.ac.at/docs/history_short.html?sb=3)) set up projects to analyze computer-telecommunication policies and at the national level policies were shaped to examine "societal information" ("samhällsinformation" in Sweden) and "information systems" ("tietojärjestelmät" in Finland).

With these paradigmatic developments a new disciplinary approach emerged between sociology and communication studies as described by Frank Webster in *Theories of the Information Society* (1995). A boost for this approach came in the 1990s along with an exponential growth of broadband and mobile communication, multimedia, etc. The emerging paradigm was highlighted in Manuel Castells' trilogy *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996-1998).

By the turn of millennium it was obvious that national and regional programs for information society did not always succeed as planned, and the economic "bubble" around new information technologies exploded and was typically followed by a decline of political aspirations around information society. Nevertheless, the emerging paradigm prevailed as the nature of work and people's everyday lives were increasingly facilitated by ubiquitous IT applications. It is symptomatic that in 2006 a book paraphrasing Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom* by Yochai Benkler, became another classic. At the political level, the concept was legitimized by the UN through the World Summit on the Information Society WSIS (2003-05).

The paper will address two questions: (1) How has information society as a concept evolved internationally and in Finland, both in scientific thinking and political discourses? (2) What has been the role of intergovernmental agencies such as OECD and EU in this evolution? Examination of these issues will be done from a critical perspective, questioning the mainstream thinking which typically understands information society as immanently good and inevitable and which suggests that traditional social theory be replaced by a new one based on mediated social relations. The role of intergovernmental structures is examined in the context of transforming capitalism under conditions of rising globalization.

The paper is part of a larger project "Network Society as a Paradigm for Legal and Societal Thinking" (NETSO) sponsored by the Academy of Finland.

**WAYNE HOPE**

Auckland University of Technology

**Time Conflicts and Global Capitalism**

**ABSTRACT:** Understandings of contemporary capitalism in an interconnected world have usually relied upon geo-spatial, cyber-spatial or time-space nomenclatures. Examples include `space of places`/`space of flows`, `time space compression`, `cyber-capitalism`, `virtual capitalism`, `fast capitalism` and `turbo capitalism`. In contrast with these formulations this paper provides a time matrix for an explication of global capitalism. I will argue that this matrix allows us to identify fundamental time conflicts in the operations of global capitalism. These include the time based contradictions of financialisation and financial crisis, the discrepant time worlds of capitalist and worker, the coevally grounded demarcations of socio-economic exclusion and the asynchronicities of capitalism and democracy.

**STEEN NEPPER LARSEN**

Aarhus University

**Critique of Cognitive Capitalism and Compulsory Creativity –  
Studies in the Transformation of Contemporary Society**

**ABSTRACT:** What does contemporary capitalism look like and how can it be conceptualized and criticized? Humans with big flexible brains are quite convenient for capital. Cognitive capitalism, which is a much better term than `information` and/or `network society`, is utmost dependant on many `things`, which immediately seem to be difficult to capitalize without striking a blow. Just to mention a few: life, air, water, ideas, dreams, love, happiness, sunshine, respect, confidence, passion, ethics, will, interaction, compassion, curiosity, empathy, knowledge, beauty, help, events, unpredictable and thinking bodies – and not the least: language and communication. Capital tries to commodify these externalities or to transform them to something that can be recognized within an economically coded horizon and it seeks to reterritorialize what has been deterritorialized and risks slip away from its field of action. The modern enclosure vocabulary deals with copy-right, patents, and different agreements on whether or not it is legal or illegal to try to head-hunt different companies' most important knowledge `workers`. Cognitive capitalism is profoundly dependant on human knowledge and creativity but it primarily views mankind as a potential resource. This human potentiality seems to summon paradise on earth but it has its costs and dark sides.

When creativity gets attuned to the needs of production, the human ability to shape something new gets moved from the playground, the art schools and the educational institutions. Besides, today it is not only the entrepreneur, the leader or the devoted and lonely genius inventor who have to be creative. The expectation is that all of us have to come up with creative solutions and ideas with the speed of light to direct the invisible cognitive, creative and innovative processes to be realized with a visible market effect.

A few years ago creativity was conceived as an anthropological capacity, a renewing force in society, as an integrated part of a successful human self-realization project and a potential for opposition and resistance. Critical thinkers even saw creativity as something to be rescued from capital, market and the state. Today it seems to have become `something` we are destined to fertilize in a life-long perspective. The compulsory creativity gets directly interwoven with neo-liberal steering techniques like evaluation and control procedures. Our creativity, our talents for serendipity and unforeseen decision making, become appreciated assets and strategic commodities. The task is to design and produce material and immaterial goods to honour the insatiable demand for new

products, experiences and entertainment. The creative outcome can be baptized as customized thought-items e.g. as media products.

Earlier creativity was conceived like an external factor. Now creativity has moved up front where it plays the role like the first priming composition of the feed chain in the accumulation process. In the rich and spoiled part of the Western hemisphere it is hard to question the 'logic' that either we live on creativity or we die. Can creativity be 'rescued' in intellectu and not the least in re?

## **MARISOL SANDOVAL**

Unified Theory of Information Research Group

### **Corporate Social (Ir)Responsibility and the Challenge of Capitalist Media**

**ABSTRACT:** In recent years both management scholars and practitioners have increasingly celebrated the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Some of them see it as way to improve corporate reputation and to create competitive advantages, others believe in a reconciliation of profit goals and social responsibilities and the possibility of a more sustainable capitalism. Some critical scholars have pointed out that the idea of social responsibility has been hijacked by corporate interests and been used as a corporate strategy for averting criticism and hiding irresponsible business practices. Critics argue that CSR rather is about changing corporate rhetoric than changing actual business practices.

Against the background of these celebratory and dismissive assessments of CSR, this paper takes a critical look on CSR in the media and communication industry. The aim is to further investigate the tension between CSR rhetoric and practices and to discuss prospects and limits of the concept of CSR for dealing with pressing socio-economic, cultural, political, ecological and technological challenges for media and communication in the 21st century. The analysis is based on a critical political economy approach that views media and communication in its societal context and tries to identify repressive and emancipatory aspect as well realities and potentialities of media and communication in society.

In order to investigate tensions between CSR rhetoric and CSR practices, a critical content analysis was used that examined differences between corporate self-descriptions of media companies and descriptions by others. The material of analysis were the CSR reports of eight leading media communication companies on the one hand, and corporate watchdog reports about these companies on the other hand. The companies under study were the worldwide largest companies in the media content sector (Walt Disney, Vivendi and News Corp), the telecommunication sector (AT&T), the hardware sector (Apple and HP), the software sector (Microsoft) and the online media sector (Google). The content of all CSR reports of these companies that were available online was analyzed and compared to criticism raised by corporate watchdogs such as CorpWatch, SACOM, Corporate Accountability International, Multinational Monitor, Human Rights Watch, Free Press, Media Watch, Privacy International, makeITfair, Google Watch, Center for Media and Democracy's PR Watch, Transnational Corporate Observatory, etc.

Based on this analysis of corporate self-description and critical counter-assessments, six areas were identified in which contradictions between the "corporate" and the "social" arise in the media and communication sector. These particular challenges concern the 1) creation of a commodified culture vs. the spread of cultural commons, 2) the surveillance of users vs. the protection of privacy, 3) the enforcement of access restrictions vs. the support of open and equal access, 4) the promotion of consumerist ideologies vs. the creation of critical media content, 5) the rise precarious vs. the possibility self-managed knowledge labor, 6) and the threat of eWaste vs. the prospects of a green IT.

In this paper I argue that these eight areas show how media and communication capital accumulation models collide with an open, secure, participatory, critical, just, and sustainable media

and communication system. This creates fundamental challenges for the concept of CSR and at the same time for the corporate media model. Instead of abandoning CSR from a critical agenda, I thus suggest using its popularity for creating attention for corporate social irresponsibilities, for putting pressure on companies by targeting their image, and for stressing the importance of developing alternatives models of media organization that allow to realize the full potentials of a commons-based media and communication culture that protects privacy, enables participation an open access, realizes the benefits of self-managed knowledge work, allows media to fulfill their role of critical watchdog in society, and promotes technological development that meets criteria of ecological sustainability.

**ASTRID MAGER**

Austrian Academy of Sciences

### **Defining Algorithmic Ideology: Using Ideology Theories to Understand and Critique Corporate Search Engines**

**ABSTRACT:** Corporate Internet technologies like Google, Facebook and co. have been described as mirroring the "Californian Ideology". Google, in particular, has been interpreted as a paradigmatic example of a company deeply rooted in the economic culture of Silicon Valley with a strong belief in information technology and the free market. While the concept of the Californian ideology helps to understand this newly arising techno-fundamental business culture, it fails to critique corporate search engines and their capitalist ideology. Big, universal search engines should not merely be seen as technical solutions for societal problems, as they often are – most importantly by Google itself – but rather as incorporating a "new spirit of capitalism" (Boltanski and Chiapello 2007) and exploitation schemes that come along with it. Previously, I coined the term "algorithmic ideology" to show how the new capitalist spirit gets inscribed in search engines by way of social practices.

In this paper I aim to define the term algorithmic ideology. Drawing on critical theory I argue that ideology could be a valuable tool to understand and critique the commercial dimension of search algorithms and their power in contemporary society. Following Althusser (1971), for example, I exemplify how the capitalist ideology gets materialized in corporate search engines and algorithmic business models. Through their algorithms corporations like Google exert their power, indoctrinate users, and create desire. By providing their services for free (and collecting user data instead) they extend their hegemony (Gramsci 1971) by attracting and integrating users in their "capital accumulation cycle" (Marx 1867, see also Fuchs 2011). In turn, user communities may be seen as (unconsciously) practicing and stabilizing the capitalist ideology by incorporating search services in their daily online routines and turning to Google & co. for advertising and consumer purposes. This way the "culture industry" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1969) and its ideological superstructure are inscribed in, transformed, and spread through supposedly neutral search algorithms.

This analysis points out how ideology theories could be used to develop a notion of algorithmic ideology encompassing materiality, institutions, and practices anchoring and reproducing contemporary capitalism. Instead of a mere belief in technology and global business, algorithmic ideology should function as an analytical framework to analyze and critique corporate search engines and the social order they perpetuate. Only when understanding how present-day search engines further global capitalism resistance and strategies for achieving alternative algorithms for a mores sustainable and democratic information society could be developed in the future. Whether a "radical repoliticization of the economy" (Žižek 1999) may be a first step into this direction and what role the state could/ should play in this undertaking will be finally discussed.

**The Alienated Labour of Academic Publishing: A Modest Proposal to Reclaim the Information Commons**

**ABSTRACT: Purpose and Main Questions of the Paper:** My intent with this paper is to interrogate and situate theoretically from a Marxist perspective various aspects and tensions that inhere in the contemporary academic journal publishing environment. As per the call, I propose to examine both the expanding capitalist control of the academic publishing industry and some of the efforts being made by those seeking to resist and subvert the capitalist model of academic publishing.

The questions that will drive the substantive focus of the paper are as follows:

1. What is the current structure of the academic publishing industry?
2. What conceptual tools does Marx provide that can help us account for the contemporary situation in respect of academic publishing?
3. What efforts have been made by various groups to resist the dominant capitalist model in the academic publishing industry?
4. What suggestions might be offered in support of attempts to actively subvert capital's control of academic publishing?

**Description of the Plan to Respond to the Posed Questions:** I suggest that we can conceptualize the responses to the questions driving this paper by returning to Marx's elaboration of 'primitive accumulation' and 'alienation'. Although not a completely novel conceptual application, I intend to employ primitive accumulation as a theoretical register for apprehending contemporary erosions of the knowledge commons through the enclosure effects that follow in the wake of industry consolidation and stringent application of copyright protection. The elements of alienation Marx articulated in respect of capitalist-controlled production processes offer a theoretical complement to the notion of primitive accumulation. Aside from demonstrating the continued relevance of the concept of alienation, part of my purpose with this discussion will be to advance the case that despite a relatively privileged position vis-à-vis other workers (albeit one increasingly under attack), academic cognitive labourers are caught up within and subject to the constraining and exploitative practices of capitalist accumulation processes.

**Relevance of the Proposed Topic to the Call for Proposals:** Similar to other branches within the media industry, academic journal publishing has witnessed a significant wave of consolidation over the last couple of decades. The consequent result is a market dominated by a handful of oligopolistic mega-publishers that wield an inordinate amount of power, as made manifest most prominently in skyrocketing journal subscription costs and a drastic lockdown of content through strict application of copyright protections. While these effects have been widely discussed, particularly among library and information studies and communication and media studies scholars and practitioners, less work has thus far been conducted in trying to conceptualize and account theoretically for these industry developments and their impacts. Even less prevalent in the existing literature is any systematic attempt to interrogate these issues from the micro level of the actual producers of academic journal articles. Finally, the paper proposes to interrogate the resistance being mounted to capitalist control and suggest a model that might further subvert this control. With an emphasis here on open access and online publishing/dissemination, this aspect of the paper is particularly relevant to the general theme of the conference.

Parallel session 1B title: A Thousand Foucaults? A Thousand Deleuzes? Foucauldian and Deleuzian Perspectives on Social Media and Technology

**NICOLE BEDFORD**

Queen's University

**With Eyes Wide Open: Applying Foucault's Theory of the Panopticon to Social Network Sites**

**ABSTRACT:** The Internet has become a popular tool used by the general public for activities ranging from simple data-gathering to online banking. With the potential for users to transmit an unlimited array of information electronically, and the capability of this electronic information to be collected, replicated, and stored with ease, the Internet now provides those in positions of power, such as governments, corporations, and marketers, with a comprehensive tool for keeping a watchful eye on the activities of the general populace. Social Network Sites (SNSs) in particular have become increasingly popular virtual spaces where these power-holders can keep users under surveillance, collecting information about users in order to predict and, arguably, even control their behaviours. Though facilitated via modern electronic technologies, this idea of continual data collection and surveillance seems to strike a chord of familiarity: that of Michel Foucault's theory of the panopticon.

This paper will seek to determine if Foucault's theory of the panopticon can be applied to SNSs. The paper will begin by briefly outlining both Foucault's theory of the panopticon and the current definition of SNSs being used by theorists today. The paper will attempt to apply the theory of the panopticon to the SNS known as Facebook to understand how SNSs make use of both hierarchical and participatory surveillance as a means of regulating and maintaining the inherent power structures within these sites. The paper will then address critiques of the application of the theory of the panopticon to SNSs and will conclude with a discussion of the impact that living under a panoptic system (SNSs) has had on society's concept of privacy.

In a society where extreme surveillance is increasingly becoming the norm, as demonstrated by the fact that the Lawful Access Act currently being addressed in Canadian Parliament can even be tabled, Foucault's theory of the panopticon provides us with a tool to critically assess and unveil the power structures that allow those in positions of power to manipulate public notions of privacy and to foster ideologies that pit SNS users against each other instead of against those in power. In applying the theory of the panopticon to SNSs, we become aware of these coercive structures, allowing us to begin to question them and to formulate the means by which we can conceive of new ways to protect our privacy and our rights within this surveillance society.community.

**CARLOS BARRENECHE**

University of Westminster

**The Grammatization of Social Space: Locative Media and the Biopolitical City**

**ABSTRACT:** Historically, geographic information technologies have served a biopolitical function producing knowledge for the control of populations. In their Web 2.0 version, location-enabled services (e.g. Foursquare, Google Places, Facebook Places, etc.) track and aggregate beliefs and

desires (Tarde) (opinions, attitudes, and emotional states in the form of users' reviews, comments, ratings, check-ins, etc.) associated to places through the practice of geocoding information. This way, platforms build rich databases (location/place/venue/POIs databases) facilitated by user-generated geocoded content.

Along with personalization, location is playing a key role in determining the information that we encounter and the places we visit. Thus, a critical examination of location in networked communication is important as it holds considerable implications for shaping information flows and changing spatial practices. Moreover, location-based services is one of the fastest growing technology sectors nowadays. It is pertinent to ask what are the business models that underpin these socio-technical systems? And what are the techniques of capture of surplus value at play?

A critical account is developed in order to understand what is the spatial ordering embedded in these location-enabled platforms, as well as how subjects are located -or better locate themselves- for the purpose of economic government. That is, the tracking and modulation of material flows of people to maximize consumption: ranging from geotargeted advertising and locative marketing to the gamification of spatial consumption practices.

I will argue that the possibility of tying information, people and objects to location through coding (geocoding) sets the conditions for a generalized grammatization (Stiegler) of social space that enables new forms of governmentality (as understood by Foucault as environmentality). This paper will examine therefore how location-enabled socio-technical systems mediate social space and what power relations structure this mediation. The goal is to interrogate the material and economic dimension of the ongoing annotation of the world and its organization in location databases. This examination is deployed in two basic levels: a) an operational level: looking at how location platforms work to articulate users and third parties' information based on specific algorithmic logics in the automatic production of social spaces; b) a political economy level: looking at how location-based services produce economic value out of users' digital labour, and the articulation of this mode of production with the political economy of cities. In order to achieve these goals the paper will engage with a critical review of algorithm patents documentation and the analysis of datasets of geocoded media sampled from three of the main location platforms (Foursquare, Google Places, and Flickr).

The paper will conclude arguing that current location platforms constitute a form of grammatization of social space that could be understood as geodemographic classification systems based not on where people live (residential location) but on how people communicate places (that is to say, share information about locations or share location information). And it will show how such geodemographic spatial orderings may impose particular regimes of visibility and governmentality on the experience of the city.

**JAKOB SVENSSON**

Karlstad University

### **Disciplining Visibility among Activists in Southern Stockholm**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper seeks to understand relations of power connected to the increasing negotiation of visibility within a middle-class activist community in southern Stockholm using social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Ning and a blog) in tandem with offline participation, fighting among other things to save their bathhouse or to preserve green areas and playgrounds. The method for studying this group is both ethno- and netnographic, through participant observations and interviews online and offline.

The theoretical framework is based on theories of visibility and power. Following Foucault, visibility and power have always been connected but in different ways across times. Whereas in an-

tiquity the visibility of the few to the many was connected to power, in modernity being watched was connected to a subordinate position of being disciplined by a subtle normalizing power of the gaze (in schools, armies, hospitals, penal institutions et cetera). Today we are participating in this disciplining by free will online in order to secure a place on the social arena. It is not at all obvious whether being watched in the context of social media is exercising power or being subordinate to it. It all depends on how skilfully the user navigates these new social media networks and manages his or hers databases of "friends" and connections. Foucault's discussions of power and visibility can be applied remarkably well in digital arenas. According to Foucault, the individuals over whom power is exercised are those from whom the knowledge they themselves produce is extracted and used in order to control them. This foucauldian side of social media visibility, as surveillance and control represent, has extra weight in activist communities, often defined in opposition to the state and the police.

The argument put forward in this paper is that a kind of network logic disciplines the activists to negotiate visibility online and to maintain and extend their activist network by continuous and reflexive updating in order to secure a position within the community. Hence activists today need to master a new form of sociability, through database and "friend" management on different social media networks. Relations of power in this network logic are manifested in the constant monitoring/ supervision and negotiation of both oneself and others' visibility, all encompassed in the practice of updating.

**KATARINA GIRITLI NYGREN and KATARINA LINDBLAD GIDLUND**

Mid Sweden University

### **The Pastoral Power of Technology**

**ABSTRACT:** Purpose and main questions of the paper: The purpose of this paper is to bring 'the fourth face of power', Foucault's (1988) concept of pastoral power, into play in order to capture a dialectical understanding of alienation in digital culture. Pastoral power, not as displacing other conceptions of power but as providing another level of analysis involved in the forging of reasonable responsible subjects willing and able to sustain the other conceptions of power. We will draw particularly on the early writings of Marx (Marx 1963, 1986) and the more recent poststructuralist developments concerning hegemony and superstructure in relation to technology. Technology is as such analysed in terms of repercussions of 'design of the machine' in industrial technological contexts and 'design of digital culture' in digital technological contexts. Pastoral power, not only directs our focus to the making of technologies but also to the making of individuals capable of taking on the responsibilities of technologies. This means that it is necessary to take on the notion of effective power of ideologies and their material reality.

Description of the way taken for answering the posed question: One of the most important implications of working in a critical tradition is resting on a basic notion that the human production of knowledge is a practical concrete activity. It takes place in a social context and in a given historical situation. This gives that our main arguments are found in early Marxism or perhaps more precisely in the historical materialism (see e.g. Marx 1986, Horkheimer & Adorno 1981). The most basic of such historical views concerns the relationship between base and superstructure and on a dialectical analysis in between the two. Together they illustrate societal formations as two layers, where the base illustrates the basic economic structure and the superstructure illustrates the legal and political apparatus and the formation of the characteristic forms of (false?) consciousness (Marx and Engels 1976). Moreover, the epistemological implications signify that knowledge cannot be described as an independent phenomenon, but must be considered in connection with the base. In relation to design of technologies this gives that the analysis travels between an analysis of the base as an excessively Tayloristic design of automation and of the su-

perstructure as a cultural ideology production of marketisation and consumerism.

The proposed point of departure in this article is to exceed the attempts of capturing the ontology of technology, in terms of what technology might be and might attain, and instead focus on 'technology in becoming' and its manifestations i.e. the epistemology of technology. How technology is intertwined with political prescriptions, power and knowledge and embedded in socio-cultural practices (see e.g. Williams 1990). Socio-cultural practices as the institutional and organisational circumstances in which technology in becoming is situated. In order to do so we call for research which do not take digital technology (IT, ICT, "e" etc.) for granted, methodologies that situate these artifacts in a technological discourse as well as in the practices of everyday life. Since Information Society, like all kinds of societal transformations in history, is multidimensional, involving technological, economic, social, cultural and political change, it is necessary to analyze the strong image of information technology in relation to discourses of modernity. And, adding false consciousnesses as a lens for understanding our willingness of becoming enthusiastic subjects sustaining power structures.

Main expected outcomes and new insights of the paper: We want to propose an analytical approach that gives opportunity to analyse moral deflections of digital technologies' influence as ideology or norm. Thus contributing to the understanding of not only technology in becoming and its manifestations but also provides tools for analysing if it strengthens or counteracts the established practices. By dialectical analyses of digital technologies as both automation and marketisation in relation to base and superstructure we aim at enhancing the understanding of some of the externalisations of alienation in both levels of analysis. Alienation both in terms of production and consumerism: automation in forms of production exponentially enabled by digital technologies and, commercially generated meaning and external satisfaction enabled by digital culture attenuating inner cohesion (Thorpe, 2007; Ewen, 1988; Layard, 2002). As such, digital technologies reinforce the pastoral power of technology.

Relevance of the topic in relation to Cfp: The opaqueness of digital technologies in Information Society today calls for deepened understandings of alienation, commodification and capitalism analyzing and criticising the uniqueness of 'the digital'. Here Marxist theories and concepts are exceptionally well placed, especially in order to unveil cultural production in relation to marketisation.

An emphasized focus on the unique opaqueness of the digital asks for questions on:

1. situated meanings and activities, firmly in the context of their use, in order to illuminate how this works in people's everyday lives.
2. the meaning of 'the digital' as a process constituted in everyday practices, to explore the meanings and activities of contemporary regimes of power.
3. 'the digital' as a construct of social practice and not as a transparent or objective 'reality', to study the ways in which different power regimes structure the technological development.
4. the interplay between subjective and objective historical processes within which the specific forms of a superstructure, cultural, political and ideological have a relatively autonomous existence

Contribution to the engagement with Marx's work and to Marxian inspired Media and Communication studies: Drawing on Marx, and particularly his notion on the benefits of thinking dialectical we aim to discuss technology as operating in structures of thinking and actions that often seems to be devoid of power relations in the digital era. A juxtaposition that reveals a conception of power that claims to be both descriptive and critical of the norms governing social and political practices. According to some of his followers the modern era (like other eras) is marked by an all-encompassing social practice (see for example Hall, Bocoock & Thompson 1992). All the phenomena that are characteristic for this era are designed either to strengthen or to counteract this practice. Our main contribution to the field of Marxian inspired Media and Communication studies are a proposed rethinking of technology in digital cultures.

**HELGA SADOWSKI**

Linköping University

### **De- and Reterritorialization Processes Online**

**ABSTRACT:** Although power structures prevalent in the internet can be described as centering on the pillars of technology, market laws, state regulation and uses (cf. Massit-Folléa/ Méadel / Monnoyer-Smith, 2012), these normalizing factors are seldom realized as such by most users; to many, the internet seems plainly disorganized and non-graspable in its complexity and fluidity. This might be the reason why astonishingly many metaphors describe aspects of the internet in terms of fluidity and flows, in oceanic, nautical or hydrological terms: we have to steer towards ports in order to surf the net, where we stream videos and where pirates download torrent files, to only name a few examples.

In this context it is interesting to consider that land is, as Deleuze and Guattari wrote in a *Thousand Plateaus* (1987), a notched space. The ocean, on the other hand, is a smooth space, without demarcations, clear permanent paths or landmarks. In this take, the internet-ocean can be understood in the terms of a deterritorialization process, which does away with previous orders and codes and has the potential of opening up new worlds and of creating new possibilities for the deployment of human bodies, thoughts and feelings.

What Deleuze and Guattari describe as reterritorialization, on the other hand, can be understood as a simultaneous blocking of these possibilities by dominant forces; while these processes, in the case of the internet, occur on institutional levels (mentioned as 'pillars' of control above), I wish to argue that also exclusionary practices as we see them in manifold virtual communities or online platforms, alongside the axes of gender, race, class, ethnicity, location, and so on.

In my presentation I wish to address the questions what theories might be useful for studying the internet, social media and the web 2.0 and evaluate and point out the advantages of understanding current power structures in the framework of reterritorialization, as a critical methodology. The goal is not only to make visible the embedding of these structures in the capitalist system but to also find ways of discussing intersectional discriminations and exclusions of certain groups that transgress pure 'symptom descriptions' and enable to look at the 'bigger picture' instead.

**THOMAS POELL**

University of Amsterdam

### **A Critique of Social Media Activism: From Tools to Assemblages**

**ABSTRACT:** Today's activists increasingly use social media, from Facebook to Twitter to YouTube. So far, the research on this topic has mostly focused on the question whether these media primarily constitute emancipatory tools, which allow activists to communicate and organize more effectively, or tools of surveillance, which help authorities to track activist communication and mobilization (Castells 2009; Joyce 2010; Morozov 2011; Rheingold 2001; Shirky 2008). Criticizing the conceptualization of social media as tools, this paper rather understands these media as socio-technical assemblages, in which technological architectures, user practices, business models, and political contexts define each other in complex ways. As such, social media are not simply instruments in the hands of either activists or authorities, instead these media actively shape the form and content of contemporary activism, and they do so in highly problematic ways.

Developing this critique, the paper builds on three bodies of literature. First, it draws from recent political economic and software studies research on social media (Andrejevic 2009, 2010; Berry 2011, Cheney-Lippold 2011; Fuchs et al. 2011; Pasquinelli 2010; Van Dijck 2009). This re-

search shows how the business models of social platforms, mostly based on targeted advertising, inform the codes and algorithms constituting these platforms, which, in turn, steer and format user activities and identities. Second, the paper builds on a variety of empirical studies on social media activism, ranging from protests against the G20 summits to the revolts in North Africa and the Middle East (Bennett & Segerberg 2011; Joyce 2010; Langlois et al. 2009; Lotan et al. 2011; Poell & Borra 2011; Segerberg & Bennett 2011). Finally, the paper uses insights from a variety of studies on previous forms of mediated activism and alternative media, to understand the relationship between activism and social media from a larger historical perspective (Arquilla & Ronfeldt 2001; Atton 2002; Atton & Hamilton 2008; Duncombe 1997; Downing 1984; Harcup 1994, 1998; O'Sullivan 1994; Van Donk et al. 2004)

On the basis of these bodies of literature, it will be argued that the growing use of social media in contemporary protests effectively entails that activists, in comparison to previous forms of mediated activism, have progressively less control over the technological architecture of the platforms on which they interact, as well as over the data produced through these interactions. Furthermore, since most popular social media are designed to personalize user activity and communication, it also means that activism is becoming more individualized, directly contradicting the traditional activist objective of building and fostering alternative communities that give subordinated political groups the opportunity to develop their own values, interests, and perspectives. Finally, as social media facilitate real-time interaction, the use of these media greatly speeds up activist communication, which is increasingly geared towards establishing the 'who', 'what' 'where', and 'when' of protest events. This empiricist tendency, which very much reflects mainstream reporting practices, clashes with the historical ideal of activist media, as spaces where different points of view can be expressed, and larger social and political issues can be discussed.

Parallel session 1C title: Digital Culture and the Digital Everyday: Whole Way of Life. Whole Way of Struggles?

**MARCUS BREEN**

Bond University

### **Privatism – The Internet’s New Social Relations**

**ABSTRACT:** The history of the internet can be set against a background of optimistic enthusiasm for cooperative action based on theories of the virtual community. Interconnectivity has been offered as a term by key communication studies scholars such as Denis McQuail, with which to explain the benefits of virtuality. Similar enthusiasms have more recently emerged in discussions about the digital humanities, for example in Kathleen Fitzpatrick’s *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology and the Future of the Academy*. Against these kinds of enthusiasms, few debates have emerged about the social aloneness of the individual in relation with his or her terminal and the unregulated content therein. This paper will use the term *privatism* to address some of these issues. This term was introduced by the author to explore “proletarianization” in *Uprising: The Internet’s Unintended Consequences*. This paper elaborates on that work. *Privatism* at the monitor space is the result of the personalization of internet engagement. The spatial characteristics of the individual’s relationship with electronic devices enable *privatism* to grow in intensity with new iterations of personalized internet applications. Moral panics about bullying on Facebook will be used as an example of *privatism* and its social aspects. Furthermore, personalization of the virtual reinforces the theory of *privatism* as the core ideology of the internet. This paper will consider how *privatism* is constructed within personalization, to investigate if a limited system of social relations is being constructed. Eli Pariser’s recent book *The Filter Bubble* will also be a reference for concerns about how personalization reinforces *privatism* to challenge theories of community.

**NATALIA GRINCHEVA**

Concordia University

### **The Online Museum: A ‘Placeless’ Space of the ‘Civic Laboratory’**

**ABSTRACT:** In the framework of this study, I want to compare the traditional museum visitor research methodologies with the methods for data collection and analyses utilized in museum online environments.

The paper will demonstrate that the historical development of online museum audience research has gone through methodological stages similar to those that have been passed through in traditional visitor research. This methodological advance started with simple quantification of visitors’ characteristics and progressed to complex ethnographic observations that aim at analyzing and interpreting visitors’ behavior in their interactions with objects in a museum setting, as well as with each other. This draws an analogy with the evolution of the online audience research that opened with web statistics analytics and has developed to a more comprehensive analysis of online audience engagement with virtual museum content.

The analysis of museums’ online visitor engagement will be grounded in such methodologies as cyber-ethnography/netnography and social network analysis. The paper will explore these online

methods through the analysis of their advantages and disadvantages in relation to specific tasks crucial for museum online audience research. Such a theoretical exploration of these methods will expose not only their limitations and highlight their boundaries, but also will investigate and question the role and position of a researcher conducting studies in the online environment. The paper will include several sections, each of them investigating a particular set of measures for assessing online audience engagement.

Drawing on theories across museum studies (Bennett 1999-2005), visitor research (Hooper-Greenhill 1998-2006), social network paradigms (Leinhardt 1997), and cyber-ethnography (Hine 2000, Kozinets 2010) this paper will seek to develop a comprehensive methodological framework of online audience research within a museum context.

**ISTO HUVILA**

Uppsala University

**Broadcastyourself'ism, Collectivistic Knowledge Production and the Vita Activa  
in the Age of the Social Media**

**ABSTRACT:** Broadcastyourself'ism, collectivistic knowledge production and the vita activa in the age of the social mediaThe information society and social media scholarship has produced and discussed a broad array of conceptualisations of the emerging modes of participation in the participatory and individualistic economies of knowledge production in the context of the social web. Many of the popular characterisations from the Tofflerian presumption to the produsage of Alex Bruns underline the primacy of the convergence of production and receptive engagement. The critical remark of Ike Picone from 2011 on the principal emphasis of information production in the discussion on produsage highlights the often relatively narrow scope of the debate on the conceptualisations and their implications applies especially in the context of the information science research of social media. The proposed presentation discusses the applicability of Hannah Arendt's concept of vita activa and the three modes of activities, human beings as animal laborans, homo faber and homo politicus in the spectrum of individualistic and collective modes of engagement in the context of social media. The focus of the discussion is in a hermeneutic analysis of how the three categories of human activity and the human condition can be used to explain the underpinnings of the practices of seeking, using and producing information in social media and their clash with the rationalistic ideas of information literacy, quality of information, information service and proper management of information. The presentation draws on empirical research in the context of Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, the photo-sharing site Flickr, the discontinued chat-service Google Lively and the virtual world of Second Life. The studies shed light on how individuals engage in individualistic and collectivistic production and use of knowledge and information and how the different aspects of participation are interlinked to the three types of human activities proposed by Arendt. The results of the empirical studies of the particular social media services show that the dialectic of individualistic and collectivistic modes of information activities can be described as a dichotomy of 'broadcastyourself'ism' and 'collective knowledge production', a form of 'virtual' talko work. The dialectics of the two intertwined modes of knowledge production and their relation to the idea of agonistic individualism of Arendt (as discussed in the Human Condition) help to understand how our patterns information production, seeking and use in the context of social media are closely related to our engagement in labour, work and political activity.

## **ATHANASIA DAPHNE DRAGONA**

University of Athens

### **Counting Virtuosity. Forms of Power and Counterpower in the Gamespace of Web 2.0**

**ABSTRACT:** "If the entirety of post-Fordist labor is productive (of surplus-value) labor precisely because it functions in a political-virtuosic manner, then the question to ask is this: what is the score which the virtuosos-workers perform? What is the script of their linguistic-communicative performances?" (Paolo Virno, *Grammar of the Multitude*)

Discussing labour in the post-fordist era, Virno highlights one of its distinctive features. Once work became immaterial and affective, it stopped being measurable; its performativity could not be quantified anymore. Based on skills and aptitudes, creativity and communication, work expanded to everyday life, embracing it and capturing it at the same time. The social networking sites of our era seem to constitute a great example of study in this frame context. Empowered by users' potentiality to establish and develop social relationships, they have come to consist fertile territories for affective-based production and value extraction. Encouraging and hosting the communicative performances of the online multitude, not only do they offer a new ground for immaterial labour, but they also succeed in rendering production again calculable in an unexpected way.

Scores of friends, countings of likes, numbers of check ins are only some of the new units of measurement presenting users' likeability, sociability and mobility at the pages of the popular social networking sites. Behind them is the strategy of gamification, the integration of game mechanics and dynamics in these online –non game- environments. By taking into consideration users' apt for competition, and triggering them with challenges and rewards, which might be direct -like a badge-, or indirect -like peers' recognition-, users' participation and interaction is significantly augmented. A new form of wealth is thus created based on the accumulation of social capital and on its openness for further process and exploitation. Advertising companies, employment networks or government services, are only some of the usual receivers of data aggregation. The process is already well established and well known, yet the urge becomes more and more clear: Is there a way out or have we reached an impasse? If non-participation is not an option for the networked world, then which are the skills, tools and methods that might be useful for a better understanding and restructuring of the power in the social networking sites?

The proposed presentation will aim to critically examine issues related to networked labour, productivity and exploitation, addressing them through the scope of games studies and play theory. Looking into the core elements of the market-oriented phenomenon of gamification as well as into the expansion of what Julian Kücklich framed as playbour, it will argue that what is at stake today is the relationship of work to play. The presentation will propose not only the use of game studies and play theory literature as a method to examine users' motivation and interaction within social networking sites; it will also support that it is from play's abundance that forms of counterpower emerge and opposition to the asymmetrical power of the networks becomes possible.

**Acknowledgment:** This research has been co-financed by the European Union (European Social Fund – ESF) and Greek national funds through the Operational Program "Education and Lifelong Learning" of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) - Research Funding Program: Heracleitus II. Investing in knowledge society through the European Social Fund.

**CATHERINE BURWELL**

University of Calgary

### **Contesting Participation: Youth, Social Media and the Limits of Participatory Culture**

**ABSTRACT:** The concept of participatory culture has become an important tool for analyzing young people's online activities. First coined by Henry Jenkins (1992) to describe fans' use of popular culture, it has since reappeared in Jenkins' more recent work on media education. In his influential report *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*, Jenkins argues that youth are already engaged in participatory cultures, and that these cultures have significant benefits – such as the diversification of creative expression and an empowering conception of citizenship – that should be included within formal education.

Such an interpretation of participatory culture draws on current discourses that associate participation with democracy, freedom, and self-expression. Yet as political theorist Carol Pateman (1970) reminds us, participation is a contingent term whose conceptual instability is tied to struggles over the distribution of power. Participation, it seems, can be used to uphold dominant ideologies as easily as it can liberate. Certainly this is evident in social media, where the past few years have seen the emergence of a set of corporate digital practices that constitute the commodification of participation. These include the takeover of a number of participatory child- and youth-oriented sites by large media corporations, including Google's purchase of YouTube and Viacom's purchase of Neopets. They also include increasing efforts to manage young people's online participation by directing their attention to commercial sites, soliciting their creative content, and profiting from their labour.

This paper critiques current conceptualizations of participatory culture by tracing and analyzing the complex online interactions between young media users and corporate producers. Combining a case study format with critical discourse analysis, I provide close readings of digital interactions between users and producers on YouTube. By looking at the power relations between young video artists who remix pop culture content and the corporate owners of that content, I reveal the complicated and paradoxical processes of appropriation, centralization, control and resistance that characterize YouTube and other commercial social media environments. Drawing on the scholarship of political theorists Carol Pateman (1970) and Chantal Mouffe (1997) to illuminate these examples, I argue for the necessity of viewing participation as a contested concept, one that has significant implications for the construction of youthful subjectivities and social relations.

This paper critically probes a concept which circulates widely in both popular and academic descriptions of young people's use of social media. While the concept of participatory culture has wide appeal, the connotations of creativity, consensus and empowerment embedded there need to be problematized by a deeper understanding of power arrangements, profit-making and the (re)production of hegemonic ideologies. This paper contributes such a critique, and also demonstrates the potential of political thought to theorize current configurations of digital participation. Finally, this paper brings to the fore the concerns and experiences of youth, social media's most prolific – and most targeted – users.

Parallel session 2A title: Facebook: Tool of Democracy? Tool of Protest? Tool of Surveillance?  
Diaspora: Tool of Ideology? Tool of Communism?

**EKATERINA NETCHITAILOVA**

Sheffield Hallam University

**Facebook and Privacy**

**ABSTRACT:** With the increasing use of online social networks such as Facebook in the recent years, a lot of research has been focussing on the privacy issue of the network. The main questions being asked are: how do users navigate their privacy on Facebook and what should be public and remain private? While this research has been very important for the understanding of the privacy issue on Facebook, it has also the tendency to focus on the user. While the individual user experience should be taken into account in the analysis of Facebook and privacy, privacy on Facebook also raises broader, more important questions for the analysis of privacy in our society in general. On the one hand, with the advancement of radio, television and especially the Internet, the public-private dichotomy raised new questions about what should be open and public, and what should remain private and how to navigate it, and on the other hand, it also raises new questions about what is happening with our data. If we analyse the privacy policy of Facebook we can see that almost all our data can be sold to third parties, and this ultimately leads to the analysis of Facebook as a surveillance tool.

In this paper we will try to look at both the individual user experience with Facebook in terms of privacy (based on 17 face-to-face interviews and 5 online interviews), as well as at the privacy question within capitalism and how the advance of the Internet has changed the focus of public-private dichotomy. It emerged from the interviews with participants that people care less about such privacy issues as an embarrassing picture on their Facebook profile, and actually have several strategies as to how to avoid a 'faux pas' on Facebook, and are more concerned about a broader picture of privacy on Facebook, like what is happening with their data? Therefore, based on these interviews, we tried to analyse privacy issue on Facebook from three different angles: users' experience in terms of privacy on Facebook, the changing approach towards privacy in general since the advancement of information technologies, and Facebook as a surveillance tool.

**SEBASTIAN SEVIGNANI**

Unified Theory of Information Research Group

**Privacy and "Diaspora" from a Critical Media and Communication Studies Perspective**

**ABSTRACT:** In the proposed presentation, I want to analyse the understanding of privacy, which is put forward by an interesting new, alternative, and non-commercial social networking site (SNS), namely Diaspora. The task of this paper is to analyse the societal recognition of an individual right to privacy in relation to the individuals' mutual recognition as private property owners and thereby characterising privacy as ideology. I conclude that, although Diaspora transcends commodity production, Diaspora's notion of privacy remains ideologically within capitalism. First, the SNS project Diaspora is introduced. I will describe Diaspora's way of production by pointing out its non-commercial character as part of the free software and copyleft movement.

Second, Diaspora's understanding of privacy is discussed and will be related to dominant concepts of privacy, such as privacy as individual control of information and privacy as (private) property. Third, Diaspora's notion of privacy and the dominant concepts of privacy within the literature will be contextualised on behalf of a critical political economy analysis that refers to the Marxian differentiation between a societal sphere of production and a societal sphere of circulation, his concepts of ideology critique and commodity fetish. Fourth and concluding, the alternative potential of the Diaspora project will be evaluated in respect of the critical analysis before.

Diaspora's focus on privacy, firstly, can be interpreted as the struggle against commercial interests in economic surveillance, that collect, store, process, and evaluate user data systematically. In case of Diaspora, the way of production is not capitalist and not based on economic surveillance. Interestingly and at the second glance, Diaspora remains ideologically familiar to the capitalist order of society. It does not challenge common notions of privacy and property that are remarkable in capitalism and have been often justified in liberal theory because Diaspora advances an individualistic control theory of privacy and sees personal data as users' private property. One can speculate that Diaspora's ideological liaison to capitalist thinking makes it easier to use Diaspora for profit purposes prospectively.

Within critical communication and media/Internet studies the nexus between the commercial character of SNS, their advertising based funding model, and surveillance has already been outlined by critical theorist. The main contribution of this paper to the field is, at the one hand, to apply these theories to understand the privacy crisis of SNS and the emergence of the new social networking site Diaspora. On the other hand and more important, this paper is about to extend the critical analysis of social networking sites to the field of ideology and class struggle.

## **PIETER VERDEGEM**

Ghent University

### **Facebook versus Diaspora. An Evaluation of Capitalist and Alternative (Communist) Social Media Initiatives**

**ABSTRACT:** "Our mission is to make the world more open and connected." "People use Facebook to stay connected with their friends and family, to discover what is going on in the world around them, and to share and express what matters to them to the people they care about." Facebook uses these statements to describe itself in the context of its I.P.O. (Initial Public Offering) in February 2012 (Facebook 2012). In the same document Mark Zuckerberg writes in his letter to potential investors: "Facebook was not originally created to be a company. It was built to accomplish a social mission – to make the world more open and connected."

"Diaspora is the social network that puts you in control of your information, while offering you an awesome new social networking experience! Built to make a change, Diaspora is paving the way to a more open social networking experience of everyone." Diaspora uses these words to reveal its mission (Diaspora 2012).

When comparing these statements one could get the impression that Facebook and Diaspora share a common goal, i.e. creating a better social media experience and connect everyone. The truth, however, is that Facebook is currently the world's largest social networking site that has generated \$4.27 billion in revenue (2011), which is more than double the \$2 billion made in 2010. Diaspora, on the other hand, is one of the alternative social network sites and has been set up by four students from New York University with the help of a project that raised \$200,000 via online crowdfunding.

The goal of this paper is to make a contribution to the political economy of social media by critically comparing Facebook and Diaspora as examples of a capitalist internet initiative versus

an alternative (communist) internet initiative. Both social network sites make use of personal information in order to provide services to their users. Personal information in this context is a form of immaterial property and thus can be sold as a commodity to e.g. advertisers. Facebook and Diaspora deal with personal information in a completely different way, although they claim to have a similar mission.

Within this paper I will elaborate on a contemporary definition of (personal information as) property in the social media era by revisiting the work of Marx and Proudhon. Marx (1867) argued that privacy (the protection of personal information) is connected to private property. Proudhon (1840) contrasted the supposed right of property with the rights of liberty, equality and security. Marx – although initially favourable to Proudhon's work – criticised Proudhon's expression "property is theft". With a focus on personal information as immaterial property, the ideas of the "classics" will be linked to contemporary studies on the political economy of media (see e.g. Hardt 2010; Murdock 2011; Fuchs 2009, 2011). Furthermore, practices of Facebook and Diaspora will be critically analysed through the lens of this theoretical framework.

**MATHIAS KLANG and JAN NOLIN**

University of Borås

### **Government by Facebook: The Disruptive Privatization of the Public Sphere**

**ABSTRACT:** Since its conception, less than a decade ago, Facebook has quickly become a technology of extended disruptive force. Social networking has begun to redefine age-old fundamental social concepts such as friendship, brought the core values of integrity and privacy under new scrutiny, and normalized a narcissistic performance lifestyle.

Essentially, the hegemonic stature of social networking held by Facebook supplies a new twist to the privatization of the public sphere. Habermas identified the growth of information professionals that could package the growing influence of corporations within the public sphere in an attractive way. Nevertheless, these were employed by large multinational corporations, controlling the spin of the message. The public sphere could still be populated by public service media that balanced the corporate message.

The development of social media creates a different kind of public sphere that becomes an obligatory passage point for government and public service media. Today, public authorities establish Facebook identities in order to, as it is often claimed, increase government-citizen interaction. Varying government authorities from schools and libraries and local municipalities to the police are establishing themselves on Facebook.

Building on empirical data from social media policies of Swedish municipalities, a number of concerns will be raised; demonstrating that many authorities have a low understanding of social media and an unclear understanding of the effects of their presence online.

The purpose of this work is to provide background as to the arguments presented by authorities in establishing a presence on Facebook and to show that these arguments, while interesting, do not assess the full range of issues and questions which arise from their presence on social networking sites. This article will also analyze attempts by authorities to regulate their presence online and the presence of their employees on social media sites.

## **SORAJ HONGLADAROM**

Chulalongkorn University

### **Facebook and Thai Politics: Struggle between Liberal and Traditional Forces in Thailand**

**ABSTRACT:** In this talk I would like to focus on how the emergence of social media such as Facebook and Twitter are changing Thai politics. It is well known that Thailand has been beset by intense political struggles for more than five years. The causes of this struggle and conflict are many, but chief among them are the rise of the middle class not only in the urban area, but also, and more significantly, in the countryside. Traditionally the people in the Thai countryside are looked down upon by the urban elites and the system of resource allocation has until very recently been geared toward satisfying the urban elites at the expense of the farmers and villagers in the countryside. However, in the past decade this has been rapidly changing due to the policies of the previous governments. This has alarmed the urban elites so much that they were complicit in the coup d'état that brought down the democratically elected government in 2006, the event which has led to the political conflict that is facing the country today.

The past five years have also coincided with the rise of the social media. It is amazing to see how Thais have whole-heartedly embraced these new media. The most spectacular use of these media are in the political scene. I will spend much of the time during the talk giving the overall picture of how the media are being used by Thais to advance their political agenda and to engage in the debates and struggle. I will focus on the many cases of lese-majeste, which is the most controversial aspect of the struggle. These lese-majeste cases have been much politicized, and all of those who are accused of violating this law are on the same side of the political divide. The traditionalists and the elites have been accused of using the law to their own political advantage. What is interesting is how this struggle between liberal and traditional forces are being played out in the social media. With the social media it is very easy to spread news and information; it is also very easy to galvanize public opinion in one way or another.

Thus it is very interesting to see how this use of the emerging social media bears upon our conception of democracy in general. What is happening in the Thai case seems to be that debates in Parliament are copying the debates on the social media in general. In other words, the new ideas and agenda are first put forward on the social media scenes and only then are they taken up by the members of Parliament. It remains to be seen whether this is a more direct, more participatory form of democracy. Toward the end I will also touch upon some philosophical implications of this emergence, notably the problem how democracy should be justified as well as which form of democracy is emerging in the age of social media.

## **ANN-KRISTIN JUNTTI-HENRIKSSON**

Luleå University of Technology

### **Experiences of Social Media among Media Students in Northern Sweden— Possibilities and Problems**

**ABSTRACT:** Media students are perhaps the people that are the most curious and interested in social media applications. University students enrolled on the "Media and communication program" at Luleå University of Technology, northern Sweden, have been interviewed regarding their experiences of Facebook. By examining the resulting narratives through using discourse analysis and approaching poststructuralism, the study emphasize on how Media students think and feel about their use of Facebook. The students feel it is important to be a part of Facebook; however they also have quite a complex relation to Facebook.

The students mainly use Facebook to communicate with friends and relatives, but they also share photos, lists of personal interests and contact information with other users. Several students feel that Facebook plays an important role in their lives and that it enhances their quality of life. For many, Facebook has turned into a cultural habit which has become a big part of their lives. However, the students also feel that there are many difficulties with the use of Facebook – for them and for others. Many students express Facebook almost like a drug which you can get addicted to. The students are well aware that their and others identities are used by Facebook and this is a thing that they feel worried about, not knowing how Facebook uses this information. Another problem is the common fear about getting patronising comments on Facebook. Altogether feelings of anxiety, worry and fear about being a part of Facebook are common. The question of leaving Facebook has turned up as a thought among many, but most feel that they have to be part of Facebook since all their friends uses it. Gendered differences in the use of Facebook may also be observed in the narratives.

Parallel session 2B title: The Antagonistic Lives of Knowledge Workers: Creativity, Precarity, Exploitation and Resistance

**RUDI SCHMIEDE**

TU Darmstadt

**Cooperation of Professionals in Virtual Work Groups – Technology, Social Relations and Trust in Modern Work**

**ABSTRACT:** In informational capitalism, the extent and frequency of virtual work constellations are increasing. Especially, in inner- and inter-organizational and transnational projects, cooperation among the participating individuals and work groups – often on a global level – is essential. It has found its material expression in various ICTs modeling and supporting virtual collaboration. However, the outcomes of such a cooperation not only depend on economic, managerial and technical factors, but social relations among the cooperating subjects and groups, and especially the amount they trust in each other, and their mutual ability to cope with cultural diversity within a virtual project team, play a crucial role.

After introducing the theme, in the main part of the proposed contribution, I want to sketch some of the questions and problems involved in this constellation of work. Despite extended technical possibilities of virtual collaboration, the relevance of close social and trust relations has not decreased, but has rather grown. Factors influencing trust (e.g. diverging interests, differing loyalties among cooperating partners, familiarity or strangeness with each other in the team etc.) are discussed. Furthermore, it can be shown that diverging cultural habits and the resulting differences in communication manners play an important role in today's work, and that they may lead to misinterpretations and suspiciousness among employees in a cooperation project.

The empirical basis of this discussion are the results of a large interdisciplinary research project on virtual collaboration and trust relations of work groups of engineers in the car industry and its suppliers. Some examples from our case studies are aimed at highlighting the special challenges management and the organization of such work groups may face, if corporate communication is not valued properly, but also, what favorable conditions for this kind of cooperative work are looking like. This discussion includes a short view on the technological basis of virtual cooperation in this area of engineering (we cooperate with engineering science at our university and the developers of these systems): CAD 3D-systems with an underlying cooperation layer, and, as a result of our research, the modeling of defined steps of low or higher trust as a special software tool within this system.

The contribution will end with a short discussion of how future research and theorizing of the relation between contemporary ICTs and the social relations in work and organizations should be conceptualized. The close relationship between the technological and the social shapes of work constellations will be argued. I will propose the understanding of technology and especially ICTs as a social product, albeit a reified one, of un-planned and not controlled collective development and production. I will argue that stages of technological development and system characteristics and levels and forms of organization are closely related – a perspective which could open up a materialistic and empirically founded, but at the same time radically critical approach to the analysis of ICTs and society. For, the consequence would be that the re-shaping of society is intrinsically tied to that of technology, and vice versa, any human-centered development of technology is bound up with parallel social changes.

**BRIAN LOADER**

University of York

### **Mediating the Professional Project through Informational Capitalism**

**ABSTRACT:** The social power of professions and knowledge-workers is said to derive from their privileged position in the political economy. This in large part arises from the claims to control bodies of expert knowledge and practice. Such positions of competitive advantage vary both across and within a wide range of knowledge occupations. What they share in common however is a general tendency to the claims of knowledge expertise, autonomy, professional ethics and higher rewards on account of being on the more advantaged side of an increasing divide in the labour market between service workers and others. The relative positions of expert-workers however is the outcome of what Larson described as the professional project – an on-going pursuit by occupational groups to gain collective social mobility as a consequence of their ability to attain social closure, exclusion and their degree of shelter in the labour market. A consequence of this understanding of professional power was a critique from both the left who argued that professions exploited their clients and right for being a fetter to the free interplay of the market. More recently however contemporary developments in informational capitalism, shaped in part by the emergence and development of new media, have led to significant challenges to the professional project. First, the internet and social media provide new opportunities for the commodification of professional knowledge. Second, the introduction of networked media technologies have also become a tool for increased control of knowledge workers through managerial control strategies. This paper critically explores the implications of social media technologies, with their potential for user-generated content, mass-collaboration, and almost instantaneous sharing, as means of disrupting, penetrating and contesting the boundaries of knowledge-occupations. In particular it will examine how social media may inform the contest over boundary closure, autonomy and occupational expertise.

**ANNIKA THIEM**

Villanova University

### **Networked Labor: New Affective Political Economies**

**ABSTRACT:** In his *The Wealth of Networks*, Yochai Benkler demonstrates how social and economic practices of the networked information economy upend especially the dominating premise that to be successful enterprises have to be structured around the principle of pecuniary self-interest. Benkler's study effectively disassembles this Smithian presupposition and shows that with the rise of networks collaboration and interaction come to be foregrounded. However, with respect to the political and political-economic consequences that Benkler draws, his conceptual framework is one that remains hitched to a Habermasian public sphere and communicative democracy model and cannot take into account two crucial transformations that a critical political theory of the information society has to take into account: 1) The technologically mediated forms of labor produce new commodity practices that unhinge traditional relations of work and remuneration; and 2) the new forms of interacting with information reshapes the sensibilities surrounding political authority, political participation, and what constitutes political institutions beyond simply a matter of scale. In this paper, I will seek to outline how a critical theoretical approach might aid us in rearticulating the understanding of immaterial labor in the information society as a commodity practice of translation and transposition, which profoundly refigures our sense of value creation and heightens as well as elides at the same time our grasp of material and virtual inequalities. Second, I will point to the implications for political theorizing to argue

that rather than beginning by conceiving of the internet as a possibly globally extended public political sphere, we need to account for how the changing practices of information production and consumption as well as social networking shape the emergence of collective political agency and political movements, such as in the confluences and transpositions between more traditional forms of labor organizing and new forms of political mobilization in the Arab Spring or the Occupy Movement.

**MIKE FRANGOS**

Umeå University

### **Affective Labor/Cultural Economy**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper focuses on recent discourse around freelancing culture and D.I.Y. education in order to understand how the privileging of the aesthetic lends creative work a susceptibility to appropriation in the information economy, beginning from the way that bloggers themselves relate to their own precarious conditions of employment. In the paper, I take blogs such as The New Inquiry and Thought Catalog to be exemplary case studies for understanding the new relation between creativity and the processes of production, and give a reading of the portrayal of precarious life and the multitude contained therein. Specifically, I read the culture of sharing in social media in terms of the incorporation of free time into productive labor. I then address concepts of the multitude and cultural commons in order to articulate the ways social media platforms enable new non-totalizing collectivities and forms of life. The concept of the commons was first appropriated by 19th century Utopian movements as an alternative to proprietary models of cultural economy from pre-capitalist social structures. Social media platforms, in this view, represent a dramatic intervention into the public sphere, as media and knowledge are re-conceived as common goods available to all. Recent materialist theory by Christian Marazzi, Roberto Esposito, and Paulo Virno has also enhanced my reading of contemporary media and its contexts. Virno's work theorizes the predicament of contemporary knowledge workers who are subject to the intermingling of work and leisure, the need to acquire new job skills through D.I.Y. education, and the perpetual threat of downsizing and redundancy. I thereby approach social media critically in order to interrogate how these platforms fit into contemporary configurations of cultural economy and information politics.

**PATRICIA MATOS**

Centre for Research in Social Anthropology

### **A Regime of Disciplined Agency: Discipline, Quantification and Surveillance in the Portuguese Call Centre Sector**

**ABSTRACT:** Since the mid 1990s, call centres have provided the most dynamic area of growth in white-collar employment internationally (Taylor and Bain 1999). Call centre work is seen as containing elements which represent a further evolution in the deployment of Taylorist methods for the organization of work with the aid of information and communication technologies (ICT). Call centres pervade almost all areas of human activity from telecommunications, banking, to insurance and utilities. Furthermore, call centres can appear to insinuate themselves into the lives of almost anyone in both developed and developing countries; as a call centre operator once told me, 'everyone knows someone who knows someone working in a call centre'. Also, call centres are physical structures which are easy to set up, do not require high investments costs, and demand little investment in training. A call centre can be as easily located in London as it can in

the Gaza strip\*. A great number of call centres are open 24 hours a day, 365 days per year; and they can be located in India, but serve clients in Britain. Call centres are therefore an exemplary case of 'time-space compression' in the regime of flexible accumulation (Harvey 1989).

This paper explores the themes of exploitation and alienation in the Portuguese call centre sector. I analyse how discipline, quantification and surveillance are enacted within the labour process in order to clarify the main distinguishable characteristic of the nature of value-creation within call centres. Such examination aims to contribute to the growing anthropological and sociological literature on the knowledge economy, and the intricate relations between the nature of value-creation and the constitution of subjectivity and consciousness. I argue that the computer-based mechanisms used in the call centre sector for measuring labour output and the informal and formal strategies of labour surveillance contain one central paradox which is indispensable for profit maintenance: workers have to execute their work according to quantitative and qualitative targets of productivity. By following these two different kinds of work prescription management attains two goals, making workers accountable for their work performance yet inciting workers to have an agential intervention in the labour process through linguistic engagement. I define the call centre regime of labour as a regime of disciplined agency. That is, call centres present the most advanced system for the exploitation of a rarefied form of human labour: linguistic engagement or human communicative competence. In order for call centres to subsist as a rentable economic activity they need specific human intervention for which no kind of machine can substitute. As such, this rarefied form of human labour needs to be watched over and disciplined. Thus, my paper reveals a core paradox of call centre work, not by describing the robotization of human beings, but by bringing to light the (usually neglected) unique human species-being quality which is exploited in the call centre regime of labour – human communicative competence – and which makes call centres such a profitable business in several parts of the world.

The empirical data presented in this paper derives from long-term ethnographic research conducted between August 2007 and January 2009 in a call centre belonging to a private sector telecommunications company in Lisbon.

## **SURUGIU ROMINA-GABRIELA**

University of Bucharest

### **Young Journalists at Work in the Digital Era. A Romanian Case Study**

**ABSTRACT:** The paper (part of a larger postdoctoral research, within POSDRU/89/1.5/S/62259, University of Bucharest ) will present an account on the working conditions of young Romanian journalists, in the Internet era. The theoretical background of the research explores the critical approach to labour and exploitation in the 21st century informational capitalism. The general assumption of the paper is that media outlets in capitalism are among its greatest beneficiaries (McChesney, 2004, Machin&Niblock, 2006 inter al.).

The research is based on 30 in-depth interviews related to work procedures, wages, professional standards, and digital work. The in-depth dialogue with journalists is considered by contemporary researchers to deliver a better understanding of the everyday practices in newsrooms. In addition to the interviews, data from previous research papers on journalists situation in Romania will be also be used (Coman, 2004, Surugiu& Radu, 2009, Vasilendiuc, 2010 inter al.). Information on blogs and Internet portals as: [www.carieremedia.ro/2010/02/15/ce-salarii-sunt-in-mass-media-din-romania/](http://www.carieremedia.ro/2010/02/15/ce-salarii-sunt-in-mass-media-din-romania/) will be taken into consideration.

In Romania, in the context of the concentration of media ownership and resources in very few hands, and in the context of a post-communist media lacking a tradition of media regulation and journalistic standards, young journalists face difficulties in newsrooms. In short, the portrait of

the Romanian journalist as a young wo(man) is: over-qualified and under-utilized, over-exploited and under-paid. Young journalists do not usually have a firm work contract: they are paid within the "copyright agreement" framework (they get paid only if they deliver news). As the profession has become more technology-ridden, young journalists are expected to be computer proficient, to act as "universal soldiers of news" (delivering news for traditional and digital media outlets in the same time, for the same amount of money) and to work around 60 hours per week. The interviews also showed that young journalists do not consider important to belong to a professional organization or union, as the older members of the profession (editors, writers) discourage them to involve in such activities.

Parallel session 2C title: Rise or Demise of the Public? The Public Sphere, Regulation, and Governance in the Media Age

**PHILIP BREY**

University of Twente

### **Political Ideologies and the Regulation of the Internet**

**ABSTRACT:** The Internet has become a medium that is used by billions of people as a tool for social, economic and cultural activities. These activities and their correlated social and economic structures have emerged in a medium, cyberspace, that largely evades the political authority of any nation or conglomerate of nations. Yet, different nations and supranational agencies do attempt to exercise political authority over the Internet through regulation. The aim of this paper is to investigate the main current ideologies for and against regulation of the Internet, and to develop a theoretical framework for the analysis and explanation of major controversies surrounding Internet regulation.

I will argue that current controversies surrounding Internet regulation are the result of collisions between three sets of opposing ideologies. The first set comprises cyberlibertarianism and cyberauthoritarianism. Cyberlibertarianism (Winner, 1997) is the idea that cyberspace should aim to be largely or completely free of regulation, and that it should support individual rights and free-market capitalism. Cyberstatism is the idea that governments have an important role in regulating the internet and are permitted, or even obliged, to impose significant constraints on behaviors, rights or the operations of markets in the interest of society. The second set of oppositions comprises more specific ideologies that result in stances for or against strong Internet regulation, including various types of value fundamentalism, proprietarianism, authoritarianism, socialism, liberalism and conservatism. In combination with either cyberlibertarianism or cyberstatism, these ideologies can be used to support or oppose specific regulations for the Internet. A third opposition is that between ideologies of centralization and decentralization of regulative authority, which prescribes at which level regulation should ideally take place: at the centralized level of states or the decentralized level of communities (local regulations, self-policing).

I will show how major regulative controversies surrounding the current Internet, such as those involving copyright protection vs. free use and open access, censorship vs. free speech and surveillance vs. privacy, can be analyzed and explained by reference to this three-part framework.

**GÖRAN SVENSSON**

Uppsala University

### **Media Governance and the Dismantling of Public Media – Options for Private, Social and Community Media**

**ABSTRACT:** Media change and the efforts to make an impact on the direction or details of change are today often approached by using the term media governance. One way of framing the concept is by claiming that the era of politically led media and communication policies and regulation has come to an end, being replaced by more horizontal steering including non-state stakeholders and also opening up towards international and global interests. Old forms of government are replaced by new forms of governance.

Media governance as a new form of non-state steering is first presented and then discussed, highlighting the asymmetrical power relations between individual and organizational voices among stakeholders. This model of media governance is also related to private media, public media, community media and social media.

A claim is made that this use of the media governance idea is normative and biased when approaching public media, linking it close to the state, and making private, community and, probably, social media the preferred alternatives when designing policies. The implication of this bias, in the context of private ownership and global markets, for public media and the articulation of public expression is discussed. The possible effects upon community media and social media are also discussed, one of them the risk of them being privatised and taken over by major media corporations.

One conclusion is that all the analysed forms of media – private, public, community and social – need to be framed in a broader model of media governance where citizens and political institutions are given a clear role in media governance. Another conclusion is that the relation between public, community and social media needs to be studied more closely in the light of possible effects of governance reforms and the bias of their implementation.

**KATHARINE SARIKAKIS and JOAN RAMON RODRIGUEZ-AMAT**

University of Vienna

### **Digital Copyright Regimes and the Public Sphere: A Sublimation of Politics**

**ABSTRACT:** The digital world is a public space under siege: private interests and public institutions make systematic attempts to gain control over the forms, narratives and norms of governance of digital media. Although Internet governance has been heralded as multilevel, multi-stakeholderist and democratised, authorities and private actors engage in decision-making processes that aim to colonise the ways in which communication goods and cultural expression are 'made' and shared. The latest series of debates on and civic reaction to machinated copyright laws reveal how important these digital spaces are for the market: if left unchecked and on their own devices, users and culture-makers will continue circumventing hard-to-develop digital business models. The colonisation of digital spaces and the configuration of the user are key processes in the battle over cultural goods.

The notion of the public sphere has been understood, despite the critique towards its conceptualisation, as a symbol of publicness for the so called 'private' concerns, which form social phenomena and function as oppressors of individual and communal liberties. On the one hand, feminism's 'the personal is political' seems to clearly apply now more than ever across the range of 'private' realms and behaviours in relation to media use, and copyright laws aim to invade those. On the other hand, the politicisation of private interests, and the constant self-configuration of subaltern public spheres show that the politics shaping the dominant hegemonic mediated Public Sphere is complex and explosive. A great deal is at stake: the colonisation of mediated public spaces is interlinked through the stock-and financial markets to financial, knowledge and state institutions that command the fates of nations. Their interests in copyright reform and the control over digital content –indeed, fragments – is part and parcel of digital capitalism and control over information, a form of symbolic capital.

Against this background, this paper takes a close look at the history of ACTA and its reincarnations in transatlantic, global and national politics as exemplary instances of policy laundering that directly undermine broadly accepted democratic models. The paper explores the cases that enhance this consideration starting from the European Directive on the harmonisation of copyright in the information society, itself an enactment of the WIPO Copyright treaty (1996); continuing

with the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) signed together with the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). Both the cases of TPP and ACTA are presented as international extensions of the home US policy; whereas Stop Online Piracy (SOPA) and the Protect IP Acts (PIPA) are considered an update of national law, albeit with immediate effects world-wide. These four policy milestones pushed by several instances from and to the US Government are related to the protection of the Intellectual Property of the United States in times of the digital era. The four forms extend and have effects at national levels, globally.

This paper departs from the understanding that ultimately, the public sphere is the space where public policy derives. Issues of common concern are (supposed to be) debated here and something like a public opinion is formed. In this process, private interests of private individuals are expected to be left behind and their place to be taken by public individuals, the citizen and common interest. Instead, the activation of a broadened world-wide debate, which takes place in inaccessible spaces, dislocates the process of policy away from established and known processes. This makes it difficult or impossible to confront 'bad ideas' practically, physically, materially in direct political action. The question arising thus is whether such a difficulty will turn into a creative sublimation of grassroots politics or into its denial.

**GREG SIMONS**

Uppsala University

### **New Public Diplomacy in the Era of Global Communication and the Competition for Influence**

**ABSTRACT:** The use of information and communication is increasingly shaping international relations. Every day countries put a lot of time and effort in attempting to attract the attention of, and then influence foreign publics. The competition between countries is increasing with time, which pushes countries to explore new ways and means to exploit in order to accumulate soft power. This is the ability influence through attraction, rather than coercion of hard power. Public diplomacy offers an avenue of the means of the message. To understand the enabler of the medium of the message, political marketing provides a good lens with which to understand and analyse the public diplomacy attempts.

An increasingly important cornerstone of contemporary public diplomacy programmes are New Information Communication Technologies. As part of this sphere, social media are taking a leading place in the efforts of countries around the globe, in public diplomacy programmes. There are varying reasons and motivations for doing so, which includes a perceived decline in the legitimacy of traditional media and the ability to reach a large potential audience. This also reflects the need to engage publics proactively with an active form of communication. The efforts of Russia, China and the United States are compared. Similarities and differences in approach shall be explored.

**STINA BENGTOSSON**

Södertörn University

### **Public Producers of Space in Commercial New Media Platforms**

**ABSTRACT:** The aim of this presentation is to discuss commercial new media environments as platforms for communication between public institutions and their citizens.

The extensive growth, in number of participants, of new commercial media environments such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc have started a trend where not only corporations, but also state

organizations, cities, municipalities and NGOs use these platforms to communicate with their target groups, locally as well as globally. Organizations and associations who formerly used more neutral means of communication (from traditional postal services, door knocking, via mass media ads, and later their own ICT platforms, such as city web pages, etc) today often follow their audiences/consumers/citizens to these platforms to communicate and interact with them. My analysis is based upon a case study of the virtual city Malmö in Second Life.

This study is informed by Doreen Massey's notion of 'progressive space' and the questions asked are thus: 1) how was the virtual city understood and constructed in terms of space and time by the producers (Malmö city) of the virtual city? 2) how was the virtual city understood and interpreted in terms of space and time by its users (the users of Second Life)? The qualitative methods and the materials to answer these questions are interviews with producers and users of the virtual city, analyses of documents, blogs, in-world magazines, and of the virtual city as space.

The analysis mainly reveals two conflicting interpretations of the virtual city as space between its producers and users. The producers regarded Malmö in Second Life a new meeting point in the city of Malmö (IRL), and they adjusted their planning and administration of the virtual city according to that. The users, on the other hand, regarded the virtual city as a new meeting point in Second Life, and thus shaped their expectations of the place according to that. These conflicting perspectives among users and producers heavily affected Malmö city's possibility to use the virtual city to communicate with their citizens.

We have lately seen a vivid debate on the producer-consumer relation in new digital media; its altering states and the way convergence culture have empowered, or cut power from, users of new media, compared with in a more traditional media landscape. What has not been debated to the same extent is what this new media landscape does to the above-mentioned public producers of content who use these new media platforms to reach out to their different audiences. It is thus of great importance for the critical study of the Internet to raise and debate this topic thoroughly.

## **MAGDALENA KANIA LUNDHOLM**

Uppsala University

### **Cultural National Intimacy in the Cyberspace: The Case of the Polish Online Discourse on Patriotism**

**ABSTRACT:** Drawing on the recent debates about the role of internet in shifting boundaries between the private and the public sphere (see Papacharissi, 2010, Thompson, 2011) as well as debates about cyberspace as arena of emergence of the 'new politics' (Liu, 2012) this paper addresses the role of the cyberspace in the process of negotiation of national identity and national image (national brand). Based on the material from the Polish discussion forums and articles from citizenship journalism portals, the focus is to critically examine the discursive aspects of the postsocialist national identity (re)construction. The main questions are: how national image and nationhood are negotiated in a postsocialist online context? What are the main aspects of this process?

The results of the analysis point to the cyberspace as an arena of emerging cultural national intimacy where citizens negotiate and imagine their collective identity. Moreover, importance of the electronic forms of communication is also an aspect when it comes to the post-EU enlargement mass migration from the Central/Eastern to Western Europe. Thanks to the possibility to stay in touch with those at home and engage with current issues, cyberspace offers also an opportunity to negotiate both internally- and externally constructed aspects of nationhood and national image. It is argued that exactly by offering this unique opportunity, internet becomes a transnational space for an ongoing debate where different ideologies such as nationalism can take popular,

bottom-up forms that are sometimes contesting and challenging the dominant discourses of the state.

Although the issues of national redefinition are of continuous importance for the public eye, particularly in the context of postsocialist countries, it is argued that we can speak of different form of involvement as compared to traditional politics and participation in the public sphere. In particular the concept of the cultural national intimacy is helpful to explain the emergence of the popular online form of nationalism. It is suggested that studying of these topics allows rethinking of how citizens are involved publicly and how traditionally state-bound identities are constructed and negotiated in an online context.

Parallel session 3A title: Surveillance 2.0? Commodification, Polification, and Discrimination in the "Surveillance Society"

**HEIDI HERZOGENRATH-AMELUNG and PINELOPI TROULLINOU**

University of Leeds

### **The Ideological Packaging of ICTs: A Critique**

**ABSTRACT:** "Technological developments and social processes mutually influence and shape or co-construct each other" (Lyon 2003:163)

There is widespread agreement that the rapid increase of ICTs in private and public life has provoked anew the urge to compress these often disorientating developments into single overarching narratives.

Key problems to be addressed include:

- the lack of an outside from which to critique our current informational order (Lash 2002).
- the ideological implications of concepts such as the Information Society (Webster 1999, 2002 and 2004).
- A disinclination to consider the systematic inter-connectedness of ICT systems although "at each encounter we leave a trail of personal data that is tracked and processed in ways that influence our activities and our life chances" (Lyon 2003, emphasis added).

The framing of the technology-society dialectic frequently makes normative assumptions about the role of ICTs and the "user". This masks a status quo which, as a recent Special Eurobarometer Report on Europeans' attitudes and behaviours concerning identity management, data protection and privacy shows, remains largely one of disempowerment (Special Eurobarometer 359 2011). More recent accounts of a Surveillance Society (Lyon 1994, 2001) trace the move from "habeas corpus" to "habeas data" (Capurro 2011), yet a negative bias can act as an equally deflective mechanism. It discourages citizen's critical engagement with their technological life-world. Meanwhile, isolated consideration of individual technologies such as social media or the Internet neglects their role as part of a larger "informational system". Combined with totalizing narratives, the pervasiveness and complexity of this system, forces citizens to rely on its ideological packaging—namely the narratives of "efficiency", "convenience", and "security". For instance, such ideology justifies the application of potentially privacy-endangering ICTs—further contributing to what we would argue to be a crisis of agency. We argue that agency must first and foremost be grounded in information: "Citizens must be able to understand the system so that they can identify its problems, criticise it, and ultimately control it" (Europe Working Group IX 2002).

In relation to all these themes, the philosophy of technology suggests that the concept of an Information Society, and to an extent that of a Surveillance Society, deflect from the idea that "technology itself is not a problem" (Scharff & Dusek 2003). Both tend to prescribe citizens' relationship with technology from a means/ends perspective. Critical philosophy of technology argues that the functionality of this logic can be traced back to the ontological "mistake" in Western philosophy Martin Heidegger expounded in his analysis of "Tool Being": the "in-order-to" as our dominant form of engagement with the world (Harman 2002). Thus it is argued that philosophy is an essential resource for shifting the locus of the debate around the place of technology in society to an earlier stage in the process: it produces a reflective mechanism that can

operate prior to "policies and regulations that minimize [technologies'] risks and their misuse" (Kompridis 2009).

**KATJA DE VRIES**

Vrije Universiteit Brussel

**Some are More Equal than Others. Thinking Difference and Indifference Produced Through Automated, Algorithmic Profiling.**

**ABSTRACT:** Automated algorithmic classification: A machine learning algorithm is a set of computer executable instructions that allow for the automated recognition (and sometimes even discovery) of patterns of similarity in data that contain a lot of variability, such as handwriting, speech, faces, cars, internet browsing behavior, human movements, etc. Pattern recognition and discovery are thus automated methods that try to solve a certain classification problem (e.g. MacCormick, 2012, pp. 80-104; Mitchell, 1997): for instance, is the object recorded by the smart camera human or non-human, female or male, suspicious or normal, etc.?

Thinking with Leibniz: a world of monads which, nevertheless, connect: We live in a world of difference. And yet the difference appears to us under common denominators. There is not just a world of isolated monads but one of connections, chains, similarities and identities. The existence of these assemblages, however, is always at risk of disruption; in thinking about how they exist "we start from a putting into presence, and not from permanence". (Latour, 1999, p. 3) Being together is always a becoming together. Automated algorithmic classification has a particular way of generating togetherness; the aim of this paper is to engage philosophically with this particular mode of creating presence and continuity, without slipping immediately in popular cultural critiques. (e.g. Pariser, 2011)

The equality-as-a-ratio device: Togetherness which has to do with whether things, objects, people, etc., appear as belonging together. This togetherness can be created through relational devices. Exploring the functioning of these relational devices (words, microscopes, cameras, etc., etc) is the field of material semiotics. There are many ways of making things stick together as equal. For instance, as one St. Paul invented (Badiou, 2003) how to use Christ as an equalizing device: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". One of the pivotal devices through which the equality of an algorithmic profile is produced is ratio-as-equality. This conceptual tool creates the possibility of (a) articulating equality not as a all-or-nothing, but as a 'ratio' or percentage, (b) establish a pragmatic cut-off point as to what counts as equal, (c) extending the chains of connection (virtually everything can be related through this gradual quantification, extending the scope of existing chains of connection; Latour & Lépinay, 2009)

Does the ratio-as-equality device coincide with capitalist, universal ratio, or is there still a multiplicity of ratios? Rationality is an important order-word [mot d'ordre] in modernity. "Is it rational?" "Hush, be silent then, for it must be good". At the same time rationality is a black-box. In European anti-discrimination law rationality is a limit that should not be transgressed: a difference in treatment should not be completely arbitrary but have some rationality to it. How does this rationality-as-non-arbitrariness relate to ratio-as-equality? This question is explored against the background of existing scholarship (Gandy, 2009) through some of the recent case law of the European Court of Justice.

## **VERENA KREILINGER**

Unified Theory of Information Research Group

### **Privacy and Surveillance on Social Networking Sites – Findings from an Empirical Study Among Austrian Students.**

**ABSTRACT:** Contemporary Social Networking Sites (SNS) have become an area of conflict – between those, who build their social lives upon them and who have changed the way they communicate, and those, who capitalize upon this transformation in social organization and commodify personal communication. It is a conflict between users and platform providers; shaped by power inequalities, commercial/profit interests, and exploitation. It is also a conflict between the privacy ideal of modern society and modern society's advancement of surveillance capacities. It is a conflict that is widely discussed in public as current newspaper headlines and latest reports show: "Facebook forces users to switch to Timeline, making their pasts more visible"<sup>1</sup>, "Google announces privacy changes across product; users can't opt out"<sup>2</sup>, "EU takes „europe-v-facebook.org" as the model case why we need stricter data protection rules in Europe"<sup>3</sup>.

The overall aim of this paper is to present findings from a study on privacy and surveillance on social networking sites that is based on a critical political economy and Critical Theory approach. We will provide answers to the following research questions:

1. How can users' knowledge, attitude and behavior on Social Networking Sites be empirically studied in a critical way?
2. Are knowledge and attitude towards surveillance and privacy of users and their information behavior on social networking platforms connected?
3. What are users' perception, knowledge and attitude towards targeted advertising on social networking sites?

The presented results are the outcome of the 3-year research project "Social networking sites in the surveillance society" that has been funded by the Austrian Science Fund FWF. In order to answer the research questions, we conducted an empirical study among Austrian students (N=4419). We analyze their usage behavior of social networking sites, how large their knowledge of surveillance is in general, how much knowledge they have about concrete SNS that are used in Austria, which attitudes they have towards surveillance and privacy, and how these variables are ultimately linked to their specific information behavior (information revelation, advertising settings, privacy settings, etc.) on SNS. We give particular focus to the role of targeted/behavioral advertising on SNS. Selling personal information/specific user groups (based on personal information such as demographic data, interests, online behavior) for advertising purposes is a political-economic topic that has thus far been rather ignored in SNS research, although it essentially constitutes the business model of commercial SNS. In the conclusion, we reflect on the practical and societal implications of the study's results.

## **THOMAS ALLMER**

Unified Theory of Information Research Group

### **A Critical Empirical Study of Surveillance and Privacy on Social Media**

**ABSTRACT:** The overall aim of my talk is to present findings from a study on privacy and surveillance on social media/social networking sites (SNS) that is based on a critical political economy and critical theory approach. The analysis of the existing research literature shows that empirical studies of privacy on SNS mostly focus on individual privacy concerns and individual privacy-related behaviour. What is missing are critical empirical case studies of surveillance and to situate the logic of web 2.0 surveillance in the context of the economic and political logic that

shapes profit-oriented social media, the antagonistic structure of communication technologies in capitalist society, exploitation, exchange value, free labour, new strategies of capital accumulation, commodification, and post-Fordism (Mark Andrejevic, Christian Fuchs, Trebor Scholz). I want to provide a critique of this kind of studying privacy and contribute to fill the identified gap with critical arguments and thereby help to advance a critique of the political economy and critical theory of social media surveillance. Therefore, the following research questions will be addressed:

In the context of a critical approach, how can surveillance and privacy on social media best be conceptualized? Which major advantages and disadvantages of social networking platforms do users see? What is the role of surveillance for users in the context of social networking sites? Concerning the disadvantages, do they see more individual disadvantages or disadvantages for society? Are disadvantages in relation to privacy described as rather intrinsic or extrinsic? Are privacy reduction and surveillance seen as legitimate if in return there is free access to platforms and to certain Internet services?

The presented results are a part of the outcome of the three-year research project "Social Networking Sites in the Surveillance Society" that has been funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). In order to answer the research questions, we conducted an empirical study among Austrian students. The research methods employed are quantitative and qualitative online surveying (N= 4419). I will analyse which role surveillance and privacy play in the context of the advantages and disadvantages that students perceive in SNS. The discussion of the results will show that maintaining existing relationships over spatio-temporal distances and creating new social relationships is considered as the main advantage and the surveillance threat is considered as the major disadvantage of SNS. The economic and political logic that shapes the strategies of profit-oriented social networking sites produces an antagonism between communicative opportunities and surveillance threats. This points out the antagonistic structure of communication technologies in capitalism.

In the conclusion, I reflect on the practical and societal implications of the study's results and argue that support is needed for critical privacy and surveillance movements in order to develop counter-hegemonic power and advance critical awareness of web 2.0 surveillance. In addition, it is recommended to support non-profit platforms, to surveil corporate and political surveillants or rather to watch the watchers. Nevertheless, online surveillance is caused by economic and political issues and is inherent in capitalist society. I will finally discuss that for overcoming surveillance the sublation of domination, asymmetric relations of power, and capitalist society as well as the creation of a cooperative and emancipated society are needed.

**LAURA WEXLER**

Yale University

### **What You See is What Gets You: Nothing to See Is Not the Same as Nothing to Hide**

**ABSTRACT:** Social media is not only "social," it is also and at the same time surveillance. To call it plainly "social" conceals the insidious nature of the aggregation of data by corporate and government entities. For individual users, decisions voluntarily to give up information are not salient as a threat, but the massive amount of data so collected, and the new analytic techniques now being spearheaded by aggregators like Google, are shifting the definition of the "reasonable expectations" of the norms of privacy upon which the right to privacy depends. The act of giving your information to a third party, multiplied by millions of users, erodes the constitutional right to privacy that prevents the government from accessing it.

Philosopher Jacques Ranciere has usefully reworked the model of Althusser's twentieth century

“policeman” whose power to constitute the subject lay in normalizing the conviction that the subject is always and already divided against itself, hiding a crime and a sense of guilt. Ranciere updates this model of social organization by re-partitioning the senses. Instead of a panopticon that exposes and “arrests,” the new policeman wields the power of a sensibility whose subject is always at ease and always willing to move on. Everything is vehemently visible; there is nothing to hide. “Move on, move on,” say the traffic cops; “there is nothing to see here.”

However, that there is nothing to see does not mean that there is nothing to hide. In the aggregate, our ability to defend our personal data from government surveillance without subpoena is weakened in court. Government and corporate secrecy is increasing alongside the apparently open highway. Governments and corporations are claiming privacy rights for themselves while eroding the privacy rights of the public. Hacker groups justify incursions precisely because of this effect. As you give your information, you contribute to the loss of privacy in the aggregate for others.

In the beginning years of photography, the rebels of the Paris Commune proudly stood at their barricades to be recorded for posterity by the camera, only to find themselves identified, convicted and sentenced to death by a policing system that had learned to read the photograph as evidence. Keyed in by Alphonse Bertillon and Francis Galton (Allan Sekula), the police were then able to use photography to institute a physiognomic system of social control, arranged in neighborhood grids. Facial recognition software has re-spatialized this “situation of photography” (Ariella Azoulay) from the precinct to corporate entities and global governance by reading the aggregate as visualizable evidence. What possibilities does photography now call forth for a re-(di)vision of the public sphere?

**DANIEL TROTTIER**

Uppsala University

### **Theorizing Social Media Policing: A Critical Overview**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper presents a theoretical framework for the critical study of social media policing, specifically the interface of individuals and investigative agencies. In a context of political and economic crises, social media allow institutions to collect information about individuals. Policing, as an institution, is a socially coercive force. This coercion is accomplished through both physical force, but also through the collection of personal information, or evidence. The latter is enhanced by the introduction of information and communication technologies. The introduction of social media in particular amplifies policing through social media. This amplification is made up of two seemingly opposing trends. On the one hand, individual social media users are identifying and shaming suspected criminals. Citizens use Facebook to persecute each other, following a broader online culture of sharing personal information. They may also use social media to resist police by coordinating protests and publicizing police misconduct. This suggests that even individuals who are not affiliated with police may either contribute to or resist policing.

On the other hand, police and other investigators are able to scrutinize social life on these platforms. Individual activity, far from supplanting conventional policing, actually enhances its scope, with citizens often unwillingly enrolled in this process. Social media has the potential to level visibility. However, as police occupy social media, top-down and bottom-up efforts converge, producing a visibility that combines the mandate and impunity of police scrutiny with the unique optics of everyday life. Police are developing more effective ways to sort out social media content, simultaneously bypassing and enrolling users. The increased scrutiny of sites like Facebook suggests that while users can be active agents through self-expression and social coordination, so too are they visible and accessible to institutions and governments, reduced to searchable content.

They may choose to actively contribute to police work and social scrutiny more generally, but they are always involved through their digital presence. Interactions, relations, events and other features of social life are mediated on social media, making them a more visible and useable kind of information. Police have always relied on evidence collection, and this is furthered with their adoption of social media.

Policing social media furthers asymmetrical relations of visibility between police and public. Moreover, they are able to enhance their scope by exploiting social ties on platforms that increasingly monopolize social life. These investigative agencies need to be under greater scholarly scrutiny. Agencies that are able to know so much about social life should in turn remain visible to social scientific research. This paper connects critical sociological, criminological, and communication literature to breaking developments in the realm of investigative uses of social media. Using the question "what is the relation between police and public, and how does this change with social media?" as a point of departure, it proposes a model that explains how social media enhances police work. This is a product of social media's domestic (Silverstone and Haddon, 1996) origins, that allow it to creep (Lyon, 2007) from lateral forms of scrutiny between individuals (Andrejevic, 2005) to relations between institutions and individuals (Trottier and Lyon, 2011). Despite privileging individual, or decentralized, activity, this only enhances institutional, or centralized, forms of scrutiny and coercion (Galloway and Thacker, 2007). In applying this framework to current and emerging technologies and practices, this paper will consider how individual activity can contribute – often unwillingly – to a heightened policing of social life.

Parallel session 3B title: Democracy 2.0? Political Theories of the Internet

**JORDANIS KAVATHATZOPOULOS**

Uppsala University

**ICT as a Horsefly**

**ABSTRACT:** The way we solve problems and make decisions has been at the focus of philosophy. Since ancient times the issue has been how to think in the right way. Skills, abilities, methods and processes have been investigated. According to Platon philosophers do not have the right answers but they can find the right answers. They have the skills and they can use the right tools to discard false ideas (aporia). Philosophers think and act in a democratic way among themselves. But anybody who has the ability to philosophize, to think self-critically, systematically, scientifically, i.e. has the Aristotelian virtue of phronesis or the Kantian skill of autonomy, and acts according to this, belongs to a democracy together with other like people.

Unfortunately, this is not the only definition of democracy. Although democracy itself is a process, the common sense definition is either result oriented or focused on formalistic aspects, or a combination of both. The first means that societies providing high living standards, security, tolerance, good environment and other goods are called democratic. The second definition is based on the existence of certain procedures, institutions, roles and processes, like elections. The presence of formal procedures is sufficient for a democracy definition. But if democracy is a process neither the result of it nor its formal surface characteristics should have the highest significance. Maintaining and running the democratic process is the important aspect as well as the conditions supporting it. By saying this we are back to the philosophical discussion. In essence democracy is dialog between people. That means that people search for solutions to their problems by thinking together with others. But that presupposes that each person has a dialog with himself and that each person starts with the position that own ideas and beliefs need to be better (aporia). This makes it possible to listen to others. Each participant in a democratic process, or a dialog, feels always the need of other participants because he is expecting them to help him and together with other able people find a better idea (phronesis, autonomy).

ICT can contribute to this process by making information accessible and therefore facilitating citizens' participation in political decision making. It can support openness and by that invite people to be more aware and active. Furthermore, it can support horizontal communication among citizens. Issues that are of interest to few people or to people that for some reason have difficulties to contact each other by traditional means may be neglected in the political process even though they are important. ICT can easily overcome such difficulties and provide a powerful tool to connect, inform and coordinate people's actions. Most important, ICT can support self-critical and systematic thinking, which is the base for successful democratic dialog. ICT systems are currently used to create aporia and to stimulate autonomy during a process of problem solving and decision making. Advanced games simulate the complexity of reality in micro worlds, broadening the spectrum of opportunities and possibilities to support dialog.

**At the Confluence of Ideologies: Social Media, Sustained Critique**

**ABSTRACT:** Foucault argued that “the work of deep transformation can only be carried out in a free atmosphere, one constantly agitated by a permanent criticism” (1988, 155). This “permanent criticism” is necessary because a “transformation that remains within the same mode of thought, a transformation that is only a way of adjusting the same thought more closely to the reality of things can merely be a superficial transformation” (155). The potential to realize “deep transformation” through the use of social media therefore necessitates a permanent critique of the technology’s various underlying ideologies. In this paper, we focus our critique on three specific ideologies that converge in many studies – whether celebratory or critical – of social media and its political efficacy: information, civil society, and democracy. We chose these three because they respectively presuppose what social media is about, whom it is for, and what it might accomplish.

The work of Day (2001a; 2001b; 2008) and Peters (1988) on the ideology of information demonstrate how capitalist, epistemological, liberal, and technocratic values are mobilized through a historical notion of information that acts as a totalizing, self-legitimizing trope. Information becomes at once an extensive yet narrow imperative colonizing social interaction and individual cognition. Dunn’s work on the ideology of democracy (2005, 2010) raises critique above the perennial debate over democracy’s best model (e.g., direct, deliberative, republican) by recognizing that democracy’s recent ascendancy as a political and rhetorical prerogative is contingent on its highly equivocal nature. Given democracy’s ambiguity, Post (2006) has argued that democracy is too shallow an ideology to redress the many injustices its proponents expect it to resolve, while Wood (2006) contends that it serves as ideological weapon for neo-imperialism. The ideology of democracy is arguably a detour on the path to social welfare and equality. The ideology of civil society underwrites both information networks and genuine democracy. Ehrenberg (1999) demonstrates its convoluted history and shakes it free of many celebratory assumptions. Perhaps most significantly, Ehrenberg reveals civil society as complicit in liberal policy. Meanwhile, the work of Mansbridge (1980) suggests that an overestimation of civil society obscures local exercises of coercion and exploitation.

Despite the importance of the aforementioned studies, they suffer drawbacks we hope to rectify. First, these analyses are usually done in isolation despite the interconnectedness of the concepts. Second, these studies either predate or ignore the introduction of new media, raising the question whether social media has since transformed these ideologies so as to require re-evaluation of the critiques of Day, Dunn, or Ehrenberg. Third, despite posing powerful rebuttals to the vaunted power of information, democracy, and civil society, the studies we draw upon have received limited uptake in popular, academic, and critical discourse. Bringing together all of these critiques in the present discussion on social media’s socio-political possibilities is important. It allows us to begin systematically unpacking the ideals that are now interwoven in both the rhetoric of “Facebook Revolutions,” “Twitter Uprisings,” and “Democracy 2.0,” and the more nuanced evaluations of social media’s transformative efficacy. By revisiting the critical analyses above we endeavor to engage in Foucault’s permanent critique, and thereby continue to scrutinize the assumptions in political discourse in the 21st century.

**JULIEN RUEFF**

McGill University

**Internet-Mediated Democratic Practices: Contributions from Jacques Rancière's  
Critical Theory to New Perspectives of Communication Research**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper will not present the thought of Jacques Rancière for its own sake, but explores how it could participate in the renewal of research on the political uses of the Internet. In this area, many studies analyze how governments, political institutions, social movements, or young people exploit the Internet in order to participate in the political sphere. It is also worth mentioning the studies of online journalism, which add to the diversity of these political uses of the Internet. Online political discussions are an important subject for the scientific community as well. From this perspective, concepts of „public space“ or „counter-public subaltern“ still have a huge popularity because they allow one to analyze the possible contributions of political discussions on the Internet for a democratic revitalization.

The research cited above has in common that it all engages with a distinction between participatory democracy and representative democracy. The originality of Rancière's thought relies precisely on its redefinition of relationships between the concepts of politics and democracy. This theory doesn't identify democracy with a form of government, whether this government whether or not this government authorizes participation or privileges representation. It rather identifies democracy with practices presupposing the equality of political actors. From there, examining political use of the Internet means looking for practices by which users confirm the equality of any user with any other. This point has not escaped Jacques Rancière, for whom online encyclopedias - like Wikipedia –result from a collaborative process presupposing equality among users. These democratic practices would then contest the teacher's authority over the ignorant and, consequently, an «epistemocratic organization» of social relationships.

Beyond confirming the assumption of equality of anyone with anyone, Rancière's thought reveals another essential feature of democratic practices: the process of subjectivation involved in these democratic practices. This means that actors of democratic practices reject identities assigned by the dominant political order and create, at the same time, their own collective identity. From this point of view, research on Internet-mediated democratic practices may also question this process of subjectivation. This analytical approach seems relevant, for example, when focusing on social movements like „Occupy Wall Street.“ The actors in this social movement have extensively mobilized information technologies in order to coordinate their actions, share analyses, provide information to the public, or provide proof of the violence of the police. This social movement would however not have had the same face without the emergence of a new collective identity, namely „the 99%“. The website „wearethe99percent.tumblr.com“ seemed to be an essential medium in this process of subjectivation. Here too, Rancière's thought offers original perspectives on Internet-mediated democratic practices.

**MIKAEL LAAKSOHARJU**

Uppsala University

**In Support of Democratic Dialogue**

**ABSTRACT:** There are many interpretations of what constitutes a democracy. Not all of these recognize that the fundament for a democratic society is the acceptance of dissent. All qualities that we see as constituent of democracy, like separation of powers; equality; elections; freedoms of speech, political expressions and press; etc., are however empty phrases unless society protects those who do not subscribe to the predominant, publicly endorsed ideologies. Nevertheless, it

cannot be disregarded that dissent can be destructive and even pose a danger to the democracy that protects it. Recently we have seen all over Europe that populist right-wing parties are gaining increasing influence; influence that could be interpreted as a threat to democratic principles like equality of individuals. How can this be dealt with democratically?

We believe that the only reasonable way — the only democratically correct way — to handle populist discontent is by careful scrutiny of what is being expressed. To stigmatize and trying to exclude the dissent from public debate has not been successful in suppressing the tendencies. By instead refuting the fundamental premises for the claims, it should be a minor problem to refute these. Complaints should not be denied but instead publicly challenged. This presupposes great trust in democratic principles but also a preparedness to change ones own position.

To facilitate democratic dialogue about concrete issues, on any level in society, we have constructed a collaborative tool. The principle is very simple, almost banal, and the fact that we propose a simple tool to solve a complex problem in deed seems presumptuous. Yet we have experienced that the tool is remarkably powerful. The reason why we can claim with some confidence that it works, is the theoretical founding of it. It is built on the assumption that people are not making judgments in isolation. Societies are systems of people and thus societal problems can only be solved by addressing values and interests of the involved stakeholders; by answering questions about how these are affecting the problem situation and how these are affected by any proposed solution.

The advantages with using the tool for this type of analysis are many. First, the tool supplies an open, distributed platform, in which an analysis can evolve organically. It allows different parties to include their points of view and decision makers to follow how arguments have been applied in concrete situations. Second, it counters the power of rhetoric and invites pluralism. Unlike debates, there is no need to limit the number of issues. Structure is instead given by application of arguments in concrete situations. Finally, the tool is designed to counter a number of biases, commonplace in decision making. The form in which arguments are presented makes it difficult to revert to value-laden principled reasoning, and invites to a proactive, concrete, solution-oriented discourse.

At the conference, we will present the moral philosophical and psychological foundation for the tool and demonstrate how it works. It represents a form of social media that has the purpose of facilitating democratic dialogue.

### **AMIT M. SCHEJTER and JAMES LOSEY**

Penn State University and New America Foundation, Open Technology Initiative

#### **Understanding the Democratic Capacity of Networked Communications**

**ABSTRACT:** Since its appearance in public life, the Internet has often been touted as more than a mere platform and as possessing the potential to be a democratizing force. This potential, however, has been more the subject of popular debate surrounding political phenomena ranging from the Drudge Report's expose of President Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinski, through the political campaigns of Howard Dean and Barack Obama, to the emergence of unexpected social movements in the Arab world and on Wall Street, than a quantifiable phenomenon that can also be set against actual "values" representing "democracy." Indeed, while it is true that networks of users can engage with other users locally or globally, and websites or Internet supported services such as Twitter and Facebook can serve as organizing tools, their power to increase democratic participation is less certain; in particular it is less certain whether the "participation" they support is also meaningful. Additionally, these forms of media exist within a greater media ecosystem and it remains unclear what, if any, factors of Internet use result in meaningful change

in the relationship between users and government bodies. The democratic capacity of networked communications, thus, exists as an unknown and assessing how meaningful a broadband connection is to democratic life has remained no more than an immeasurable ideal. This paper offers a framework for assessing this capacity by defining measurable elements, each of which points to aspects of democratic participation that are theoretically grounded. This framework can serve as the basis for measuring the extent of the contribution of broadband connectivity to a given society's democratic potential. The democratic potential of an Internet connection encompasses various factors including ownership, literacy, and utility of the connection. It also takes into account elements of democratic performance such as engagement with news and legislative affairs and active participation in the digital public sphere, in order to assess whether a system does indeed stand up to its potential. Additionally, this paper outlines how to compare the democratic capacity of new media with traditional media such as radio, television, and print. No doubt, Internet access will continue to be a policy priority for governments around the world but unless factors that implicate democratic capacity are taken into account policymakers risk merely transitioning citizens from one technology to another without supporting meaningful change.

**HALLVARD MOE and ANDERS LARSSON**

University of Bergen and Uppsala University

**Mapping Participation and Power on Twitter during Election Campaigns.  
A Comparison of the Scandinavian Countries.**

**ABSTRACT:** The advent of so-called social media represents a twofold challenge for critical social science research. Firstly, they represent popular phenomena, surrounded by buzzwords and heralded as democratizing and liberating forces in and for public debate. Such claims call for assessment based on critical theories and sound, contextually aware empirical insights. Secondly, social media represent a rich source of information on users that, especially when aggregated, facilitates new understandings of how media and communication tools are utilized. Commercial businesses and state authorities alike are increasingly exploiting such information. As such, there is a pertinent need for social scientists to appropriate such methods for information collection in order to understand their potential as well as their limitations.

This paper addresses both of these challenges. By presenting findings from a comparative study of political discussions on Twitter during election campaigns in Sweden (2010), Norway (2011) and Denmark (2011), the paper discusses the role of social media in the public sphere and its colonization by focusing on issues of participation and power. The analysis looks into what characterizes the most active users, the more passive users as well as those users whose messages gets most widely disseminated. Results show that participation and power on Twitter looks remarkably like the offline world, both in terms of actors and their modes of communication. Comparing the three cases, the paper explains differences and similarities, and point to the potential merits and risks pertaining to political social media use. Moreover, the study assesses the popular rhetoric surrounding social media by providing findings on Twitter use before, during and after the height of the two election campaigns. In doing so, the paper provides unique insights into the practice of civic microblogging in three comparable modern democracies.

Methodologically, the study shows how new sources of data can be analyzed for a critical perspective on social media use. The data – content and meta-data on a large amount of thematically tagged tweets – has been collected by means of open source software (YourTwapperKeeper), and further analyzed and visualized with the aid of an open source visualization application (Gephi). Specifically, tweets hashtagged according to each specified election were archived during a one-month period leading up to each election date. This allows for a large-scale analysis of online

political behaviour on the Twitter platform. Such patterns of political behaviour were identified by means of statistical methods and social network analysis, allowing for clarifying visualizations of the top identified users and their specific relationships pertaining to political Twitter use. The paper further discusses the pros and cons of the method employed arguing for the need to critically evaluate and further utilize such novel tools in critical Internet studies.

Parallel session 3C title: Feminism 2.0? Gender and Family in the Age of Technoculture

**VILDAN IYIGUNGOR**

Marmara University

**The Women's Movement And Cyberactivism In Turkey: From The Streets  
To The Streets Mediated By Internet**

**ABSTRACT:** The internet has mainly a two-fold function. On the one hand, global economic relations depend on the capital flows. On the other hand, the internet is a resistance tool or an alternative media distributor, or a public sphere that social movements use.

Politically-motivated movements rely on the internet. Through cyberactivism social movements create new forms of communities, communication, mobilization and resistance. Activists take advantage of the technologies and techniques offered by the internet to achieve their traditional goals. New social movements organizational strategies are internet-enhanced. These movements are based more on shared values and identities than specific issues.

In this paper, the feminist movement's cyberactivism in Turkey will be examined and the movement's campaigns against male violence, especially against crimes directed towards women. It focuses on the "We are in Rebellion to the Crimes Against Women" campaign and its website, email distribution lists and social media. The women's movement organisation uses the new media as a democratic public sphere and aims to mobilize its members and the women. It aims to attract the attention of the politicians and political parties to the change the laws. In fact, the movement's cyberactivism is mainly directed to the minds of individuals. Drawing attention to the patriarchal mentality of male violence against women is intended to put pressure on public institutions. The Movement use the new media and email distribution lists for awareness, since traditional information channels, the mainstream media, are controlled by the patriarchal ideology. New media and email distribution lists are used to circulate the alternative news and information for criticism and interpretation.

At the same time the Movement uses new media or email distribution lists to call for a demonstration at a given place and time, or to call for an action pressing over the government or political parties such as for a law in favor of women.

All of the social movements could be examined in their historical context, when we look at the political history of Turkey. After 1980, the ascending women's movement created a public sphere relying on books, pamphlets, monthly newspapers and home meetings. Their activity took place in the saloons, on the streets and in the squares. Now in the time of globalization the movement's activities take place on the streets and on the squares as democratic public spheres again but mediated by virtual spheres as democratic public spheres.

Methodologically, it will be interviewed with the activists and used active participatory survey and examined emailing lists.

**Gendered Openness: Politics of Presence in the FLOSS-movement**

**ABSTRACT:** During the last decade the Free-/Libre- /Open Source Software (FLOSS) movement has come to establish itself as one of the most vital transformative forces within the digital economy and culture. The FLOSS-movement seeks to defend different forms of information freedoms, providing a social critique of the intellectual property logic, thus resisting the monopolization of digital cultural/informational resources. As challengers of existing power-relations within the informational economy, the ideas, goals and visions of the movement has transcended its origins in alternative software development and are informing a broader spectrum of resistance activities grounded in cyberpolitics and hacker culture. However, this is a cyberpolitics strongly gendered and the question is; how does it matter?

Although the male domination of the FLOSS-movement is well-known, it is rarely critically questioned and/or analyzed. Rather, we dare to argue, researchers tend to echo the idealistic rhetoric formulated in official movement discourse. The strong emphasize on openness, inclusiveness and egalitarianism, however, does not translate well given that FLOSS developer communities constitute a much more gender-secluded arena than the IT sector in its entirety. There are no indications that the representation of women in the FLOSS movement has changed during the last decade (Nafus 2011). In case FLOSS really provides an open space for everyone to "join the movement", this radical gender divide seems both surprising and unfortunate. In particular one can ask, what is obscured with the universal claims and gender-neutral movement discourse, echoed in the body of (equally male-dominated) research? In social movement research, gender-perspectives typically have been deployed on identity movements focusing women's concerns. However, it has been argued that all social movements and collective action processes are gendered (Taylor 1999). Failing to acknowledge how they are gendered, therefore, means that we are unable to thoroughly understand collective action per se. As noted by Einwhoner et al. (2000), "[...] gender is frequently invoked by movement participants, reflected in movement strategies, incorporated in movement goals, claimed as identities by movement actors, and used as weapons by movement opponents."

Our presentation will point to the relevance of a gender aware- or feminist perspective on the contentious politics of the FLOSS movement in particular and contemporary cyberpolitics in general. We will offer an overview of some of the key mechanisms and structures present, which seem especially significant for understanding gender stratification processes. We then discuss how gender and gender-divide-issues have been constructed in the public movement discourse. We specifically direct our critical discussion towards the different lines of argumentation emanating from the supposed neutral ontology of technology. We discuss how this is translated into an "inclusive" and "gender-blind" body politics which subsequently is used as the (self-)evident reason for claiming the relative "un-importance" of gender-issues within the movement. With this line of argumentation, which also renders "the politics of presence" (Phillips 1995) irrelevant, follows the logic where the large community of coders, hacktivists and developers understand themselves as representing "the rest". As empirical backing we draw on a broad range of material including discussion-list debates, movement literature and official documents, all of which have raised or obscured gender issues. In addition, the presentation is reflective on previous and current research on FLOSS politics and gender issues and how it is intersecting with social movement studies.

## **FREDRIK SJÖGREN**

Luleå University of Technology

### **Gender and ICT for Sustainable Growth?**

**ABSTRACT:** The aim of this paper is to critically scrutinize the discursive connections between gender, development of ICT, and sustainable growth.

Sustainable growth is generally depicted as the coming together of economical, social, and ecological sustainability of growth, for instance through a shift to a so called knowledge economy (cf. Krings 2011). Yesterday, the only focus was on economic growth, we are told. Today however, this aspect of growth will have to be restricted by both ecological and social sustainability. In days of insurgence and rebellion all around the globe, of ecological and major capitalist crisis this might seem as a very wise consideration. If the capitalist system has inflicted serious damage upon itself, let us then rescue it from itself (cf. European Commission 2010).

Governmental agencies in Sweden, as the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket) and the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems (Vinnova) actively work with promoting a more sustainable growth through a gender perspective (see for instance Granhilda and Granat Thorslund 2011). Many Swedish ICT-research projects also get funding from Vinnova, and the agency actively promotes a gender perspective in the funded research environments.

Drawing on critical studies on the development of ICT (e.g. Dyer-Witford 1999; Wajcman 2004), my own research on gender and ICT-research, and through a critical reading of documents from ICT-research organizations, Vinnova, Tillväxtverket, and the European Commission, I will scrutinize the use of gender and gender equality for promoting sustainable economic growth with the use of ICT. How is gender and ICT reified in relation to and subjected to economic growth? How is gender supposed to lead to better innovations within ICT R&D? How is capital enclosing struggles, in this case for gender equity and equality, by subjecting it to the robustness of ICT R&D, and in extension to economic growth?

Possible main results will be that social sustainability is subjected to economic growth through the reification of gender and ICT, and openings for securing a critical gender perspective in times of subjugation of gender perspectives for economic growth. Relevance for the conference is most notably the scrutinizing of how particular democracy struggles gets reified and disarmed by strategies for sustainable growth.

## **SAMO GRASIC and JENNIE OLOFSSON**

Umeå University

### **“Did You Mean: Why are Women Cranky?”**

#### **Exploring the Gendered Implications of Information Retrieval Processes**

**ABSTRACT:** The rise of the Internet scaffolds our habitual use of computational means and facilitates their integratedness in everyday life. Providing social platforms, online communities and Web-based services it clearly affects how we communicate, learn, shop and play (Jackson et al. 2001, 363). Endeavors to map and characterize the Internet’s infrastructure have been accompanied by research that has paid particular attention to the different implications of search engines: the politics of search engines (Introna and Nissenbaum 2000a, 2000b), users’ eye movements as they browse through results from search engines (Pan et al. 2007), the imbalanced representation of websites in different search engines (Vaughan and Zhang 2007) as well as the structure of search engine law (Grimmelmann 2007). Saying this, far from being neutral means through which information is retrieved search engines have profound affects on the shaping of

the Internet.

Given the interest in the functions of search engines it is interesting to note that the cultural and political means through which information is retrieved on search engines remains unanswered in relation to gender. This paper is an attempt to bridge this gap. It explores some of the gendered implications of information retrieval processes of Google's search engine services. More specifically, our interest concerns how Google's provision of functions such as instant search, auto complete suggestions and automatic spelling corrections services works in tandem with gender stereotyping. While gender currently is one of the most crucial means of classification in everyday life it is interesting to note how gender specifically erupts as Google uses instant search, auto complete suggestions and automatic spelling correction services.

In previous research it has been argued that the aggregate traffic within search engines is a mere reflection of mass tastes (Granka 2010, 371). Put differently, the information retrieved is assumed to denote the interests of the search engine users. As such it is also part of a presumed one-way communication. The problem with this argument is that it tends to oversimplify processes of information retrieval. While provision of personalized and customized information retrieval is realized through instant search, auto complete suggestions and automatic spelling corrections services, the search results are based on societal norms and expectations on, for example men and women. In order to outline the political implications of search engines it is therefore necessary to understand that the locating of information also serves to inform about what the user is looking for (Introna and Nissenbaum 2000b, 176). With James Grimmelman (2007, 31f) "to the extent that a search engine is viewed as a speaker [...] its recommendations of content potentially become endorsements of that content's message". Hence, as technology and society mutually feed of from each other (Wajcman 2004, 33f) the recommendations provided by Google do not so much reflect gender stereotypes as endorse them. The search result then, is the outcome of social, political, cultural and economic interests.

**EVA SVEDMARK**

Umeå University

### **Diffraction as Critical Method**

**ABSTRACT:** The social media landscape is vast and so is the amount of words written about what we do, how we do and the power of what we do in the ecology of interaction. But it is so much more that knowledge about interaction patterns that are in play. Drawing on a three year long ethnographic study of extreme emotional online sharing mingled with a six month long ethnographic study of online bodily exposure among youth this paper argues that to reach a critical understanding of the information society we must stop only mirror what we see and start use diffraction as method in search for the uncommon to see traces of the common. Using diffraction as method is a critical practice that aims not to reflect but to diffract the known, to map out differences from within in order to understand which differences matters, how they matter and for whom (Barad 2008). Early findings in the material show that the technology itself is performative in relation to its use and users, providing feelings of trust and intimacy. It also indicates that ethics in this context is complex and entangled with the digital material suggesting that ethics transcends the human.

Leaning on feminist technoscience theory (Haraway 1991, 1997, Barad 2003, 2007) and taking a post humanist standpoint (Introna 2009, Verbeek 2011) the paper further argues that by using a diffractive methodology we can learn other things about the socialnatural (or socialmaterial) practices in a way that are far from reproducing and mirroring what we already know. Quoting

Barad (2008 pp.91) “. ... knowing is not about making facts but about making worlds”. In other words; knowing is the worlds becoming not its explanation. There for we need new methodological approaches to critical studies of the information society. Diffraction can be one.

## **INDERPAL GREWAL**

Yale University

### **'Parental Control' and the Marketing of Family Security**

**ABSTRACT:** In an earlier essay (published in *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 36:1&2) I examined the emergence of the “security mom” as a key participant in the surveillance mechanisms of the US state enmeshed in the “war on terror” and its intensification after 9/11. In suturing family security and state security through practices of consumption and mobility, this figure brought surveillance and militarism into the private sphere of the family. In this paper, I examine the marketing and use of “parental control” and security software that is intended for use within the home to understand how “fearful consumption” or even, “fearful prosumption” of ICT's are altering notions of family, sexuality, and childhood in contemporary USA. My objects of study are articles and advertisements in *Popular Computing Magazine* and in a variety of websites devoted to parenting for US consumers. My goal is to understand how the “private” domain of the family is being renegotiated in the interests of the security of children and family.

Following Foucault's idea that a perpetual war exists in modern society as a mode of constant defense, I suggest that the family is not simply a domain of a hegemonic “security mom,” but rather it is the site of this war between parents and children over the control of technology. However, this war is not simply a concern for welfare or protection, but rather a means to produce information as commodity from the new gendered relations within the family. Such a process requires collaboration between family, state and corporations, in which not only is security privatized in the family but also commoditized through the work of the corporations that sell security for the “security mom” who must surveil to be a “good” parent. Such “fearful prosumption” results in the collapse between the private sphere of the family and the private commodity of the corporation.

The figure of the mother and the sphere of the family have long been of interest for social research and feminist research, and there is growing interest in theorizing how ICT's alter the notion of the family as the “private sphere.” This paper contributes a feminist approach to understanding the changing nature of the “private” within ICT theory through examining family and gender relations.

Parallel session 4A title: Reloading Karl Marx? Exploitation, Alienation, and Commodification in the Age of the Internet

**ROB HEYMAN and JO PIERSON**

Vrije Universiteit Brussel

**User Generated Content or User Generated Audiences? Debunking the Empowerment Myth through Analysis of User Registration and Commodification on Social Media**

**ABSTRACT:** Social media are looking for ways to monetise their network on the long term. These companies have two assets in common, their loyal user base and vast amounts of information about these users (which includes User Generated Content or UGC). These assets are used for targeted advertising purposes. Social media are commoditising personal information and this is visible in the social media design. The design limits users' chances to be informed and thus design influences users' agency on social media with regard to this on-going commodification. This is an indication of disempowerment, as opposed to the much celebrated nature of empowerment and autonomy via these media.

We confront the literature that celebrates user empowerment and user generated content with a critical, politic economical view on labour. This confrontation shows how UGC and PII (Personal Identifiable Information) are being leveraged for surplus value through immaterial labour. Immaterial labour (IL) was first conceptualised by Italian Marxist Autonomists and adapted to social media by Coté and Pybus. IL is used to conceptualise the commodification of subjectivities to market goods and services. This process can be with or without users' consent. Because both UGC and PII are relevant to privacy, we have added the privacy framework of conceptual integrity. Since we will be analysing distinct features of social media we have integrated the perceived and real affordances approach. This combination is needed to analyse how the commodification of UGC and PII on social media have shaped the registration process and advertising services, which shape user empowerment and disempowerment on social media.

In this paper we analyse two central aspects, the registration process and advertising services on social media. We analyse to what degree users were given an informed choice in adapting these new forms of targeted advertising. For this research we examine four social media platforms; Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and StumbleUpon. They are dominant social media players, providing the clearest examples of new forms of advertising in three distinct ways. The findings are based on a combination of in-depth web content analysis and expert interviews during 2010. The outcome is based on surveillance and privacy research in the four-year interdisciplinary project 'EM-SOC - User Empowerment in a Social Media Culture' ([www.emsoc.be](http://www.emsoc.be)) in Flanders (Belgium). The research shows that users are asked to opt-in once, during the registration process. Informed consent is however hard to achieve because the terms of service or privacy statements are hard to find and read. Advertising on social media exists in different forms: targeted advertising, targeted advertising coupled to social context or UGC, and advertising integrated in the main services (for example in Facebook's News Feed). As these new services are rolled out, they are either impossible to opt-out or they are hard to opt-out because users are unaware of them. The paper illustrates the limits of user empowerment on social media and how there is even user disempowerment in the case of targeted advertising and the related privacy issues on social media. This paper also proposes a method to measure users' agency with regard to their privacy on social media.

**ROBERT PREY**

Simon Fraser University

### **Networks of Exclusion, Networks of Exploitation**

**ABSTRACT:** As Hardt and Negri (2004: 142) put it, "today...we see networks everywhere we look." It is the network form which is widely understood to be one of the key characteristics of 'new media' (Gane and Beer 2008) and the "network metaphor" which acts as "an organizing framework" (Cavanagh 2007: 24) for how we understand society.

This paper argues that network discourse has oriented social critique away from the critique of exploitation towards an almost exclusive focus on "the theme of exclusion" (Boltanski & Chiappello 2005: 347). Demonstrating the limitations in viewing exclusion as the dominant locus of social critique, I argue for the need to re-conceptualize how we visualize networks in order to be more sensitive to what is still the preeminent exercise of power under capitalism – the extraction of surplus value.

Not surprisingly, Marx provides us with some of the tools to accomplish this. When the ontological assumptions that ground the network discourse are examined we quickly realize that 'networks' are a contemporary representation of a much older philosophical argument: the idea that relations between things should be the focus of inquiry and that process precedes substance. As Anne Fairchild Pomeroy (2004) argues, the same process-relational ontology provides the foundation for Marx's philosophy. However, unlike contemporary network theorists (ie. Lash 2002; Castells 1996, 2009), Marx's foregrounding of relationality and process thinking leads us not into the inclusion/exclusion cul-de-sac but rather to a critique of exploitation writ large. This paper illuminates why this is so by reviewing how production for Marx is both a particular activity under the capitalist mode of production (Marx, 1990) and - crucial for contemporary critical scholarship on "new media" - a general activity of human "species-being" (Marx 1973, 1988). The idea of 'exploitation of the commons' is thus latent in Marx's general conception of production.

This paper draws attention to the shared process-relational ontology that underlies both network discourse and Marx's dialectical philosophy. This ontology is most forcefully exemplified in Marx's theory of exploitation, via both his particular and general conceptions of 'production'. Contrary to popular perception then, this paper argues that Marx's theory of exploitation is no relic of a hierarchical world of industrial capitalism but rather a theory of social relations rooted in a process-relational ontology that is perfectly capable - even highly predisposed - to critiquing power in "the network society".

**JERNEJ PRODNIK**

University of Ljubljana

### **Processes of Commodification: From the Labor of Audiences to the Social Factory in Information Society**

**ABSTRACT:** Commodity-form has played an important, if often overlooked role in studies of capitalism. Authors such as Lukács (1971), Adorno (1991/2001), Sohn-Rethel (1978), Cleaver (1979/2000), and Postone (1993/2003) have focused much of their attention to this 'cell-form of capitalism', while commodification has at the same time played a crucial role throughout Marx's oeuvre. Historically speaking, processes of transforming literally anything into a privatized form of (fictitious) commodity that can be exchanged or sold in the market are of critical importance for the rise and reproduction of capitalism. The starting aim of the paper will be to demonstrate how the role of commodification was analyzed in key works of heterodox critical theory, and

more specifically, how this topic was approached in critical communication studies, especially in the (critique of) political economy of communication (see Mosco 2009). The latter will be done through a reappraisal of the 'blind spot debate'. This long-lasting debate, which at least indirectly continues to this day (e.g. Napoli 2010; Fuchs 2010; Caraway 2011), contains an invaluable source for practices and ideas connected to both Marxian-inspired critical communication studies, and even more importantly, to a serious analysis of the continuing commodification of different spheres of society and its increasing pervasiveness in contemporary life. On this basis, author will claim that political economy of communication could (and ought to) in many ways overlap with the latest approaches to critical theory of society. Findings and ideas on audiences-as-commodities will therefore be connected to autonomist neo-Marxism (i.e. Virno, Marazzi, Negri, Hardt, Dyer-Witheford). Authors connected to this approach claim that communication, or even language-capacity as such, is gaining an increasingly important role in post-Fordist capitalism; it holds a paradigmatic role both at different social levels and in capitalism as such, which is only one of the several possible links to the critique of political economy of communication. The concept of 'social factory', which discloses how work has expanded beyond places commonly intended to host the production process (i.e., factory) into wider society (see Negri 1984/1991; Negri 1992; Terranova 2004 etc.), can be directly linked to findings of Smythe, where he points at full-fledged commodification of different social spheres. Smyth 'prophetically' claimed in one of his pertinent theses that audiences are crucial commodities, which are manufactured and sold by advertisers, and furthermore, that audiences in fact labor. Even more importantly however, Smythe (1981b, 121) derived another radical thesis on the basis of these findings, claiming that today "work time for most people is twenty-four hours a day." Consequences of these findings are radical and wide-ranging, while most importantly, his observations are proven day-by-day. Smythe's thesis in its fundamentals means that all aspects of not only social, but human life can be fully commodified and be drawn into the market place, whether one knows it or (preferably) not. As Jameson (2010, 26) would put it, there is a 'tendential dominion of commodity-form' in current historical epoch. This is especially obvious with the rise of digital technologies that started to play crucial role in these very processes, providing unprecedented detail and further 'rationalization' of measuring, quantification, and control (see Napoli 2011). Seeking converging points between certain heterodox lines of contemporary neo-Marxist critical theory (which might strictly speaking not form an important part for critical communication studies) and critique of political economy of communication, can therefore be regarded as only one of the insights brought by the proposed paper. There will also be a serious attempt to rethink both approaches through initial observations of critical theorists and their own original and mostly separated insights into questions concerning commodification. On the basis of arguments presented in the paper, author will also try to demonstrate how there is an ongoing tendency to totally subsume human life under capital.

**GÖRAN BOLIN**

Södertörn University

### **Value, Capital and Labour in Marx, Bourdieu and Baudrillard**

**ABSTRACT:** Marx labour theory of value has held a prominent position in recent debates on the social networking media and the Web 2.0, and the ways in which the media users contribute to the value generation within the digital economy. A blindspot in these debates are the incentives for media users to freely give their labour to the media industries. Why is it the media users, who are aware of the exploitative nature of the Web 2.0 business models (e.g. Facebook), freely submit their labour and the rights to their uploaded pictures and status updates?

Most scholars who have engaged in this discussion have thematised this either in affirmative ways, pointing to the possibilities for users to engage with the media in e.g. ‚produsage‘ (Bruns), the ‚wisdom of crowds‘ (Surowiecki), ‚distributed problem solving‘ and ‚crowdsourcing‘ (Brabham). Others have taken a more critical perspective, and theorised this as ‚exploitation‘, and ‚free labour‘ (Terranova), ‚playbour‘ (Kücklich), ‚loser-generated content‘ (Petersen). This paper suggests a third way, an analytical solution to this problem, by way of combining Marx labour theory of value with Bourdieu’s field theory. The basic argument is that the field theory of Bourdieu attempts to reach beyond the limitations of Marx’s labour theory of value, although at the same time building clearly on it (as the labour theory of value cannot sufficiently explain why people are seemingly working ‚for free‘ in the digital economy). In the course of the argument also Bourdieu’s field theory will be updated - partly by returning to its roots in Marx’s labour theory of value - and qualified in order to explain this phenomenon. The relevance also build on the fact that Marx’s labour theory of value is also at the root, not only in Bourdieu’s field theory, but also in theories on consumption and sign value in, for example, Baudrillard. Through this theoretical combination we can see that the processes around the web 2.0 actually involve two fields of production, with different outcomes in each (social status and differentiation in the field of consumption in which media users engage), that is then expropriated as labour in the field of cultural production, in which the commercial media industry extract value from the activities of media users in the field of cultural consumption.

**MARK COECKELBERGH**

University of Twente

**Data Milking/Identity for Sale: Remarks on Information Technology and the Problem of Alienation**

**ABSTRACT:** At first sight, new information technologies promise more knowledge, more autonomy and self-fulfilment, more possibilities to shape and control one’s identity, new forms of sociality, and opportunities for political participation and change. However, it is highly questionable if this is being achieved. What is going on? How can we best conceptualize the ethical and political problems raised by new information and communication technologies (ICTs)?

Various authors have drawn on Marx to identify and analyse what they take to be problems related to contemporary capitalism. For instance, Fuchs has used the term ‘exploitation’ to argue that users of Web 2.0. ‘produce surplus value and are exploited by capital’: for instance, users of social media generate content without receiving payment; but the content is sold as a commodity to advertisers. In this sense, the users are ‘sold as a commodity to advertisers’ (Fuchs 2011a, p. 214). Similarly, search engines like Google accumulate data and then sell them to third parties. But Google acts not only as an exploiter but also as ‘a meta-exploiter of all user-generated content producers’ since it ‘instrumentalizes all users and all of their data for creating profit’ (Fuchs 2011b).

In this paper, I will first apply this view to the relation between ICTs and identity: one could say that the identity users create on-line is commodified: turned into data and sold on the market. At best we are consumer cattle milked for data, at worst we are turned into data ourselves. We think we express and create our identity and that we are doing something ‘social’, but our identity and our sociality becomes externalized, commodified, and transformed from informational to financial capital.

Then I will further discuss and develop the ‘commodification’ thesis by using the concept of alienation. Engaging with both Marx and Heidegger, I will argue that this process of commodification can helpfully be conceptualized as (involving) processes of alienation. I use the Economic and

Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 (Marx 1844) to distinguish between several types of alienation and work here, but also Heidegger's essay on the question regarding technology (1954), in particular his term 'standing-reserve'.

Finally, I further explore similarities and tensions between the Marxist and the phenomenological tradition and offer some comments that question the commodification/alienation thesis and its assumptions. First, contemporary technology is not the same as 'modern technology': does use of social media and (other) ICTs really amount to 'indifference' (Marx 1846, p. 66) or to the loss of 'self-activity' (p. 87), given that identity workers care about content, although they may seem indifferent to the data they produce and to others? And does the internet necessarily exclude commitment, as Dreyfus has suggested (Dreyfus 2002)? Second, can we suffice with giving an 'objective' account? The phenomenological tradition draws attention to the experience of subjects. If this experience is not as negative as one may expect, we are faced with the that 'objectively' users are said to be commodified and alienated, but 'subjectively' they may or may not experience a problem. Experiences vary. How can we deal with this? Is this a matter of 'ideology' and 'false consciousness', or can we provide a less pessimistic analysis? Should we neglect concrete user experiences or at least dismiss these as irrelevant to the evaluation of our society? Third, is the social really threatened by these new technologies, as Fuchs and others suggest, or is the social far more resilient than we think? Fourth, are ICTs mere tools in the hands of capitalists, or is the nature of technology and its relation to humans more complex? In sum, how can we combine Marxist and Heideggerian insights in a way that is both intellectually satisfactory and politically relevant?

**ERAN FISHER**

Ben Gurion University

### **How Less Alienation Creates More Exploitation? Sociological Insights from New Media**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper tries to establish a Marxist-inspired theoretical model of contemporary capitalism by looking at an epitome of digital capitalism: social network sites (SNS). It offers a political economy analysis of SNS (and Web 2.0 more generally) by juxtaposing the conventional discussion on SNS as a mean of communication with a materialist understanding of SNS as a means of production, insisting on the dialectical relations between them. This is done through an examination of audience labor in SNS.

The notion of audience labor revised the traditional Marxist political economy analysis, which focused on media ownership, by pointing to media as a site of production in itself, a site that establishes particular relations of production. It highlighted the active role of audience in the creation of media value as both commodities and workers, thus pointing to audience exploitation in the mass media.

The emergence of a new media environment characterized by participation and interactivity has led to a renewed interest in such analysis, and a reexamination of audience exploitation. Focusing on Facebook as a case-study, this paper examines audience labor on SNS along two Marxist themes – exploitation and alienation. It argues for a historical shift in the tradeoff between exploitation and alienation of audience labor, concurrent with the shift from mass media to social media and from Fordism to post-Fordism. The paper argues that in the mass media, the capacity for exploitation was quite limited while alienation was high. In contrast, social media allows for new and exacerbated forms of exploitation, allowing the expansion and intensification of exploitation. However, since the work of social media users involves communication and sociability, such work also contributes to a process of de-alienation by allowing self-expression, authenticity,

relations with others, etc.

Most importantly, the paper argues that the new relations of production that SNS establishes are based on a dialectical link between exploitation and alienation: in order to be de-alienated, users must communicate and socialize, thus producing information (which has become a key force of production in contemporary capitalism), and in turn exacerbating their own exploitation. And vice-versa, in order for Facebook to exploit the work of its users, it must contribute to the de-alienation (or objectification) of their users.

Most generally, the paper suggests that SNS crystallizes a new social contract between capital and labor where the exacerbation of exploitation (of living labor) is coupled by a promise for de-alienation. The paper then also offers a political economy critique of the discourse on "participatory culture" prevalent in communication studies, by showing how communication becomes a site of struggle between emancipation and oppression. As a means of communication, Facebook gives people an almost universally accessible tool to express themselves, make connections, and facilitate social action, representing a potential for expanding human emancipation. On the other hand this promise is dialectically linked with the innate tendency of Facebook to commodify human communication and sociability, to harness cognitive, emotional, and communicative human potentialities to capitalist accumulation. Those two tendencies are not simply co-present on the Internet, but are dialectically linked. Facebook epitomizes this dialectical link by both enabling communication and commodifying it, by acting as both a means of communication and a means of production.

Parallel session 4B title: Philosophy and Ethics of Information: The Good and the Evil in the Information Society

**PAK-HANG WONG**

University of Twente

**From Culture 2.0 to a Network State of Mind (and Beyond): A Selective Analysis of the Axiological Foundation(s) of the Popular Discourse on the Internet and Web 2.0**

**ABSTRACT:** There is never a shortage of celebratory and condemnatory popular discourse on the Internet and the Web even in its early days. Although the hopes and dreams of the Internet and the Web have faded with the burst of dot-com bubble in 1990s and the rise of control and surveillance over and through information technology after September 11, 2003, the advent of Web 2.0, with its newly proclaimed potential and promise, has rejuvenated the hopes and dreams of the enthusiasts and renewed the popular discourse on the Internet and the Web. I shall argue that researchers should not take lightly the popular discourse on the Internet and Web 2.0, as it can deepen our understanding of the axiological foundation(s) of our judgements towards them. Looking at some of the most representative examples available (e.g. Andrew Keen's *Cult of Amateur*, Clay Shirky's *Here Comes Everybody* and *Cognitive Surplus*, Nicholas Carr's *The Shallow*, Jaron Lanier's *You are Not a Gadget* and Nick Bilton's *I Live in the Future & Here's How It Works*), I examine this (new) wave of popular discourse, focusing on the (new) worries and doubts voiced by the alarmists and the (new) hopes and dreams portrayed by the enthusiasts. More specifically, I will examine the problem representation (i.e. what problems are being represented and how they are represented) and axiologisation (i.e. what benefits and harms are being foregrounded and how they are foregrounded) of the Internet and Web 2.0 in popular discourse. I shall illustrate that the popular discourse on the Internet and Web 2.0 are ultimately rested on different notions of the self, i.e. the disengaged self of the Enlightenment, the expressive self of Romanticism and the reflexive self of the late modernity. This conclusion has a significant implication to practising the critique of the Internet and Web 2.0, namely it entails that our critique of the Internet and Web 2.0 cannot be done without referring to a notion of the self. Hence, a critical enquiry of the Internet and Web 2.0 should not only be about the moral and/or prudential goodness or badness of the Internet and Web 2.0 per se, instead it should be about whom we should be online, or which notion(s) of the self we should strive for.

I shall end my paper with a tentative answer the question of "Who Should We be Online?" by drawing from Wellman's and Ess's analysis of the human condition of the information society, and proposed an account the art-of-digital-life, i.e. the art of living in information society.

**ALISTAIR DUFF**

Edinburgh Napier University

**Blessed are the (Information) Poor: Political Theology for the Digital Era**

**ABSTRACT:** It is fashionable to ignore the contribution of religious thought to progressive economic politics and the struggle for social justice, but wrong so to do. In fact any fair assessment of the genuinely popular movements for a better society, as distinct from the 'left fascism' and

'state capitalism' spawned by other ideological traditions, must acknowledge the creative role of political theology—whether we are talking about the contribution of Christian socialism to the British Labour Party before its slide to the economic right under Tony Blair ('The Labour Party owes more to Tawney than to Marx', etc), or about liberation theology endorsing left violence against authoritarian regimes in South America (Segundo's and Miranda's so-called 'option for the poor'), or, indeed, about Ali Shariati's mosque-calls for Islamic social justice. In this paper I wish to retrieve some normative resources of the broad church of the religious economic left and apply them to problems of the digital era, such as access to information, power balances, etc. Building upon *Information Society Studies* (Routledge 2000) and *A Normative Theory of the Information Society* (Routledge 2012), I will attempt to tease out the specifically religious ideas embedded in the moral basis of the centre left, ideas that can help to keep alive the flickering flames of privacy, freedom and fairness in the post-industrial epoch.

**ANTHONY HOFFMANN**

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

### **Rewiring Rawls: Social Justice, Technology, and the Information Society**

**ABSTRACT:** Various attempts have been made to insert rights to information or access to information into a Rawlsian framework of social justice (for example, Drahos, 1996; van den Hoven and Rooksby, 2008). Still others have attempted to use Rawls' theory - justice as fairness, and in particular its "difference principle" - to articulate how informational and technological goods ought to be distributed today (for example, Lipinski and Britz, 2000; Raber, 2004; Fallis, 2004). More recently, Rawls' work has been appropriated as part of a comprehensive normative theory of the information society (Duff, 2010; Duff, 2011). However, what these attempts have in common (besides their commitment to broadly Rawlsian liberal principles) is a lack of critical attention to the assumptions and models that serve as the justificatory foundation for Rawls' theory. This paper proposes that certain features of the information society - as articulated by political economists (Benkler, 2006), communications scholars (Braman, 2006; Castells, 2009), and theorists of technology (Feenberg, 1992; Galloway, 2004) - force us to revisit the foundations of justice as fairness in order to determine if its fundamental assumptions as to the nature of persons and society in advanced liberal democracies accurately reflect our current condition. If, as the constructivist method that undergirds Rawls' theory asserts, "the correct regulatory principle for a thing depends on the nature of that thing" (Rawls, 1971), then we must ask: what, with regard to features relevant for a theory of social justice, is the nature of the information society?

Echoing leftist critiques of Rawls that claim justice as fairness does not properly account for the role of economic markets in shaping persons' life prospects (Doppelt, 1981; Miller, 1989; Sensat, 2007), this paper suggests that his theory also underestimates the role socio-technical systems and technological artifacts play in shaping the limits of practical political possibility. While sympathetic to Rawls' method, the author revisits the basic framework of justice as fairness by analyzing the potential impact of socio-technical systems at three critical junctures in its development: 1) its justificatory foundations, 2) the design of the original position, and 3) Rawls' two principles of justice. A failure to properly account for technology-related concerns at the first level of analysis would necessarily impact deliberation at the second level, while any modification at level two would necessitate a reevaluation at the third level, that is, at the level of Rawls' resultant principles of justice. If Rawlsian ideals are to continue to be appropriated by scholars of information and technology, this type of systematic analysis is necessary in order to critically evaluate the fitness of justice as fairness for conceiving of social justice in the information society.

**LÁSZLÓ ROPOLYI**

Eötvös University

### **The Crisis of Modernity and the Shaping of the Internet**

**ABSTRACT:** In the first part of this paper a philosophical analysis of the crisis development will be presented. In the second part these ideas will be associated with the cultural and social context of the Internet use.

The crisis is a process of transformation in which an established system (of beings, of values, of institutions, etc.) loses its integrity, disorganizes and a new system is emerging. Applying the Aristotelian view of processes three stages in the development of crisis can be distinguished: the critical, the crical and the dialectical stages; in which the "transformation" is possible, is actualizing and being actualized, respectively.

In the critical stage of crisis a unique existing actuality dominates over possibilities. However, this ruler position, which was previously accepted without doubt, now can be questionable, so the possibility of changes has already appeared here. Very typical ideologies of this stage of the process are the different forms of criticism: critical philosophies, utopias, avant-garde movements in art. Criticism belongs to the world-view of modernity.

In the crical stage of the proceeding crisis the unique existing reality as a basis for our activity is destroyed. Actuality loses its dominant position, the difference between actuality and possibilities cannot be identified anymore, so reality is relativised and pluralized. Here we have many actualities and it is impossible to make an acceptable comparison between alternative values and actualities. The crical attitude is a prod of deepest crisis. The typical ideologies of this stage are versions of irrationalism and postmodernism.

The third stage of crisis is the dialectical one. From this position we can comprehend the change of something as a change which has been actualized. Here it is evident that everything is commensurable, interconnected and interrelated. Actuality is developing, and in this process lots of possibilities are actualized, the world has a complex and open nature. In this stage typical ideologies are the dialectical philosophies.

The Internet is an artificial sphere for modern people, which is a prod of the crisis of modernity. Formation of the Internet can be associated with a crisis development – with the advancement of the crisis of modernity. The critical, crical and dialectical stages of this crisis creates and/or prefers different sorts of beings and practices are included into the Internet use, so it has a complex nature, which is imbued with the values of the relevant stages.

In this way the Internet as the product of a society in crisis has three fundamental facets. In the critical stage of crisis of modernity social utopias are created and the Internet can be considered as a virtual realm of these ambitions. In the next phase of the crisis these possibilities transform into realization and in this process the Internet will be the most significant holder of the fundamental postmodern values (plurality, virtuality, individuality, fragmentation, included modernity, against abstract power). From the perspective of the dialectical stage the Internet can be considered as a medium of a new realm for the mankind built on the traditional natural and social ones.

**EJVIND HANSEN**

Danish School of Media and Journalism

### **Human Rights in Distributed Networks**

**ABSTRACT:** Ideas and doctrines of human rights were articulated in close proximity with the creation of democratically founded nation states and the ideas of humans subjects as autono-

mous, self-legislating individuals. The ideas of human rights were conceived as a protection of the autonomous individual against the powers of the legislators, bureaucrats and executors who represent the state.

Various analysts like M. Foucault, G. Agamben, M. Hardt & A. Negri have, however, argued that the notion of the individual subject, conceived of in terms of rationality, coherence, and discipline as opposed to madness, ruptures, and desire is a historically contingent figure that seems to be vanishing for various reasons. In the analyses of Hardt & Negri the distributed networks of the market and the Internet are pointed out as the main reasons for this change.

If this analysis is reliable the dialectics between the autonomous individual and the legally regulated nation state is broken. I will explore the question in how far it is possible to maintain ideas of human rights, if the very notion of humanity is challenged by new kinds of community. Analysts like A.R. Galloway has suggested that regulation in distributed networks tends to dissolve disciplinary paradigms (because of the lack of legislative centres) in favour of more control-oriented paradigms (control as constituted through technical limitations in the protocols of exchange). L. Lessig has, however, problematized this, by pointing out that this is democratically problematic, because it deludes the responsibility of existing measures in the freedom of the users.

Taking the notion of freedom of speech as my starting point, I will argue that if the ideas of human rights are to be translated into a social setting consisting of communities in distributed networks, the control approach will not suffice. Even though it is possible to introduce some regulatory measures in the protocols of exchange, the regulations need to be open to reflection and adaptation to new situations. For this to happen, it is important (for democratical reasons) that they are continuously subject to legal reflection in the public spheres.

However, the new social settings urge a new reflection upon what kind of "humanity" we are trying to protect against what kind of "state". The jurisdiction of the states is challenged by the fact that the relevant issues at stake in communicative exchanges transgress the borders seamlessly. Paradoxically this facilitates both an informational "wild west" (e.g. exemplified by Wikileaks) and an informational "Fort Knox" in which corporations and cultural industries claim exceeding degrees of protection against unwilled use of their intellectual properties – even across national borders.

The new informational structures have thus in many ways exceeded the possibilities of exert our freedoms of expression, but at the same time blurred the exact borders of jurisdiction. The question thus is: Does it make sense to have a freedom of speech that is blurred to such a degree?

**SYED MUSTAFA ALI**

The Open University

### **Towards a Critical Race Theory of Information**

**ABSTRACT:** Recently, a number of works have begun to appear in the information studies literature which attempt to apply variants of critical theory to ICTs with a view to analyzing the power relations embedded within these technologies and the discourses associated with them. Building on earlier work (Ali forthcoming), in this talk, I will report on the use of a reflexive hermeneutic approach to analyze issues at the intersection of race and critical information studies; more specifically, I will present the results of a preliminary critical race theoretical enquiry into critical information theories as presented by Lash (2002) and Fuchs (2009). Paraphrasing Heidegger, the principal aim of the investigation is to „question concerning critical information theory“ from a critical race theoretical perspective, exploring the racial dynamics associated with critical information theorizing in order to (i) determine the extent to which, if at all, the categories, concepts and frameworks associated with such theories can be shown to be racially grounded, and

(ii) determine the extent to which critical information theory discourse reflects, yet masks (that is, conceals), differential power relations.

Following Mills, I want to question the necessity - in fact, the legitimacy – of adopting a neo-Marxist and/or neo-Hegelian framework as foundational for a project of critical enquiry aimed at exploring differential power relations and the political economy of ICTs. My criticism of existing approaches is twofold: Firstly, it is motivated by recent critical race theoretical scholarship which has exposed various dimensions of the Eurocentrism and/or racism implicit and explicit within the writings of Hegel and Marx (Eze 1997) (Bernasconi 2003) (Mills 2003) (Hoffheimer 2005) (Eze 2008) (Tibebu 2011); secondly, it is motivated by concerns that the base-superstructure ontology underpinning critical information theory is problematically committed to materialism and reductionism, contemporary reformulations of this dialectical ontology in terms of non-linear dynamical systems, complexity theory and emergent phenomena notwithstanding. For these reasons, rather than endorsing a critical information theory grounded in a neo-Marxist and/or neo-Hegelian framework, I advocate adoption of a critical race theoretical framework for thinking about information based on the conceptualisation of racism as a global social-political-economic system (Mills 1997). This necessitates positioning race, as opposed to class, at the centre of analysis and recasting the contemporary world system as white supremacist, rather than capitalist or imperialist, in nature. In addition, while recognizing the validity of a material aspect to structure-agency interactions, adoption of such a framework does not entail a commitment to materialism, whether reductive, emergent or dialectical. It will be argued that both these moves are significant for the development of critical information theory.

Parallel session 4C title: The Sociology and Political Economy of Consumption, Prosumption and Mobile Lifestyles

**VINCENT MANZEROLLE and LEE MCGUIGAN**

University of Western Ontario

**“The Store Becomes Omnipresent”: Theorizing the Political Economy of Ubiquitous Media and Markets**

**ABSTRACT:** A growing body of literature on the topic of “ubiquitous commerce” posits the annihilation of spatial and temporal constraints over markets as the inexorable culmination of digitization. The intellectual support for this perspective finds its most substantive expression in business journals favouring administrative research on marketing and information management. Technology, according to these scholars, evolves autonomously—rather than as the confluence of historically situated social developments. Moreover, these authors argue that digital media evolve to the mutual advantage of business firms, who enjoy augmented control over information resources and time-compression of capital processes, and consumers, who may overcome the limits of rationality by customizing marketplace structures (e.g., payment routines) and delegating aspects of decision-making to automated processes. In essence, consumers are conceptualized as “always-on” technological subjects, existing in a ubiquitous marketplace unbounded by time and space (Vollmer and Precourt 2008). Indeed, human capacities—communicative, creative, co-operative, affective, attentional—are adapted to continuous information management via technological prostheses. This marketing paradigm depends entirely on a communications and computing infrastructure to support ubiquitous commerce; and, ostensibly, it reduces electronic commerce to a fully naturalized (unnoticed and entrenched) component of social reality. Most fundamentally, these scholars regard communications technologies as instruments for freeing commercial markets and supplanting historical contingencies, such as geography, with the flexibility and efficiency of networks. The strategic momentum toward u-commerce consummates when “marketing is everything” (Watson et al. 2002).

Grounded in a careful review of this emerging literature, our paper offers a critical analysis of “ubiquity” as an economic category central to informational capitalism (Fuchs, 2010), but one that implicates a very specific technologically-mediated articulation of human capacities. Harold Innis’s perspective on the bias of communication is germane here because it considers not only the limits and pressures inherent to the physical dimensions and capabilities of technologies, but also the administrative and social conditions in which technologies are developed and embedded. Thus out of our critical analysis of u-commerce we re-deploy key concepts culled from the media theory tradition initiated by Innis, through Marshall McLuhan, and most recently, including theorists like Friedrich Kittler. We argue that the concept of “ubiquity” is a central, yet under-theorized, concept specifically related to the political economy of digital media. We therefore contribute to a theoretical framework specifically directed at the critical analysis of ubiquitous media as an embedded, and often invisible, technological infrastructure tuning human capacities to the paradoxical (rationalized and chaotic) demands of informational capitalism. Finally, we demonstrate that the approach cultivated by Innis attends to the principle tenets of political economy as outlined by Mosco (1996). An Innisian critique of u-commerce furthers our understanding of the commodification of network infrastructure and cybernetic information, the spatialization of digitized commercial markets, and the structuration of social relations within economic institutions.

**DENNIS BROE**

Long Island University

**Fais Attention: Cinema, the Internet, and the Archeology of Productive Perception**

**ABSTRACT:** Following Jonathan Beller's and others descriptions of the "attention economy," this paper traces both the prehistory of that economy and ways of thwarting it in the cinema. Attention, now in its directly commodified form, where internet clicks register attention and then are translated directly into value, can be seen to have been produced, organized, and directed in the century long history of the cinema which preceded and then paralleled this development. Here, especially in Hollywood film, a regime of attention was developed that consisted of ways of focusing attention in a form that as it progressed placed a premium on speedy comprehension of the image while at the same time moving away from any assessment of the context or deeper meaning of the image. Thus the "meaning" itself was a simple recognition of the iconic content of the image with more and more images bombarding the viewer at an ever faster pace. The inability to think the image in any specific or even relational sense other than as broad recognition of a narrative pattern was a part of the deconditioning of thoughtful attention that helped condition the internet spectator to search ever faster, constructing his/her own narrative on the internet, but again downplaying context or assessment of the kinds of relations that allow critical and political thinking. Conversely, other cinematic modes developed alternate means of relaxing attention, allowing space for a kind of reflection, i.e. long take styles ranging from the early work of Jean Renoir, to the late modernist Bela Tarr, to Asian Cineastes such as Jia Zhangke. This alternate mode points the way to political and critical reflection and finds its equivalent on the internet today perhaps in the more reflective attention focusing of shows like WBAI's "Democracy Now," in places where, in Marx's phrase, the general intellect can flourish and create spaces for change instead of it being relentlessly conditioned, directed and exploited as its desire is redirected to freely producing value that capital exploits (Facebook, YouTube, etc). This paper will first detail the developing of attention in the history of cinema, focusing on Hollywood modes of capturing and directing attention and relating them to the frenzied focusing of attention on commercial internet sites. It will then explore alternate relaxing of attention in long take styles pointing to how they evolved in a much more social and political context and then theorize how this loosening of attention to provide critical reflection takes place in alternate sites on the internet as well.

**YUJIE CHEN**

University of Maryland

### **Valorization of the Embodied Presence and Mobility in the Social Media**

**ABSTRACT:** Any stories about the impact of social media would be incomplete without understanding the transformations it ushers in to the marketing and advertising world (with latest coined term social commerce and group buying). While consumer's work in marketing and product-improvement is not new to the business world, the extent to which the role of producer and consumer is overlapping on the Internet and social network media needs nuanced studies. In particular, in the face of hegemonic ideologies equalizing prosumers' online participations with participatory democracy, it's substantially significant to disentangle the mechanism of value-creation in social-media-driven commerce. Therefore, the central questions for this paper are what kind of valorization mechanism emerged in the social media/commerce activities and which factors shaped the emergence of such valorization mechanism.

Instead of jumping to the newness of social media or totalizing all social media usage as "free labor", I propose to utilize media archaeology approach and take a retrospective look at how media technological breakthroughs remediate the previous advertising practice. The rationale is that in informational capitalism the media network infrastructure rules the traffic of information that corresponds to the traces of capital's accumulation and labor abstraction, and meanwhile information stored in the servers or data centers is meaningless unless being situated in the socio-cultural context and made relevant by us. Analysis will be conducted on several fronts: selective valorization of consumers' internet-mediated activities in the standardization and evolution of audience measurement, the socio-cultural context that is correlated to media and communication technologies, and mediated network infrastructure and its impact on the construction of the sociality.

Three points stand out: 1) the latest development of data-mining-based personalized advertisement is rooted in the long history of persistently systematic rationalization of potential consumers in the evolution of audience measurement strategies from the print age. What differentiates social media is that connectivity (especially through mobile devices) dislodges human bodies from fixed places. Mobility and constant mediated connectivity constitute counterproductive forces against the rationalization of users' behaviors. 2) As a result, users' embodied presence and mobility increasingly becomes the contested terrain between capital's economic exploitation and the construction of sociality through media. Embodied presence with its temporal and spatial coordinates is valorized in the social media/commerce as one form of scarce (informational) materials on which users are laboring. 3) Users' cognitive and communicative capacities to consume information and produce (new, relevant) meanings upon consumption translate into informational relevance. They pre-process the information before it enters to the valorization stage. However, meaning-making in a specific place that's "augmented" by mediation is a constant instantiation process. This is where possibilities for alternatives lie. The paper concludes with a discussion on how focusing on the materiality of information and media and the embodiment of meaning-making can complicate current conversations on critical studies of ICTs and society.

**RACHEL O'DWYER**

Trinity College Dublin

### **Common Ground: Shifting Property Relations in the Mobile Internet**

**ABSTRACT:** A growing political vocabulary that includes the Communism of Capital (Virno, 2004) and the Becoming-Rent-of-Profit (Vercellone and Negri, 2007) provides the foundation for a discussion of the shifting vectors of labour, property and capital in the information economy. This literature, however, often fails to consider the ways in which contemporary economic relations are mobilised in the material substrate of the network: the technical standards, architectures and policies governing the future of the Internet. This paper will examine shifting commons/property relations under information capitalism through the lens of the mobile Internet.

The mobile Internet currently occupies a period of interpretative flexibility, as mobile communications transform from a discursive technology with a lineage in the circuit-switched telephone network, towards a diverse range of rich media and context-aware activities taking place across a variety of network architectures. Many core operations are in flux, from resource management, engineering policy and standards, through to shifting revenue models and property relations. This period of transition provides a cogent lens through which we might engage a number of economic conditions: A growing emphasis on immaterial goods and labour, a contingency between corporate interests and commons-based peer-production to the telecommunications value chain and a variety of structurally antagonistic property dynamics at the level of physical network resources and infrastructure.

Drawing examples from key areas such as open accessory development, resource sharing and spectrum policy, this paper will use the mobile Internet to ask a number of questions. What economic changes to the technological composition of property are reflected in the architecture of the mobile Internet? What contradistinctions and inequalities operating between material and immaterial economies are visible? Finally In light of a technologically grounded analysis of the commons/property dialectic of the mobile network, what possibilities does this model afford to critically engage with the future of the mobile network, support non-proprietary practices and leverage transient or competing models of ownership?

**GRAINNE KETELAAR**

Open University

### **Battles over Cognitive Taxonomy**

**ABSTRACT:** Whilst it is widely acknowledged that large numbers of people engage in illegal downloading, it is rarely thought of as a form of political protest or action. Based on interviews with downloaders, this paper will argue that participation in downloading represents a form of political action and engagement, as well as a form of political education and socialisation in some cases. Some downloaders are simply reacting to the closed world of mass consumer culture which is too expensive for them to access regularly. By using peer-to-peer networking sites, and by sharing files, these downloaders can access cultural productions of a greater variety, and at a manageable cost. Other downloaders educate themselves about key movements and people who engage(d) in struggles against hegemonic political regimes. For these downloaders, a more nuanced use of peer-to-peer facilities and more discerning internet usage habits is evident.

These findings make important contributions to contemporary thinking about political engagement and citizenship. It furthermore provides some interesting insight into the versatility and responsiveness of citizens at large to the lack of genuine political options which they feel they have. In an age of ever-creeping security and surveillance, a certain subsection of society, clearly

indicate through these interviews that they are worried about the meaning and legitimacy of democracy when the extent of freedom of information on the internet looks set to be bought and sold off, and policed in ways yet to be determined.

This paper will chart the recent lobbying and political attempts to close down on the hitherto existing parameters of freedom of information on the net; and will show how these moves to lock down on illegal downloading have, for some, all the characteristics of a stealthy collaboration between the super powers of the cultural industries and the political elite. I utilise Bourdieu's ideas on symbolic violence and misrecognition to highlight how downloaders have a very different take on what crimes are being committed.

**ANNA MARIA JÖNSSON, LINUS ANDERSSON and AMANDA LAGERKVIST**

Södertörn University

### **What's New Today is Waste Tomorrow: Phenomenology of E-waste**

**ABSTRACT:** Digital communication technologies have been heralded as possible tools in the movement towards a sustainable society and conceptualized in terms of sustainable communication (cf. Lin, 2007). In the field of Ecocriticism, the new media were afforded utopian qualities and were vested with hopes and promises. At the same time production and consumption of media technologies seem to be guided by other values than sustainability. Aging, outdated and dead media – e-waste – is a growing environmental problem that encounters society. The concept of e-waste refers to the increasing amount of high-technological garbage, often containing heavy metals and chemicals that are hazardous to the individuals involved in dealing with the waste, as well as to the environment as a whole. In this planned research project we wish to approach e-waste (discarded mobile phones, computers, computer and game hardware) as an experiential field, and to explore its relation to lifestyles, consumption, and everyday life. Within the discourse on sustainable society/sustainable development, substantial interest has also been directed towards the role of technology for society, including the relationship between artefacts and actors (individual and collective). Our focus is on both. We will analyze the life cycles of different media and how they are linked to everyday materialities and life worlds. In other words, the focus is on the phenomenology of e-waste and our life among the dying media. Based on an overview of existing research (eg. Maxwell & Miller 2005, Parks 2007, Sterne 2007, Grossman 2006, Widmer et.al. 2005), we will argue in this presentation that the phenomenological approach to e-waste is fruitful for understanding the material as well as experiential sides to our media and information society. It will highlight the emergence of media waste as a perilous phenomenon that more or less visibly pervades everyday life in a Western postindustrial society (Sweden), as our homes become "closet-fills" (Grossman 2006) standing as reminders of the risks inherent in modernity. Additionally, this perspective will, through e.g. the use of the concept of obsolescence (technological and psychological), provide us with an understanding of the often contradictory facets of our contemporary communication culture (cf. Acland 2007; Gregson 2007, Kim & Paulos 2011). These encompass how overproduction relates to certain lifestyles and ideologies of consumerism (the compulsion to be 'new') while it is simultaneously incumbent on us to display a high degree of environmental awareness in an age of environmental crisis.

Parallel session 5A title: Towards Critical Theory of Social Media: The Dialectics of Empowerment and Disempowerment

**MARIA BAKARDJIEVA**

University of Calgary

**Contesting Sociability: The Misery and Power of Social Media**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper takes as its theoretical basis the critical theories put forward by Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Mikhail Bakhtin and Dorothy Smith to open an inquiry into the operation of sociability in the framework of social media.

Social media give previously ephemeral acts of free, playful sociability a lasting objective form. With that, they make possible the commodification of sociability and its separation from the lifeworld of the original producer. Early forms of online sociability hosted by newsgroups, mailing lists and forums were largely non-commercial and remained at the margins of the dot.com boom which was all about e-commerce and content presentation through corporate web sites. The transition to Web 2.0 was marked by the invention of mechanisms for extracting profit from user-generated content and other user activities intended as gestures of self-presentation and sociability. Thus the door was open for massive capitalist colonization of sociable interaction that hitherto had been a preserve of the lifeworld. Certainly, this new function of sociability as a profit-generating engine did not leave its form and content untouched. Daily social interaction online was open to profound instrumentalization and alienation.

Seen from a different perspective, social media also represent sites where an impressive variety of new symbolic codes and sociable practices emerge and consolidate in the daily communicative action of numerous users. Among these practices researchers have identified the germs of new possibilities for enhanced reflexivity, collaborative knowledge-construction, solidarity-building and collective action toward political goals.

The paper will draw on two sources of empirical data - focus group discussions with individual Facebook users and case studies exemplifying grassroots civic and political initiatives organized through new media - in an attempt to specify the contexts and circumstances associated with each of these opposing developments in online sociability. The goal is to illuminate the scope of directions and choices available to human actors and participants in the social media landscape.

**ILKIN MEHRABOV**

Karlstad University

**'State' Strikes Back: Forgotten Actor as an Agent of Intervention into Online Public Sphere**

**ABSTRACT:** The turbulent 'Arab Spring' happening during the course of the last year has caused all kinds of new insurgent oppositional movements all around the world to emerge. Turkish and Azerbaijani online opposition, inspired by the 'success' of revolutions in Middle East and organized mostly on social networking sites, thus adding more 'sense' to democratization effect of Internet, is not an exception within this scope. However, both Turkey and Azerbaijan are also best examples to clearly show that technically savvy state and its surveillative potential is also constantly developing itself.

Based on Evgeny Morozov's concept of net delusion, that is after starting with „flawed set of

assumptions (cyber-utopianism)“ acting on them using „flawed, even crippled, methodology (Internet-centrism)“ (2011, p. xvii), this paper looks at Azerbaijan, one of the richest Post-Soviet states, and Turkey, one of the biggest and most powerful developing countries of the region determined to join European Union, and their new-media based oppositional movements, aiming to show how these efforts are crushed down by technologically developed advanced surveillative state apparatus. In the case of Turkey the main focus will be on the process of Operation Turkey, famous hacker collective Anonymous` hacking attempts, announced after Turkey revealed its intention to implement all encompassing online filter, interpreted by many as latent censorship act. However, after only few days of successful hacks, the whole group of hackers active within Turkish cyberspace were arrested. Response time of state was even faster in the case of Azerbaijan, where all oppositional protesters, calling through Facebook posts and Twitter tweets to turn Azadlig Square into „Baku`s Tahrir“, were arrested only in the course of few hours with charges of selling illegal substances.

Main discussion point developed on such ‚failures` is in line with analysis of David Morley, that media and communication studies as academic field is heavily suffering from „drastically foreshortened historical perspective“ (2007, p. 2), and much emphasis needs to be given to longer historicity of construction of technologies of everyday, how these technologies willingly or by force were introduced and entered into our lives, and how their symbolic dimensions have been largely neglected in previous studies, that is to engage into destruction of cyber-myths, attempts already tried to be done to some extent by studies such as Marvin, 1988; Standage, 1998; Winston, 1998 and Mosco, 2004. Paper insists that only-Internet based politics is not enough, and street-based political action have to be put back into existence for fully democratic development. Trying to further develop Maria Bakardjieva`s concept of subactivism, that is „small-scale, often individual decisions and actions that have either a political or ethical frame of reference (or both) and remain submerged in everyday life“ (2010, p. 134), paper argues that instead of expecting ‚revolution` emerging from Internet, any oppositional movement within authoritative countries and regimes firstly needs to redevelop the aspects of civil society, essential to involve into protest otherwise contesting middle classes.

**KIRSTEN FORKERT**  
University of East Anglia

### **Social Media as Conduit for Mobilisation, or Shared Disempowerment?**

**ABSTRACT:** My paper will explore the intersections between social media, social movements, and affect, drawing on my experience as an activist who makes frequent use of social media (mostly in union and anti-austerity campaigns in the UK). I have observed that during moments of increasing mobilisation, we use social media to encourage each other to take action (both online and in the street-- if we see social media posts as performative speech acts). However, in the absence of strong and vibrant social movements, the default mode for social media communication can be disempowered comiseration or shared cynical despondency, bringing to mind what filmmaker Adam Curtis has called ‚oh dearism` – where people express anger or frustration at injustice, but feel there is nothing they can do about it.

Drawing on the work of Laurent Berlant, Jodi Dodi Dean and Geert Lovink and others (in addition to my own experience of union and anti-austerity campaigns), I will examine the ways in which social media lends itself to mobilisation and demobilisation, and particularly why expressions of disempowered anger or frustration or despondency seem so prevalent. Are such responses a product of social media, or are they more of a symptom of the conditions of austerity (particularly for those whom social movements have failed to reach)? Do certain platforms as opposed to others (for example, Facebook as opposed to Diaspora) lend themselves to particular responses?

**HENRIK JUEL**  
Roskilde University

### **Social Media and the Dialectic of Enlightenment**

**ABSTRACT:** In my paper I want to revitalize the critical potential of certain core concepts of Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adornos Dialectic of Enlightenment (first published 1944) and bring it to bear on the digital era in general and in particular on the phenomenon of modern social media.

At first this may seem a little odd as the book, though respected as a classic, nevertheless for decades has been called outdated by many critics - especially when it comes to understanding the nature of modern media, audience studies and reception theory. The harsh critique in the book of the „Culture Industry“ has been regarded as obsolete elitist and based on a way to pessimistic view of mass media as only one-way instruments of repression and pacification entailing the opposite of enlightenment, namely mass-deception and poor taste - curiously exemplified by the rhythms of jazz which seemed to be to Horkheimer and Adorno the incarnation of all evil. In contrast it has been argued that with the upcoming of the Internet, web 2.0, and social media, enlightenment has at last come to flourish with a truly - or at least in principle - democratic, participatory, and user-oriented media practice within the global village.

However, I shall argue that the central philosophical critique of Dialectic of Enlightenment runs deeper than just a critique of contemporary (and perhaps outdated) media technique and cultural habits. It is a critical view of the process of civilization, economy and enlightenment as such, a critical view of the seemingly self-evident notion of pure reason, science and technology. What Horkheimer and Adorno are trying to capture and reflect is the very process of rationality backlashing into irrationality. We seem to have reached the era of mathematics and exact calculation, but this leaves us with no sense of control or meaningfulness, and in the face of crisis and systemic contradictions in the now global society we tend to regress and rely on older, more primitive forms of sense-making and coping: magic, mythology and metaphysics - even ritual behavior.

It is this dialectic of enlightenment - this backlashing of pure rationality into various types of irrationality - that forms the master scheme of their critique of ideology. Horkheimer and Adorno applied this scheme of critique on the media and cultural practices of their day. Perhaps in an overcritical, sarcastic way, influenced also by their own personal distress during the war as refugees meeting American pop-culture. But it should be worthwhile today to apply once again their basic form of critique to the newest of media, to the internet and social media of today: What fundamental contradictions, conflicts, ambiguities, and dialectics shape 21st century information society and social media?

**ANNA CROON FORS**  
Umeå University

### **Critical Approaches to Digitization – Exploring Unknown Potentials in Social Media**

**ABSTRACT:** This text deals with the meaning of digitization in contemporary society as well as what it means to study digitization in a critical way. My departure is that most critical stances portray digital technology as provider of means rather a site for rich and authentic experiences. But inspired by the works of, among others Martin Heidegger, Herbert Marcuse, Andrew Feenberg, Don Ihde, Carl Mitcham and Albert Borgmann I have found that people not only experience things separate from each other, but also as parts of wholes. Therefore, I find it hard to conduct critical questioning of digitization solely based on a critique of what it is in digitization that deprives people a sense of belonging, a sense of fulfillment and meaning. That is critiques normally

associated with traditional conceptions of technological rationality.

My suggestion is rather that critical research of digitization need to elaborate dialectic thinking in some kind of negation to prevailing notions and ideas (Fuller 2005). Expanding notions of technical rationality beyond the device paradigm as outlined by Borgmann (1984) and/or towards a new critical sensibility as suggested by Marcuse (1964). By the notion democratic rationalization Feenberg (1999) too suggest that critical research should investigate the subordinated meanings, interpretations and understandings that so far are not accounted for as significant to conventional conceptions of technological rationality.

Accordingly it is by making explicit tensions between actualities and alternative ideas and practices that productive contrasts can be created. Such contrast that might lead to the emancipation of subordinate positions and interests. As such the emancipating ideas advanced in this text accords with the claim that there seems to be a need to explore the possibilities and potentials inherent in digitization by framing our relationship to digital technologies in some new and radically different ways. Behind these ideas lies in my view the core of critique, i.e. it has to do with examining the possibilities and limits of our way of experiencing that something.

So my position in this text is that the fundamental tension between digitization on the one hand and human experience on the other needs to be critically questioned as suggested above (Croon Fors 2006, Feenberg 1999). Inherent in this tension are assumed asymmetries between humans and the digital which in turn prevents us from approaching digitization in ways that enhances/enriches people's desire for meaningfulness and significance.

**ANDERS OLOF LARSSON**

Uppsala University

**Reproducing Structures of Audiencehood – Why Notions of “Politics 2.0”  
Remain (Mostly) Unfulfilled**

**ABSTRACT:** In the last decade of Internet development, conceptualizations of a “web 2.0” mainly focusing on enabling and harnessing user generated content have grown increasingly common in both public discourse as well as among researchers interested in the continued growth and transformation of the world wide web. While hopes have generally been held high regarding use of online interactivity, most research projects on the topic have produced results somewhat contrary to these hopes. Especially in the context of online politics, arguably an area often seen as being heavily influenced or even seriously challenged by more widespread use of the Internet, most users seem to be content with staying users and thus not assuming more active roles as content co-creators. As such, while rhetoric usually flies sky high regarding voter participation, e-participation, politics 2.0 or whatever buzzword is at hand for any given election, most empirical research endeavors has produced results indicating that voters mostly remain voters.

The suggested paper approaches the non-use of online interactive features in online political contexts by applying structuration theory. In Anthony Giddens' original conception, structuration theory posits that social structure is shaped (and possibly altered) as human agents choose to re-enact certain facets of said structure. By changing their uses of the rules and resources made available to them by the structure, human are given agency in relation to overarching, macro-level structures. Giddens' writings have also been contextualized to the study of ICTs by Wanda Orlikowski, mostly focusing on research at the organizational level. The proposed paper combines theoretical insights from both Giddens and Orlikowski with an extensive literature review regarding online politics, arguing that the average web user is enacting a “structure of audiencehood” rather than a “structure of prosumerism”. The paper further suggests that we should not be surprised at the extent of non-contributions, as the chosen area of study could be said to represent institutionalized structures – i.e. structures that are not so easily amended.

**ANDREW KENYON**  
University of Melbourne

### **Illusions of Speech? Social Media and Voice under Neoliberalism**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper asks what contemporary accounts of politics and communication suggest for ideas about free speech. What if anything can be taken from free speech traditions for developing critical theories of democracy and media?

Common philosophical and legal approaches portray free speech as furthering three things: a search for truth; the practice of democracy; or the development of liberty. These ideas can be traced in many ways. Examples include landmark cases on free speech during the US civil rights movement, European regional approaches to speech and its control, the gradual development of formal human rights protection in commonwealth countries such as the UK, and continuing pressures for less restricted speech in some ASEAN countries, where these international norms about speech are explicitly used against autocratic political leaderships.

Notwithstanding their varied forms, these approaches often imply particular ideas about public speech, especially about speech that is thought to be socially valuable. Such speech is seen as if it was a 'conversation', with open listening and feedback aimed at consensus formation occurring under egalitarian rules of engagement. While counterfactual, such ideas have long been powerful. How that 'conversation' might be fostered is a matter that has differed greatly under different political traditions, with the US enamoured of a presumed free marketplace of ideas and other governments taking greater steps to support particular media environments.

Two substantial transformations now offer ways to reconsider what is seen to be at stake in speech and its control. The political changes of neoliberalism and the development of digital communications suggest at least two things for public speech. The first is what could be called the 'bare preconditions' of speech and the ways in which free speech's quality as a philosophy of privilege should not be ignored. The second is a need to consider 'voice' or the opportunities for people to speak and the impacts of their speech. These things are not new, but they are revealed more starkly in the reconfiguration of public speech under contemporary modes of politics and communication. They suggest that conversational rationales for speech warrant reformulation so that better account is taken of the role of dissent and difference in speech, of ways in which all communicative projects are shaped and limited through speech, and of the reception and impacts of speech.

Parallel session 5B title: The Media - Alternatives and Commons: Towards a New Communism?

**JAKOB RIGI**

Central European University Budapest

**Universal and Communal Labor: Working Class, Knowledge Capitalism  
and the Quest for Communism**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper discusses the structural unity and contradiction between knowledge workers who perform universal labor, on the one hand, and other workers who perform communal labor (whether material or immaterial) under the capitalist regime of accumulation. The paper draws on Marx's concepts of productive/unproductive labor, universal/communal labor, total social capital, average rate of profit and rent. Its main thesis is as follows: Only a small portion of the total huge exchange value which is expropriated by informational capitalism is produced by the workers of this sector. The overwhelming portion of this value consists of rents that information capitalism extracts from the labor deployed outside informational capitalism. Informational capitalism shares these rents with the top-tier of knowledge workers, so called stars, trying to integrate them in ideological and cultural apparatus of information capitalism. On a deeper level of abstraction the knowledge workers and other workers are structurally unified by the fact that both produce surplus value and are subjected to alienation. However, this structural unity is counteracted by the extraction of rent by the knowledge economy from the rest of economy. Castells has argued that this division is so deep that it has fractured the erstwhile unity of the working class into self-contained communal identities. And, worse, identity politics is the main way for these fragments to defend themselves against informational capitalism. This paper argues that the objective conditions of exploitation and alienation provide a ground for the subjective reunification of the working class. For this to happen workers must organize themselves around a revolutionary and universal program for transforming the current knowledge based society into communism. And knowledge workers have started to play a pioneering role in this respect by inventing peer production which offers a model for the creation of a fully-fledged communist society which can be free from the state, capital, division of labor and indeed labor itself. The very fact that the majority of knowledge workers do not benefit from the rents that information capitalism extracts from other workers will facilitate their unification with other sectors of working class around a revolutionary platform.

**SYLVAIN FIRER-BLAESS**

Uppsala University

**Wikipedia, Shape of Things to Come? The Collaborative Encyclopedia Analysed  
under the Theoretical Lenses of Marx, Foucault and Habermas.**

**ABSTRACT:** Wikipedia is today an undeniable success both in terms of popularity than in terms of quality. In this presentation, we shall show that Wikipedia also bears practices that are normatively progressive. These progressive practices are present in three fields of human interaction that are the economy, the organisation, and the discourse. First we shall see, with Marx, that the economy of Wikipedia can be called a communist economy. It carries the properties of co-operative labour, common ownership of the means of production, participatory democracy in the production process, free distribution of its outputs, and pleasure to work. Second we shall look upon

the organisation of Wikipedia, and discover, with Foucault, that Wikipedia present a very original system of relations of power, a „rhizomic“ system that is very different from the modern disciplinary power. Third, we shall analyse the internal debates that shape the content of Wikipedia, and, with Habermas, question whether Wikipedia is a place of communicative action. To do so we will study which types of discourse are present in the discussions that shape Wikipedia articles. Fourth, we shall see what possible links we can find between the economy, the organisation and the discourse of Wikipedia, and how the properties of these fields can feed one another. Fifth and last, we shall consider if and how the practices Wikipedia bears could be applied in other fields of society, especially production at large and democracy politics. Possibly Wikipedia prefigures a better way of living together, and might bear the shapes of things to come.

**STEVE JANKOWSKI**

University of Ottawa

### **The Disciplined Article: A comparative Analysis of the Wikipedia and Britannica Encyclopedia's Epistemology of Articles**

**ABSTRACT:** The presentation of this discussion will be facilitated by comparing the sub-headings of ten articles from two hundred years of the Encyclopedia Britannica with the same ten articles from Wikipedia. Thus, by analyzing how articles such as 'America', 'Atheist', 'Black', 'Canada', 'Cannon', 'Cat', 'Democracy', 'Human', 'London' and 'Oceans' differ in time and publication, we witness how the process of writing encyclopedic knowledge privileges certain knowledge statements and at the same time, invalidates others.

It is undeniable that after ten years, Wikipedia can easily claim to be the number one encyclopedia on the web. Yochai Benkler states in "The Wealth of Networks" (2007) that the success of Wikipedia is due to the "large-scale cooperative efforts" of peer production (p.5). The results, he writes, is "a radically new form of encyclopedia writing" (p.70). This enthusiastic sentiment of the site's novel and radical approach is reiterated in Manuel Castells' "The Network Society" (2004), Don Tapscott's "Wikinomics" (2006), and Clay Shirky's "Cognitive Surplus" (2010). While Wikipedia is undoubtably unique for its scale and popularity, the scholars Featherstone & Venn (2006) doubt whether the Wikipedian product is entirely new or particularly radical. These two authors observe that Wikipedia tends to follow "traditional disciplinary divisions" that were prominent during the European Enlightenment (Problematizing Global Knowledge and the New Encyclopaedia Project, "Theory Culture & Society", 23, p.10). In the ten years since the site's inception, Wikipedians have not only continued to rely on these idealogical categories of knowledge but have, in fact, implemented them more consistently and on a greater scale than their ancestral counterparts.

Thus, my presentation argues that Benkler's claim that Wikipedia possesses a new and radical encyclopedic writing is misleading. Instead Wikipedia, should be criticized for being exactly the opposite, of establishing traditional categorizations that reinforce and maintain the status quo.

**BENJAMIN KLASS**

University of Manitoba

### **Putting the 'Common' back into Common Carriage: Why Network Ownership Matters**

**ABSTRACT:** The configuration of infrastructure ownership profoundly effects both how individuals experience Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and the political, economic and social relevance of ICTs. Traditionally, industrial, large capital-central conceptions of ow-

nership such as 'natural monopoly' or 'competitive market' have dominated the discourse, in the name of superior Quality of Service (QoS) and the efficiency of private industry. Countries such as the US and Canada specifically, but others as well, have restricted their regulatory frameworks to oversight of a small number of large, commercial network owners, ostensibly in the best interest of both 'industry' and 'consumers'.

This myopic structuring of ICTs has fostered a situation in which telecommunications firms, broadcasters and ISPs, (not necessarily separate corporate entities) act as 'gatekeepers', and as such powerfully shape the way end-users experience ICTs. Numerous recent developments worldwide have highlighted the shortcomings of our current institutional 'gatekeeper' role. The Mubarak regime's attempt to 'shut down the Internet' during Arab Spring in Egypt, the MPAA's attempt to control the Internet via SOPA/PIPA, the US foisting ACTA on many other countries, and in Canada legislation like bills C-11 (Copyright Modernization) and bill C-30 (Lawful Access) all highlight potentially negative effects, from the perspective of end-users (prosumers/"the public"/consumers/workers), associated with central ownership of ICT infrastructure.

I propose to discuss precisely how highly concentrated, capital-intensive ownership of ICT infrastructure affects our experience of the Internet, and the relevance of network media more generally. This paper takes a "Political Economy" approach, insofar as it will consider the implications of political decisions, economic factors and social relations that shape the ICT environment, primarily focusing on Canada as an example.

The emergence over the past decade of the potential for decentralized ownership of networks, ranging from the prevalence of ubiquitous WiFi networks based on unlicensed spectrum to radically decentralized 'meshnets', suggests the possibility of feasible alternatives to the dominant paradigm of capitalist ICT infrastructure ownership. I intend to discuss the possibility of alternative forms in the context of the background discussed above. In so doing, I will address questions such as: What can an alternative Internet look like and what are the conditions for creating such an Internet? What is a commons-based Internet and how can it be created? What is the role of the Internet and social media in contemporary capitalism? How do power structures, exploitation, domination, class, digital labour, commodification of the communication commons, ideology, audience/user commodification, and surveillance shape the Internet and social media? And What does contemporary capitalism look like? What is the role of the Internet and social media in contemporary capitalism?

**MICHAEL GODDARD**

University of Salford

### **Self-Organisation of the Common in Social Media Networks**

**ABSTRACT:** The concept of the common has become an increasing prevalent one in contemporary political discourse, notably in the three volumes published by Hardt and Negri, culminating in *Commonwealth* (2009), along with the work of other post-autonomist or Open Marxist scholars (Teranova, Virno, Dyer-Witheford, Bonefeld, Holloway). Whatever the differences in approaches to the common, its Marxist roots are in capitalist processes of the primitive accumulation or enclosure of common, shared wealth, processes which are pre-capitalist more in an ontological than temporal sense and that continue up until the digital present. The common is, however, not limited to political discourse but is also frequently used to describe the emergent *modus operandi* of a range of programming practices ranging from the Free and Open Source Software movement to Peer to Peer networks, which are also frequently (self) described in relation to concepts of the common, or sharing, if not as digital communism. However, there is another layer to the common that needs to be thought alongside it, namely practices of self-organisation; it is not sufficient

to merely posit the common as an abstract political concept but its modes of organisation also need to be interrogated, after all, what is capitalism if not an especially exploitative organisation of the common in the forms of land, raw materials, technical innovations and working practices. Self-organisation has a long and complex history, alongside capitalist and other modes or exploitative organisation, that runs through cooperative movements, cybernetics and the technical operations of digital networks themselves, and in fact the common only appears in relation to autonomous modes of self-organisation that can be seen as alternatives or resistances to both capitalist and pre-capitalist organisational models.

This paper will therefore explore the 'self-organisation of the common' in the context of social media, focusing on a number of inter-related questions: To what extent are digital social networks inherently self-organising and what new potentials for both resistance and capture do they give rise to? How are these dynamics played out in specific forms of social network ranging from YouTube or Facebook to Wikileaks? What might the analytical perspective of modes of organisation of the common contribute to understanding of both the exploitative and emancipatory potentials of social media? If there is at least a minor tendency towards a post-capitalist reconstitution of the common facilitated via self-organising digital networks, how accurate is it to describe this tendency as digital communism?

The overall aim of this paper is to contribute to an understanding of processes of self-organisation of the common as a potentially post-capitalist tendency, far removed from classical Marxist accounts of post-capitalist rupture; as such we believe that concepts of self-organisation and the common are vital for a critical understanding of both social media and the social relations surrounding ICTs more generally.

This paper emerges out of the research project I am currently developing with Professor Seamus Simpson into practices of self-organisation and the common in contemporary media organisations.

## **JOHAN SÖDERBERG**

Laboratoire Techniques, Territoire et Sociétés

### **Inventing a 'Factory for the Kitchen Table' - New Industrial Conflicts in the Social Factory**

**ABSTRACT:** The presentation develops the notion of the „social factory“ through an empirical case study. In the case study I am following the emergence of an open hardware movement. Groups of hobbyists are developing a range of computer-guided machinery tools dedicated for home-use. One of those projects is called Rep-rap. It is an open source 3D printer which „prints“ objects in plastics. I have made 22 interviews with people involved in the Rep-rap project and followed discussions on forums and blogs over a period of more than 2 years. The 3D printer can be key to the future development of the open hardware movement since it provides a highly versatile production process. The hobbyists vision is to develop a factory possible to run on top of the kitchen table. The chief, technical principle behind Rep-rap is to guide the movements of a machinery tool with the help of a computer. It is basically the same principle which underpinned much of the automatisisation of the heavy industry in the second half of 20th century. Previously, the movements of the machinery tool had been guided by the human machine operator. To master this process required many years of training and practice. The de facto knowledge monopoly of the workers was the basis of strong and militant trade unionism. Subsequently, the computer guided tool machinery was introduced with the intent to break this strength. When the same technical principles are now being explored by hobbyist, organised labour has been defeated to the point that the very memory of industrial conflicts has disappeared. The people developing the open source 3D-printer tend not to place themselves in continuation with this history of labour

struggle. Their rationale for inventing the technology is completely different than the old one (i.e. lower cost and fight trade unionism). The concept of the social factory help us to trace the continuity (antagonism, exploitation, struggle) across the discontinuity in the development of this technology.

## **MATHIEU O'NEIL**

Université Paris Sorbonne and Australian National University

### **New Forms of Critique in Online Collaborative Projects**

**ABSTRACT:** Extending previous work on authority in online projects (O'Neil 2009), this paper suggests that the analysis of legitimate domination provides the key to understanding new forms of critique which are emerging in collaborative projects. It corresponds to the conference concern with extending and developing critical methodologies in the Information society.

Collaborative online projects have been characterised as enabling participants to engage in "radically distributed, nonmarket mechanisms that do not depend on proprietary strategies" (Benkler 2006: 3). Peer producers self-select tasks and the amount of effort they contribute; their collaboration is commons-based and commons-oriented. This paper envisages "critique" as a concrete activity engaged in by people in specific situations (Boltanski 2009). It could for example be argued that debates about which software licence is more "free" in FLOSS project enable the formulation of critiques of capitalist market-oriented behaviour. The question this paper seeks to answer is the following: what other forms of critique are being deployed in collaborative peer projects?

The paper examines critical operations during specific situations involving the exercise of legitimate domination in the anti-authoritarian environment of collaborative projects. Based on an analysis of rules and administrative decisions in three large collaborative projects (the Daily Kos community weblog, Wikipedia, and the Debian free software project), I argue that legitimate domination in collaborative projects responds to the desire for symbolic integration. Participants seek proximity between pleasure and work, production and consumption, leaders and followers. Symbolic integration manifests itself when (1) participants criticise legitimate domination as a form of separated expertise: external credentials are banished in favour of work for the project and (2) participants criticise legitimate domination as a form of separated justice: rules should be transparently debated, and equally applied to all. Online critiques of separation represent implicit critiques of the organisation of society: online expertise is openly assessed and constitutes a rejection of secretive technocracy; collective regulation is open to criticism and debate by all stakeholders, in contrast to prevailing processes. This is a partial critique, but it is powerful in that it is based on the actions of participants and may lead to wider critique of social domination.

However the relationship between the real and digital identities of participants perturbs symbolic integration. Knowledge about the identities and competencies of participants affects the coordination of online collaboration. Regimes of certainty and uncertainty regarding what is known about the real identity of participants have to be distinguished, as do the constraints and affordances these regimes represent for legitimate domination in collaborative online project. In some cases, such as Wikipedia, uncertainty over identity can generate tensions and the multiplication of verification and/or policing procedures, potentially leading to increases in power asymmetries.

Parallel session 5C title: Reason and Revolution Today: The Media in The Arab Spring, the Occupy Movement, and Beyond

**GWYNETH SUTHERLIN**

University of Bradford

**The Digital Battlefield: Controlling the Technology of Revolution**

**ABSTRACT:** The visibility of mobile technology, and its perceived role in the recent upheaval across North Africa and the Middle East has intensified interest and scrutiny on many aspects of technology. Referred to as ICT, these technologies include social media as well as more situation specific software developed around governance, survey analysis, or information sharing. The global north is quickly seeking to capitalize on the growth of technology by encouraging participatory democracy and building partnerships which bring stability for populations and enterprises. ICT is increasingly used as a tool in defining and implementing strategies aimed at achieving these economic and foreign policy goals. It can be used in orchestrating cooperation during upheaval, conducting needs assessments as peace is restored, or ensuring transparency related to elections, human rights, or commerce. In each instance, there is an element of communication facilitation as well as information management. However, these technologies are designed in the West, the EU and the US, with a Western communication style, information management preferences, and with codes often retained by Western entities. All of these elements contribute to a cultural bias impacting the users from outside the technology-controlling cultures ability to access and manage information. The ICTs being deployed for the purposes of conflict management and democratization are plagued by cultural bias which disenfranchises users. It diminishes the technology's potential for use in participatory actions by removing authorship and contributes to information gatekeeping by the creators of the technology which tend to be European or American. It is through this gatekeeping, this controlling of information and communication data, that European and American actors seek to determine the boundaries of the next battlefield. By applying a neo-colonial strategy to information gathering, these actors are not simply positioning themselves on the field to the best advantage, they are determining the shape of the field by commanding the programs and codes through which the information flows. While the traditional battlefields remain in upheaval, maneuvers on the digital terrain do not progress in parallel. This paper will examine the environment surrounding the emergence and persistence of cultural bias in ICT from the framework of critical theory. From this perspective, the dynamics between the commodification of information and conceptualizations of identity will be explored with examples from several regions in Africa.

**HOSNI M. NASR**

Sultan Qaboos University

**New Media, New Revolution: Social Media and Youth Revolution in Egypt**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper analyzes the role of the online social networks media especially Facebook during the revolution erupted in Egypt in January 2011. Through content analysis of a sample of pages, groups and events, I discuss how people exchanged information before, during, and after the 18 days revolution that ended by the resignation of ex-president Hosni Mubarak.

The article also analyzes online discussions and media coverage. Particular emphasis is given to the role of the social media, such as Facebook tools and services, which enable citizens to interact or share content online.

The analysis shows that during the revolution, the social media functioned as an political organizer and alternative mass medium for citizen communication or participatory journalism.

In this article, I argue that the social media generated an alternative public Sphere for Egyptian activists, which widened the perspectives about the revolution and enabled new kinds of citizen participation in discussing the situation. The success of the revolution in Egypt also showed the significance of the social media as a horizontal form for information sharing. The study concludes that the experience of using social media networks to wage and support the political revolution has important implications for the process of democratization in Egypt.

**DYLAN E. WITTKOWER**

Old Dominion University

### **Facebook and the Occupation: A Critical-Theoretical Perspective**

**ABSTRACT:** The political agency of the American electorate today exists within two disconnected spheres of action; the one containing consequence without meaning, and the other meaning without consequence. Economic and institutional-political actions, even when oppositional, lend concrete support to institutions already in place, without respect to any content within those actions. Even action taken against those interests takes place in conditions which serve to further those interests. Community building and deliberative processes, on the other hand, take place in social contexts disconnected from contexts of politically consequential action.

In the ongoing #occupation movement, we begin to see a breakdown of this separation.

Most prior discussion of political agency online has been disparaging. By returning to Adorno's also much-disparaged essay on Resignation, combined with Ethan Zuckerman's cute cat theory and an adaptation of Robert Putnam's work on social capital, we see a possible retrospective defense of „slacktivism“ as restraint from pseudo-activity. Looking forward, I argue that the current state of SNS-supported discussion and execution of direct action accords significantly with models from Marcuse and Arendt.

In this research, I intend to outline a theory of online political action that is both descriptively sound and practically guiding, to be of use and interest to both theorists and activists. My guiding questions are (1) how critical theory can be used to reveal the structure of our current political situation, and (2) how our current political situation can be used to interpret and modify critical theory in order to support effective reform. By beginning with an application of Marcuse's analysis in *One-Dimensional Man*, then engaging in an analysis of patterns of SNS use in recent political action, I argue that we today see an opening of meaningful political possibilities of a kind projected, sometimes pessimistically, by critical theorists.

**RYOKO ASAI and IORDANIS KAVATHATZOPOULOS**

Uppsala University

### **Social Movement And Social Media**

**ABSTRACT:** How do social media affect the process of building a democratic society?

Information and communication technology (ICT) made it possible for people to communicate beyond national borders and other obstacles. Social media in particular play an important role

in creating a place where people communicate with each other, for example Facebook, MySpace, YouTube and so on. In other words, under these circumstances, social media function as the third place in addition to home and workplaces, which contributes not only to unite people in communities but also to the resolution of various problems and crises. Therefore, the third place nurtures relationships and mutual trust under internet access conditions, and it is open for free discussions, and becomes a ground for democracy.

In face-to-face communication, participants' behavior is affected by social context cues, and users let their behavior adjust to particular communication manners. However, in online communication, it is more difficult for participants to understand static and dynamic cues surrounding other participants compared to face-to-face communication. Because, in many cases, whereas social media makes it possible for users to communicate with others easily regardless of physical distance, national boundaries and time difference, it limits the number of characters and the amount of data that they can post and use. However, participation in online communication, especially in social media, is seen as the key element in the recent trend toward democratization. In fact, millions of users send and receive a huge amount of information via social media in order to cultivate a relationship with others and strengthen mutual exchange beyond borders. Generally it is recognized that social media advance participation through exchanging information with minimal social context cues.

However, communication through social media has some problems. Firstly, exchanged information via social media minimizes social context cues under severe restricted or censored internet access conditions; because simplified messages can be more understandable and impressive for other users in communicating. Therefore information tends to be extreme, and it could evoke a risk of group polarization. Secondly, in social media, information receivers gather fragmented information in borderless cyberspace, for any purpose. Following this they try to transform information into something they can understand, something closer to their own experience, or they try to perceive the feelings and experience of the senders of information. Through this process, users develop a sense of solidarity and share expectations and norms, which bring them together as one community. Therefore, social norms have a considerable influence on users in particular communities and advance self-stereotyping among them as solidarity and social identity are enhanced. This situation carries the social risk of exclusion of others. Some people call Middle-east political change "Facebook revolution" or "twitter revolution" on the internet. Is this naming really pertinent? Indeed, social media has played an important role as "hub for information" and as the third place in political change. Still, social media has to contribute to the development of skills for dialog in order to achieve a really democratic society.

**FARIDUN F. SATTAROV**

University of Twente

### **Smart and Furious: New Media and Political Change**

**ABSTRACT:** The contemporary world can be characterized by the development of two somewhat interrelated trends. On the one hand, there has been an expansive proliferation of new media technologies which can store, process and transmit enormous amounts of information with great efficiency and in a blink of an eye. On the other hand, there has been a sprawling spread of political upheavals, especially as witnessed in the case of revolutions and rebellions that has engulfed and overwhelmed the despotic regimes of North Africa and the Middle East. The former is technological, the latter is socio-political. Admittedly, there exists some sort of causal correlation between the two technological and the political phenomena. However, attempts to understand the relationship between them have often led to somewhat overblown and rather exaggerated

descriptions of the role of technology in the current socio-political processes (one such instance is when it is claimed that social media services such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and etc. have caused the recent revolutions in the Maghreb region). Hence, an important question to be addressed is how to reveal the actual role of new media technologies in political revolutions, uproars, and rebellions. In this essay, I attempt to tentatively address the question by tackling three strands of argument. Drawing upon what I argue is a coherent theory of power that offers a satisfactory description and classification of various forms of power-dependence relations, the essay considers the role of technology in political processes through the lens of the theory of power as proposed by Neo-Marxists Bachrach and Baratz (1970). My first argument is that political revolutions, uproars, and rebellions can be essentially regarded as attempts to alter the existing power network of society, where power-network refers to two or more connected power-dependence relations (such as coercion, enforcement, subordination, persuasion etc.). My second argument is that technology (both mundane technological artifacts and complex technological systems) can be, by design, means for the emergence and sustenance of various specific power-dependence relations. And lastly, my final argument is that in order to reveal the actual role of new media technologies in political revolutions, uproars, and rebellions, it is necessary to look at the individual roles of particular types of new media technologies in the emergence and sustenance of specific forms of power-dependence relations. To illustrate my last point, Blackberry Smartphones, as a specific type of new media technologies, possess advanced encryption capabilities, which does not allow for an easy interception of the information communicated among Blackberry users. The specific design of the smartphones in question thus can facilitate communication between anti-government protesters, which otherwise may be impeded by the state censorship system, since knowledge that one's anti-government messages can be intercepted and that one can be thus penalized may deter one from communicating those messages in the first place. According to the theory of power advanced by Bachrach and Baratz, this kind of an intentional impediment created by the state is an instance of power-dependence relation known as coercion.

**LORENZO CORETTI**

University of Westminster

### **The Purple Movement: limits and Controversies of Facebook Activism in Berlusconi's Italy**

**ABSTRACT:** The case study of this presentation refers to the Italian movement "popolo viola" ("purple people"), a social movement that sprung on Facebook and managed to gather 300,000 demonstrators in Rome on December 5th 2009, marching against the politics of the former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in a demonstration named "No Berlusconi Day".

After the 5th December, the protest kept going on both online and offline, coordinated and publicised by the organisers on the Facebook page "il popolo viola", which, in Fall 2011, counted more than 430,000 "likers".

Drawing upon principles of Social Movement Theory and Critical Theory of Technology, this paper assesses the impact of social media usage on activism in terms of mobilisation and organisation. The research fieldwork, part of a PhD research due to submission in Summer 2012, considered 18 months of activity of "popolo viola"'s page, and it has been carried out through content analysis, trend analysis, a survey and in-depth interviews.

Facebook proved to be an exceptional tool in promoting online participation, stimulating users' discussion and involvement. In fact, whereas the members of the page were initially limiting their online involvement mainly in a form of approval/disapproval through "likes", with time they became significantly more involved in the exchange of ideas and opinions.

Alas, online involvement was not followed by equal levels of offline participation. The Internet, instead of providing tools for direct action, became itself ground of contention, through largely ineffective forms of online activism. Moreover, the ideologies and the interests behind the design of Facebook contributed to the fragmentation not only of the movement's arena of discussion, but also of its organising structure, hampering the mobilising potential of the Anti-Berlusconi protest.

**GLORIA BOONE and LINDA M. GALLANT**

Suffolk University and Emerson College

**Defining the Public: Contested Views of the People in Social Media Posts and Tweets from the Tea Parties and Occupy Wall Street Movements**

**ABSTRACT:** Communicative informatics, as well as rhetorical and social movement theories, are used to analyze the social media of two important political social movements, the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street. Social media posts and tweets come from the right and left of the political spectrum as represented by the conservative Tea Party activists to the liberal Occupy Wall Street reformers. As seen in their uses of social media, each movement fundamentally defines the "public" differently. For the Tea Party movement, the public is constructed as patriots, the real people, citizens, people who have earned it, and fighters against big government. Religious rhetoric and quotes from the founding fathers point to a return to small local government to attack the media elites, corrupt politicians, the welfare state, and illegals. For the Occupy Wall Street movements, the people are occupiers, nonviolent protesters, the voices of the people, the community, the 99%, culture jammers, and anonymous. They seek to restore democracy from the corporate corruption of government. They strive to attack inequality, argue against war, poverty, homelessness, medical costs, and student debt. Social media is speeding up the coherency and phases of development of social movements. Social media helps to compress the time frame for the diffusion of social movements and brands. The social media practices of the Tea Parties and the Occupy Groups provide important insights into how social causes can use social media as a persuasive platform for mobilizing an audience.

## NOTES