Working Group 2 "Audience Interactivit

# Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies

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# Where I can get more info about the Action and WG2?

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# Welcome

Dear News Letter Reader,

I am very happy to introduce you to the News Letter of Working Group 2 of the Cost Action "Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies". As a Working Group, we focus on "Audience interactivity and participation".

This News Letter is meant to keep you up to date on our activities. As a Cost Action, we are an academic network with more than 200 members from 30 countries. Working Group 2 has almost 80 members, mostly academics. But we want to be as open as possible, and for this reason, this News Letter is sent to a variety of people, many of which are non-academics. Moreover, in this News Letter you will find a call for members of Civil Society Organisations to produce short essays for our Cost Action website. We hope that this is a start of a fruitful collaboration with many different people that are interested in audiences, media and participation.

You will also find an overview of some of the past and future activities. Our Working Group 2 members have been very active in producing new publications, which you find listed here. As an Action, we have had a very successful conference in Zagreb (7-9 April 2011), with a significant contribution from Working Group 2, which organised three panels. In this News Letter, you will find quite a number of conference reports, which give you a flavour of the Zagreb conference. At the next IAMCR conference, Working Group 2 will have another conference panel ("Interrogating audiences: theoretical horizons of participation"), and on 31 August, Working Group 2, and the other Working Groups, will meet in London (UK) for a Working Group meeting. A considerable number of Working Group 2 members will also attend the Transforming Audiences 3 conference, which will take place on 1 and 2 September at the University of Westminster in London (UK).

We hope to meet you on one of these occasions, and wish you a pleasurable reading of this News Letter,

#### **Nico Carpentier**

Chair of Working Group 2 "Audience interactivity and participation" Cost Action "Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies" http://www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/



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New challenges and methodological innovations in European media audience research First conference of the COST Action ISO906: Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies (www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu) University of Zagreb, 7-9 April 2011 [SELECTED REPORTS]

*Keynote Report* New challenges and methodological innovations in research on media audiences and patterns of usage [Thursday, 7 April 2011]

Nora Nyiro

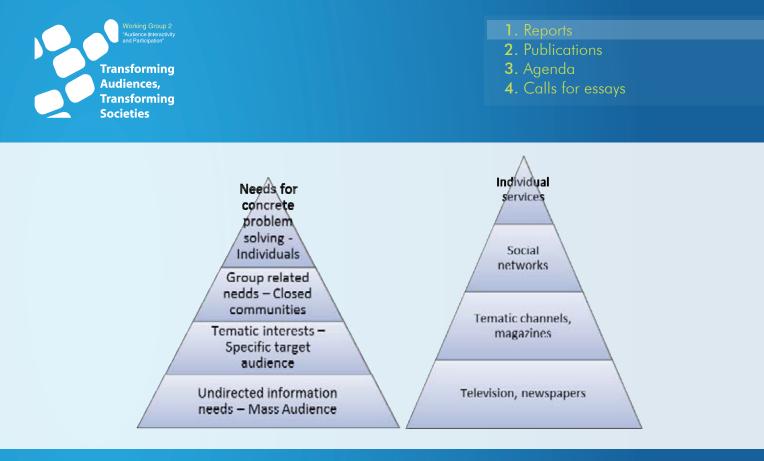
Professor Uwe Hasenbrink from the Hans Bredow Institute summarized the complex structure of media audience research. The first question regarding audience research is whether we can talk about media audiences nowadays, and the answer is that media services do not have audiences anymore. As Rosen (2006) said: "People formerly known as the audience are simply the public made realer, less fictional, more able, less predictable". Audiences are conceptual constructions based on the interests of the respective interest groups or research disciplines who are involved in "audiencing", the activity to construct audiences.

The field of audience and reception studies focuses on the one hand on media exposure, and on the other hand on media effects. Regarding media exposure measurement, the challenges are the examination of patterns of media use and the factors affecting these patterns. These affecting factors are changes in the media environment like digitalization, new technical devices, new distribution strategies, interactions and transactions, and new content. Other affecting factors are the changes in the society including demographic change, time structures changes, variation in values as well as in lifestyles.

We need innovations in order to meet the consequences of cross media strategies and to catch the audience in its user-medium relation. Taking this view point we can talk about users as characteristics of specific media ("Which users does a particular medium reach?") and media as characteristics of users ("Which media does a particular user use?"). However, traditional research concentrated on the usage of single media types or genres, and the entirety of the media that a person uses was mostly disregarded. Now it has become necessary to turn towards transmedial approaches in audience research.

The repertoire-oriented approach to media use may serve as a vehicle for this goal. On the theoretical level, explanatory concepts for media repertoires have to refer to the level of lifestyles, general everyday orientations and practices. In case of repertoire-oriented audience research, the model of analysis, includes aspects of media repertoires (preferences, embeddedness in everyday structures, contacts, loyalties); the levels of media use (media types, genres, contents, services) and the relational criteria for description (proportions of use, relevance, diversity, complementarities, compatibility/competitiveness).

Another approach to describe the audience-media relationship may be the classification of information needs. The information needs concept can be related to audiences and the type of medium as the following image shows.



Information repertoires are changing. Today, the mass-level is decreasing, as well as the specific, thematic level. In parallel, the closed communities and the individual level are growing. Of course not only the time dimension, but the demographic and social changes are also influencing the above mentioned information repertoires.

At the same time we are facing new roles of audiences in media governance, for example victim, consumer, commodity (Webster and Phalen, 1994) or consumers, owners of rights, citizens (Hasenbrink, 1994). We need methodologies and theoretical frameworks to examine these trends in media governance. In summary, media audience research finds itself in a challenging period, where we have to redefine our research implications and methods.

#### *Roundtable Report*

Roundtable: Audience research: academic and non-academic approaches and cooperation possibilities
[Thursday, 7 April 2011]\_\_\_\_\_

#### Nora Nyiro

The purpose of this roundtable, chaired by Guy Starkey from Sunderland University, was to provide an opportunity for dialogue and discussion between academic and non-academic media and audience researchers, in order to establish the gaps between the two research agendas and to identify the possibilities of cooperation. Wouter Quartier from the Flemish (North Belgian) VRT Research Department introduced the main research approaches used by VRT, which focused on motivational research looking at consumers; the portable people meter research from 2003 trying to measure actual media behavior; social media research to highlight the learning from social media discourses; and the measurement of live screens like iPads. He emphasized that they increased their market share from 20 % up to 42 % during the last 10 years, which was supported by their research strategy. He suggested the following cooperation possibilities with the academic field: longitudinal studies and strategy building, research in new media, analysis of linguistic data and measurement of the public broadcaster's role in the society.



Maya Gotz, head of International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television, reviewed the studies which aimed to develop better quality programs for children (e.g. Fun-O-meter working as a candid-camera while children are watching cartoons). She also introduced their research database (which is available online at http://www.izi-datenbank.de/en/) and the Prix de Jeuness Foundation. She stressed the need for studies which aimed at achieving better knowledge of audiences and mainly of children audiences.

Andrzej Olszewski, chairman of TNS Poland, talked about the importance of keeping the finger on the "ever evolving" consumers and the search for new business models for the industry focusing on quality and not only on advertising transactions. At the same time, academic research was characterized from the point of view of market research companies as being slow, too theoretical, concentrating too much on details, and missing the main questions, but academic research could still provide a wide view angle on commercial audience research.

Simona Sbarbaro, head of Research - MTV International, said that the consumer is the key in the evolving media landscape, referring to a multiplatform user. The new trends and changing consumer behaviour drives the need for continual reinvention, for new models, new metrics and new methodologies to measure how consumers are moving across platforms. She identified academic research as being able to see behind the mirror and to be able to understand even the very first signs of change.

The roundtable was a first and appealing opportunity to start a discussion between academic and non-academic audience research, and agreed with exchanging knowledge and information during academic and non-academic conferences and sharing experiences on different levels of possible future cooperation.

## Panel Report

**Media literacy: ambitions, policies and measures** [Thursday, 7 April 2011]

## Miroljub Radojković

In the introduction of the panel, Sonia Livingstone from the London School of Economics and Political Science expressed the wish for this session to reconsider the status, ambitions and current trends in media literacy development across Europe and particularly within the EU. The intention of the panel was to present different measures and models and how they could operationalize media literacy into practice.

A good example was produced by the paper dealing with local newspapers and readers' participatory practices in Sweden, presented by Tobias Olsson, and co-authored by Johanna Borgstrom and Therese Oberg, all from Jönköping University. The group of researchers tried to follow the emergence of, what they call, convergent or Web culture in local communities' media. In order to see the contribution of citizens in this process, they studied the levels of interactivity of 5 local newspapers with their readership. The research goal was to see how editors handled user generated contributions. Both tensions between and advantages for audience and professionals were discovered. Among the tensions were the clash with the professional roles of journalists and the fear of losing a part of circulation. In defending their profession, journalists referred to values such as educational background, objectivity and independence. Local newspapers concluded that citizen's participation could influence their



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brand as well. Therefore, the research will have to continue following two emerging tendencies: how the participatory activities of the readership activate journalistic ideologies and what economic consequences could appear when more user generated contents gets published.

Peter Lunt from Brunel University (but who is now a Leicester University) spoke about the moral interrogation and the politics of recognition in the talk show programs. His focus was on audience participation in a popular UK TV talk show led by anchorman Jeremy Kyle. The example dealt with a vulnerable family reacting on the son's first child in second marriage. The man's mother and sister refused to recognize this child as a family member. These TV discussions confronted audiences into political and public issues, typical for contemporary families such as: family, genetics, marriage, emotions, manipulation and money.

The use of Facebook among Cypriot youth was the topic presented by Tao Papaioannou from the University of Nicosia. Her main research question was aimed at discovering whether young people go on Facebook for deliberation or for self-presentation. She presented results collected through focus groups with high school students aged 14/15 and 18/19. The first focus group took place in 2008 and the second one in 2010. Main conclusions are that youngsters use Facebook for the coordination of activities, and to form both closed and open groups. Moreover, Facebook replaces e-mail, becomes messaging system, and promotes news and events. In Papaioannou's conclusion, Facebook is hardly used for deliberation but for self-presentation.

In her presentation, Sonia Livingstone suggested the concept of media literacy for all. Its necessity is provoked by the complexity of technological changes that rapidly restructure society and people's living styles. On the other hand, the spread of media literacy, as a valuable form of knowledge to understand these changes, is uneven, unequal and insufficient. Her conclusion was that media literacy provided by schools could reach children if the political will to support it existed. Media literacy could also be promoted by the media themselves if the commercial will existed. Since the practical situation is quite the opposite, Sonia thinks that both state action and regulation should bring media literacy to the public, family and private life. Therefore, EU policy needs to combine its legal and technical expertise in order to defend the interests of ordinary people.

# Panel Report Networked belonging and networks of belonging

[Friday, 8 April 2011]

# Manuel José Damásio

During the Cost action conference entitled "new directions in audience research" that took place in Zagreb between the 7th and the 9th of April, working group 2 task forces organized several panels along the general topic of participation and interaction. One of these panels on Networked Belonging and Networks of Belonging took place on the afternoon of April 8th with four different papers presented on different topics associated with the general theme. Sara Henriques and Manuel Damásio from the Universidade Lusófona in Lisbon, Portugal, discussed the applications of social capital and sense of community measures for audience research. They discussed empirical and qualitative data on on-line communities' interaction with social network technologies and how this affects both levels of social capital and sense of belonging.



The second presentation came from Francesca Pasquali from the Università Degli Studi di Bergamo in Italy who, starting from a set of empirical researches based on online ethnographies, biographical self-accounts, and qualitative interviews conducted since 2009 on college students' Facebook use, examined the relationship between media consumption activities (e.g. media content quoting and sharing) and references to material consumption (e.g. brands quoting, etc.) in Facebook. The relation between identity building and the use of SNS as a means to make sense of everyday life was pointed as one of the features that mark the bridge between production and consumption in this new media environment. Selfexpression, privacy and social technologies normative apparatus were other themes discussed during this presentation.

The third presentation came from Knut Lundby of the centre for Media, Culture and Religion at the University of Oslo, who presented a very interesting proposal on the intersection between media and religion, on what concerns the discovery of new patterns of belonging. Starting from the point of view that off-line and on-line lives are merging, Knut discussed how belonging is changing and how patterns of religious belonging are changing with the media landscape. The internet and the web offer additional material for identification and promote new patterns of belonging that have to be understood via cultural practices. The author presented different conceptions on the relation between social technologies and religion ending with a claim that the internet offers new ways for religion to happen via the interplay between mediation and belonging. Spaces of belonging of the web open new spaces for identification.

The last presenter was Paula Cordeiro from Universidade Técnica de Lisboa in Portugal who discussed users' engagement through social networks, namely on what concerns the ways radio station are trying to use social technologies in order to engage and involve their listeners, namely via Facebook.

The four presented papers answered to the panel's proposal in different ways but all add important contributions to the ongoing discussion on how our sense of belonging is transforming itself under these networks of belonging.

#### Panel Report

**Interrogating audiences: theoretical horizons of participation** [Saturday, 9 April 2011]

# Nico Carpentier

This panel was one of the initiatives of WG2. During the WG2 meeting in Lisbon, the WG2 members pointed to the need to elaborate a multi-theoretical framework of participation (and the many related concepts, such as access, interaction, interactivity, engagement), which could provide support to WG2 and the entire Action. This request was the direct motive to organise this theoretical horizons panel at the Zagreb conference. The panel had five speakers: Manuel José Damásio, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, Nurcay Turkoglu, Francesca Pasquali and Nora Nyiro, and their diversity of approaches immediately showed how diverse participation (as a concept) actually is. It is both defined and practiced in very different ways.



Manuel José Damásio from Universidade Lusófona linked participation and interaction to social capital theory, showing their relevance in strengthening social ties. But embedded in this presentation was also the warning that interaction can have an exclusionary dimension.

Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt from University of Tartu moved the discussion on participation to the world of museums, which is one of the locations to study the complex relations between (cultural) professionals and non-professionals.

Francesca Pasquali's (Universita Degli Studi di Bergamo) intervention had a related focus, as she looked at the changes in the publishing industry, triggered by the process of digitalisation. The so-called "self-publishing" market and the circulation of digitized texts have strongly affected the traditional publishing circuits, and offer novel ways of thinking about participation and the relationship between the amateur and the professional.

Nurcay Turkoglu from Marmara University used a critical media literacy angle to discuss participation. Here, media literacy became seen as an important and even necessary condition for participation. At the same time Nurcay explained the many thresholds that stimulating literacy and participation has to face, at the level of audiences, media professionals and academics.

Finally, Nora Nyiro from University of Budapest gave an overview of how participation is used in marketing and in marketing communication literature. Despite the risks of the instrumentalisation of participation, the world of marketing (e.g. through User Generated Adverstising) is opening up locations for people to create media content and to have their voices heard.

Together, these five presenters illustrated how participation intervened in a variety of societal spheres, but also how participation interacts with different theoretical frameworks. Together with a series of other texts, these presentations will be published in a special journal issue of *Communication Management* on the theoretical horizons of participation.

*Panel Report* **Ethnographic approaches** [Saturday, 9 April 2011]

Igor Vobič

Renata Demeterffy Lančić from University of Zagreb, Croatia, discussed the importance of new media technologies in terms of the development of the public sphere and public relations (PR) as one type of communication. Primarily, this concerned the spread of new forms of public communication, such as blogs, online forums, e-mail lists, chat rooms and networks. In this light Demeterffy Lančić presented the traditional qualitative research methods of audience used in PR – grounded theory, ethnography and discourse analysis – and their relevance in the contemporary technological environment, and in the context of audiences involved in its dynamisms. She argued that new types of research, most notably netnography, carried out by researchers trained in qualitative and ethnographic methodologies could provide insights into subtle aspects of interaction between audience and the media.

Galit Nimrod from the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel, argued that the method of netnography, which is based on observations of technologically mediated interactions in



online networks and communities, and of the culture (or cyber-culture) shared between and among them, could be useful for studying "pure" cyber-cultures and virtual communities that do not exist in real life, and "derived" cyber-cultures and virtual communities that also exist "offline". While it is a qualitative and interpretive methodology that adapts the traditional ethnographic research techniques, it is distinguishable from traditional approaches by four distinct characteristics: first, it is mostly based on published texts; second, it observes behaviors of particular interacting people, but the individuals themselves remain unobservable; third it often relies on archives; fourth, it examines a unique form of private interactions that take place in a public space. Furthermore, Galit provided findings from a study of seniors' online communities, where netnography was used. The study revealed a rich cyber-culture that has specific characteristics, including types and subjects of contents, participatory behaviors, and inter-personal dynamics.

Igor Vobič from the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, argued that newsroom ethnography is a needed companion in contemporary audience research. Namely, ethnographic methods, which are often regarded as non-mainstream within media and journalism research, make it possible for the researcher to better understand the work of individual and collective actors in editorial processes in specific settings, and to get insights into the relationship between journalists and the audience from the content production perspective. Furthermore, Vobič presented preliminary results of a newsroom ethnography in the online department of Slovenian print outlet (Delo) and provided insights into the differences in imagining print and online audiences among online journalists who work for both (print and online) departments.



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Key Outputs of WG 2 Members COST Action ISO906 Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies WG 2 Audience Interactivity and Participation Period: 1 March 2010– 15 April 2011

#### **Scholarly articles**

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Noguera, J. M. (2010). Panorámica de la convergencia periodística: los caminos hacia la redacción Google. El Profesional de la Información, 19 (6), 652-657. Available online at: <u>http://hdl.handle.net/10760/15069</u>

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# Next Cost Action Events

Working Group 2 panel at IAMCR Interrogating audiences: theoretical horizons of participation 14 July 2011, Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey http://iamcr2011istanbul.com/

London meeting of the Working Groups 31 August 2011, University of Westminster, London, UK http://www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/node/175

Transforming Audiences 3 1– 2 September 2011, University of Westminster, London, UK http://www.transformingaudiences.org.uk/ Reports
 Publications
 Agenda
 Calls for essays



# Call for interview essays [Early Stage Researchers]: Audience Interactivity, Participation and Civil Society Organizations

The Working Group 2 of the COST action Transforming audiences, Transforming societies on Audience Interactivity and Participation is calling upon Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) for interview essays, based on an interview with key members of civil society organizations (CSOs) in relation to the theme of audience, interactivity and participation. These essays will be published on its official website: http://www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/

#### What is "Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies"?

It is a large network financed by the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) framework. The main objective of this network is to advance state-of-the-art knowledge of the key transformations of European audiences within a changing media and communication environment, identifying their interrelationships with the social, cultural and political areas of European societies.

#### What is the Working Group 2: "Audience Interactivity and Participation"?

The group aims at looking at the possibilities and constraints of mediated public participation, the roles that new and old media institutions and professionals play in facilitating public participation and in building citizenship; the interlocking of mainstream media and non-mainstream media and their production of new hybrid organizational structures and audience participation.

#### What is the Call for Interview Essays?

The Working Group 2 aims to establishing a dialogue with members of CSOs that are dealing with the notion of the audience and issues concerned with interactivity and participation. The goal of the call for interview essays is to invite members of the CSOs to enter in debate on contemporary issues concerning the audience through and to invite them to voice their perspective on contemporary issues of audience interactivity and participation. As these interviews are based on conversations and dialogue, they will also promote the work and ideas of ESRs.

#### What are the contributions dealing with (but not limited to)?

- Audience feedbacks and participation
- The introduction of interactivity in CSOs communication strategies
- The importance of community networks and social media
- The transformations of communication with new technologies
- The changes in audience practices

We welcome essays of no more than 1500 words (references included). Essays should be sent in .doc or .rtf format to the Working Group 2 Liaison Officer for ESRs, Igor Vobič (igor.vobic@fdv.uni-lj.si) by 1 September, 2011.