

The Evolving Media's Impact on Rhetoric and Society: Critical and Ethical Issues



The University of Vienna, Austria

Proceedings of the 2010

International Colloquium on Communication

Elizabeth C. Fine and Gary W. Selnow, Editors

Virginia Tech, 2012

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2012

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In memory of Hellmut Geissner (1926-2012),
founder and guiding light of the
International Colloquium on Communication.

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An Introduction to The Evolving Media's Impact on Rhetoric and Society: Critical and Ethical Issues

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The 22nd International Colloquium on Communication, held July 25-30, at the University of Vienna, Austria, centered on the theme: "The Evolving Media's Impact on Rhetoric and Society: Critical and Ethical Issues." The general theme was developed by conference attendees during the previous session (held in Schoodic Point, Maine) and was later refined by organizers, Susanne Heine and Gary Selnow, with advice and guidance from Hellmut Geissner and Elizabeth Fine. Participants were asked to explore the implications that new and changing media have for rhetoric and society, and how they impact social movements, politics, human agency, and civil society in the 21st century.

The twentieth century saw the introduction of three new media, each of which, in its time, radically changed society. It began with radio in the early 1920s. With the spoken word, radio reduced the abstraction of newspapers, opened windows to nonreaders, and revealed unheard-of wonders to the human imagination. There was a liveness to radio. It could take ten million listeners to a convention, a rally, or the signing of an armistice. At best, a newspaper, even with speedy "extras" could only retell the events and only later touch readers never assembled as one. Radio delivered a sense of community—the brand-new feeling that you were sharing a moment with "everyone else." The idea of community is key, and what radio started, 40 years later, television would expand in the formation of global collectives.

It took just several years for television to swoon audiences around the world. Record breaking adoption patterns during the mid-1950s brought in millions of viewers and created a new presence in the daily schedules of people everywhere. With two or three dominant networks in

the U.S. and in most European countries, audiences coalesced around the same programming, and this had the effect of forging communities bound not by geography but the media themselves. Eric Sevareid, a broadcast news legend in the United States, once called TV the national hearth. "Everyone" gathered around the TV to watch the same evening programs, and we all were warmed in these national assemblies.

That changed with remarkable speed. In less than a generation, with the launch of Satcom I in 1975, cable was born, and we had dozens of channels; then came satellite, and we had hundreds of channels; then the Internet surfaced, and we had tens of thousands of Web sites, then millions of them. Through it all, the hearth cooled, assembled audiences broke down, and we went our separate ways. We are left today warmed by our individual candles with a few like-minded souls, enjoying our special news and views and tailor-made entertainment. With the onset of audience fragmentation went the remarkable unification of national, even global audiences--and the commons took a hit.

The media today appeal to our natural inclinations to fix on topics we like, to dwell on viewpoints we prefer, to confirm our biases and avoid our aversions. In less than half a century, we transformed from populations united by our media to populations divided by them. This has converted once broad and sweeping audiences into narrow and parochial clusters.

So what? In principle, there is nothing wrong with giving people what they want. Who would care to return to the days when we received all our news from print or radio or from a handful of networks? But anything with the potential to alter the flow of news and information and to affect

how millions of people spend six or more hours each day is likely to have consequences.

This micro-media environment is still maturing, so the full impact is not yet manifest, but already we are seeing effects. The politics of nations are changing along with the capacity of leaders. Communications by every stripe of activist can now target audiences more precisely. It is abundantly evident with the Internet, but the focus is apparent in all media.

Never before have populations been sliced and diced and subdivided so thoroughly for political and commercial advantage. With audience segmentation so easy and efficient, our common agendas and reference points are yielding to individual preoccupations, and this weakens empathy, tolerance and compromise. Just where do we assemble anymore? We don't regularly gather around the same agenda-setting forums; we have become the iPod population, enveloped in our personal media pods.

Even though the media have been with us for only an eye-blink of human history, they have integrated so fully into our experiences, our way of thinking, and our relationships with each other. In ninety short years, they had once united us around common themes, and then whip sawed us in the other direction. Yet recent political uses of cell phones and social media such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube in the Arab Spring and other social movements suggest that the evolving media can play a powerful role in building civil society and coordinating democratic protests (Shirky 2011). Indeed, as Philip N. Howard argues, the "social media's role in strengthening civil society will likely prove its most lasting contribution to political culture." Further, the Internet enables individual users to create and disseminate content and thus challenge the dominance of mainstream, corporate-controlled media. As Howard concludes, "Digital media's most lasting impact may be that it acclimates citizens both to consuming and to producing political content" (Howard 2010).

Whether or not the social media contribute to the common text of a nation or reinforce the Balkanization of a population remains to be seen. Clearly, at this early stage of development, the social media have not had the homogenization

effects of network television; we have hints that they might even work in the other direction, tightening the perimeter around likeminded groups. Still, it's early, audiences are exploring, and the impact of social media on national cohesion remains to be seen. This Colloquium was designed to address the changes and the challenges of the emerging media and to look at the consequences to our evolving society.

In an age of rapid technological change and evolving media, it is not a surprise that the media through which people communicate influences a broad spectrum of society. The ICC's theme, "The Evolving Media's Impact on Rhetoric and Society: Critical and Ethical Issues" stimulated a wide variety of papers that fall into five thematic areas that provide the structure for this volume: repercussions on society, storytelling, pedagogy, religion, and politics.

Three contributors focus on the repercussions of the evolving media, particularly on children. Hellmut Geissner, a co-founder of the International Colloquium on Communication over 40 years ago, probes the ethical paradox arising from a conflict in Germany between the desire to protect children from the child pornography that circulates through the Internet and the desire of many to protect freedom of communication on the Internet. Geissner explores the tensions in "the collaborative attempt to create at least a precarious balance between order and freedom" in protecting children from abuse on the Internet. Also engaged with the repercussions of the evolving media on children, Edith Slembek, from Lausanne, Switzerland, examines how electronic devices in children's playrooms are affecting their reading ability and creativity. In "The Electronic Invasion in the Playroom," Slembek examines how electronic media usage by children is affecting their development of communicative competence. In "European Kids Online: Minimizing Risks and Maximizing Opportunities," Renate Csellich-Ruso from Vienna, Austria, synthesizes data from studies about how young people in Europe and Austria are using the Internet to point to potential risks of Internet usage, as well as opportunities to mitigate those risks.

Two articles fall under the rubric of storytelling and the evolving media. Eric E. Peterson and Kristin M. Langellier, from the Department of

Communication at the University of Maine, Orono, critically examine claims about new storytelling practices on the Internet, known as “digital storytelling.” They argue that analog and digital communication “are not opposed to each other; they overlap and spiral as well as alternate in the shift of storytelling performance to written form.” They explore the critical and ethical issues that emerged from their involvement in the Somali Narrative Project at the University of Maine. Focusing on a particular kind of storytelling about the fleeting celebrities of popular culture in “Temporary Celebrity: Media ‘Fodder’ and Diversion,” Sam G. Riley, from the Department of Communication at Virginia Tech, argues that temporary celebrities are “shooting stars” that provide “vivid and varied splashes of color on our enormous media canvas.” Making use of his own book-length experimental informational blog on temporary celebrity culture, Riley offers a 21-category typology of temporary celebrities.

The evolving media also influence pedagogy and two contributors to this volume offer examples from their own practice as teachers. Eberhard Wolf, a communication trainer for the public broadcasting channel, Swiss Television (SF), is responsible for training all of the Swiss TV channel’s employees who deal with language-related forms of communication. Wolf explores the differences and interrelationships between face-to-face and audio-visual technically transmitted forms of communication and their implications for the communication trainer in “Face-to-Face and AVT-Forms of Communication: Pedagogical Interventions – Conditions and Possibilities.” Annette Mönnich, in the Department of German Language and Literature at Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany, explores listener behaviors in the “feedback communication” between audience members and speakers in her public speaking courses. In “Forms and Functions of Listener Behaviors in Audio-Based ‘Feedback Communication,’” Mönnich focuses on the response tokens of listeners by using participant observation and transcriptions of audiotapes and videos of speeches given by students in her courses.

Three contributors to this volume offer essays related to religion and the evolving media. Martin Peier-Plüss, member of the management

of “Reformierte Medien” (reformed media) and Commissioner for Radio and Television of the protestant churches of German-speaking Switzerland, explores how young people use the Internet and the implications of that usage for churches in Europe. In “Internet—the Agora of the 21st Century: Communication of Young People on the Internet,” Peier-Plüss makes the case for European protestant churches to learn to communicate with young people through the Internet. In “Communication Possibilities in Religious Pedagogy: The Austrian Protestant Diaspora in Times of Media Networking,” Moritz Stroh, from the University of Vienna, Austria, explores the impact of digital networking on the teaching of religion in Austrian schools. Henner Barthel, from the University of Koblenz-Landau, Germany, analyzes the handling of the Psalm through history and changing media in “The Psalm: Ethical and Critical Notes Referring to its Media History.”

Two essays in this volume deal with the political realm and the evolving media. In “How to Sell Wars,” Wulff Bickenbach, from Düsseldorf, Germany, examines how the political and military leaders used the media to gain and maintain support for wars in the Gulf, the Balkans, and Afghanistan, and offers some predictions about future efforts to sell wars to the public. In “Rhetorical Strategies of Environmental Cyberactivists,” Elizabeth Fine, from the Department of Religion and Culture at Virginia Tech, examines the critical rhetoric of four different kinds of environmental websites to evaluate how cyberactivists are using the Internet to motivate citizen action. Fine uses comparative impact data from the Internet web information site Alexa to help evaluate the audience appeal of various rhetorical strategies.

Finally, several people deserve thanks for their leadership and contributions to making the 22nd International Colloquium on Communication a success. Susanne Heine, from the University of Vienna, hosted the Colloquium, garnering University support and arranging a spectacular fieldtrip to the Melk Abbot. Gary Selnow, from San Francisco State University and Wired International, served as the U.S. organizer, soliciting participation from U.S. scholars. Hellmut Geissner played a key role in arranging our lodging at the Benediktushaus in Vienna, and Edith

Slembek took charge of collecting the European papers for this volume. Special thanks to Holly Jordan for her editorial assistance and to Anne

Lawrence, Online Editor at the Digital Library and Archives at Virginia Tech, who helped us make the proceedings available digitally.

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Evolution or Involution? A Question on Political Ethics

Hellmut K. Geissner

1. Progress in communication?

Considering *The Evolving Media's Impact on Rhetoric and Society*, we can't avoid the question: Where are they taking us, these "media"? The question does not admit of a general answer, certainly not in terms of their function in human communication, that is, whether they are more or less adequate, or even effective means of communication. Human communication never occurs in isolation, of and for itself. It is never "individualistic" in the solipsistic sense; rather communication is always unavoidably embedded in social situations, hence also in the political. These situations, in contrast to the relative stability of the genetic code, have changed. But does this change constitute progress? It depends on what you mean by "progress": What is the starting point and who is progressing, that is, who is moving "forward" and not just "away" from the present. But even if we assume "forward," that simply means "not backward." After all, "forward" does not specify a destination, a goal. Thus, once again, the question is "where to", or in a more elegant mode, "whither?" What direction is being taken? (A direction has always been chosen, even if the choice is by default, i.e. unconscious.) Where is the goal? Is there any overarching goal? For the single life – the whole society – for mankind? Who is asking those questions? But this necessarily compels communication scholars such as ourselves to ask the basic question: *Does communication even have an ultimate goal?*

If we are not ready to content ourselves with commonplaces, we will have to ask further what the media mean for communication, not just for the acquisition of information, but rather and especially for a consensus-oriented communication that is based on and leads to action (Geissner, 2005, 19). Speaking and writing do not constitute the content of communication, even if it sometimes appears they do; they are

merely processes that transmit thoughts and feelings. Therefore, the development of this content is more important than the "nurturing" of speaking or writing. I propose the following motto: *What use is the best education in speaking and writing, if people have nothing to say?* With respect to television, Pierre Bourdieu made the following observation:

The exchange of commonplaces is communication with no other content than that of communication itself. [...] Because of their banality the commonplaces are common to both sender and receiver. Thinking, by contrast, is subversive from the start: it has to begin by breaking commonplaces down (Bourdieu 1998, 39).

2. Directions of progress

So, let's investigate some possible directions and look into the goals we might pursue "moving forward":

1. Away from the present
2. Quantitative expansion
3. Qualitative change
4. Attainment of goals

Let's look into what these four dimensions mean for communication:

2.1 The fascination of the new

It can probably be assumed that "forward" means a general striving away from a never-changing present, breaking out of the everyday. Fashion is always bringing us something new; even fashions of speech change: The ancients spoke of "bread and circuses" (*panem et circenses*) for the masses; these days, it is the demand for games that keeps growing. Enough

already of the “daily bread” of ordinary, boring modes of speech! Give us wordplay, verbal amusements! Escape from the customary, everyday, seldom entertaining entertainments, but also from the dismal seriousness of life: a game of poker in the fun-society, which mistakes itself for an information-society and mocks itself as a knowledge-based society.

2.2 Quantitative enlargement

Biologically speaking, the human being is a rather deficient species (Müller 1980, 712). To compensate, it has eliminated many of its deficits and faulty aspects *quantitatively* (Kittler 1986; 125) by technical means: eyeglasses, the wheel, machines, transportation by rail and car, telecommunications, experiencing novel and foreign situations through radio, film, long-distance eavesdropping, closing distances with tele-optics: the telescope and television. All these prostheses are uncontested in their usefulness and most of them are irreversible innovations, but have they led to a *qualitative* change? Apart from improved marketing options for Olympians - I mean Olympic athletes -, who is helped by the athletic maxim “citius, altius, fortius”? That is the official motto of the Olympics committee: “faster, higher, stronger.”

Does a Formula-1 racecar improve the engines in passenger cars? Although the Tower of Babel was toppled, the Tower of Dubai still stands, but it has by no means realized a utopia. If “time is money,” then saving time through increased speed is worth gold, but at what price and to what end? “Compressed speech” is at best useful for fighter pilots to convey their positions to each other. Machine power has reduced the strenuousness of work, but just how do workers benefit from increased production, homemakers from the lightening of their chores, communicators from speaking and listening machines?

2.3 Qualitative changes

Is it possible—now and then—that a quantitative change creates new qualities, even in communication? *Certainly there is no progress in art or in morality.* Giacometti’s “Walking Man”

recently changed hands for ninety-four million Euros, but it hardly represents an advance over, say, the “Discus Thrower” of Praxiteles; the cave paintings of Lascaux (Spain) bear witness to their times as Picasso’s “Guernica” does to ours. A pentatonic “stabat mater” is not to be viewed as backward relative to a twelve-tone requiem. And what about a qualitative change of morals? Do the new liars who drove whole nations into the Iraq War have more integrity or refinement than the old liars? Is a banker who inveigles his customers into the purchase of worthless derivatives a better betrayer than Judas for his thirty pieces of silver?

2.4 Completion of communication?

*Is a perfection or consummation of communication even possible? Can this mean any more than achieving a condition post mortem in which communication is superfluous? Whether it is “milk and honey in the heavenly gardens,” or eternal life in *Paradise Regained* or the utopian “topos hyper ouranios.” The time machine is no longer ticking. The thinking machine is getting rusty. The mouths and the communication machines stand idle. The electronic cloud seems to be gone with the wind. Decades ago McLuhan prophesied: *The computer [...] promises by technology a Pentecostal condition of universal understanding and unity* (1964, 79). Is this prophecy now to be fulfilled online?*

The condition of weightlessness that biologists say promises us physical immortality may be paralleled by the condition of speechlessness that could confer a perpetuity of collective harmony and peace (McLuhan 1964,80).

Human souls wafting through the heavenly fields, basking in the radiance of the divine countenance and singing “Hallelujah” with the angels — and nary a breath for words, no more talk of reason and rationale, and no “unforced constraint by the better argument” (Habermas 1973, 240). The contra-factually conceived “ideal speech situation” has been achieved; in fact, the inferred agreement is now a collective given, obviating any possible communicative exertion. *“The rest is silence.”*

3. The reality of communication

“Since, however, it is not so,” as Kafka once said, we must ask further about the goals of communication, both on- and off-line. Of course the media have changed people’s lives, including the way they communicate, but let us not forget that many technological innovations, considered revolutionary in their day, have since disappeared. Who still sends telegrams? How would you even do it? (Note from *Wikipedia*: Western Union ceased all telegram services in the U.S. in 2006). Who, especially among young people, still makes phone calls using landlines? Who sends a fax when it’s so much cheaper and easier simply to text someone? Who is not proud of his/her many Facebook-friends? (It would not be out of place to insert here an excursus on the transformations in communication pedagogy under the influence of such developments as audio-visual technologies, from the wire-recorder to the iPhone, from the slide projector to the digital projector.)

The greatest transformation was occasioned by the WWW, which brought us the possibility to “communicate” about anything and nothing globally and in real time with any and all who are online. Of course, it is always a question of whether this is “consensus-oriented communication based on action” or merely a one-sided, one-way downloading of information that accomplishes nothing more than to “dis-inform” the mind of the “user.” Users have the choice of identifying themselves or remaining anonymous. (Provided they are technically savvy enough to avoid cookies and spyware!) The electronic cloud obscures and hides. The Web and its countless data sources offer the possibility to find out about everything, even the most remote subjects, to access reports and images that are otherwise unavailable, to establish contacts the world over, to exchange messages with strangers in foreign lands and foreign cultures. By the same token, the Web offers the possibility, totally free of any recognizable form of control, to find like-minded people who share one’s opinions, political views (Selnow 1998, 75), religious practices, personal tastes (culinary as well as musical), passions (travel, theater) and even obsessions (compulsions, sexual practices), whether these be “honorable” or criminal.

4. Uncontrolled freedom?

The WWW not only enables the clandestine plotting of crimes (“alone or with others”), for example making bombs and planning attacks. It also enables the covert participation in crimes, a participation that makes the participant a criminal. A concrete example here - to demonstrate what is meant - is child pornography. There is probably a consensus that child pornography is criminal, as is its distribution and consumption that is, looking at the pictures and reading the texts. Actions that would be dangerous in the physical marketplace can be performed unobserved in the electronic marketplace, safely removed “from the eyes of the law.”

While among consenting adults vulgar pornographic practices, images, and films - so-called hard porn - are more a matter of taste than the penal code, the sexual abuse of infants, children, and adolescents is always against the law and subject to punishment. The suffering and damage that is inflicted by such acts, sometimes amounting to torture, is described in German by the word “Seelenmord”: murder of the soul. The victims are left with psychological wounds that will burden them for life, deprive them of sexual fulfillment, and in many cases lead to suicide. While the children (*infantes*) are free of any responsibility, the perpetrators are punishable, and so are the voyeurs, even if they “only” look at the pictures.¹ (This is not about pin-up girls and pin-up boys; this is about helpless victims, such as children, who fall a victim to a crime – child pornography.)

Since minor children cannot protect themselves from criminals, it becomes a duty of the state to legislate “laws for the protection of youth,”² in particular to guarantee the protection of minors. For this reason the German Federal government drafted a law against the abuse of children with the goal of blocking incriminated websites. The law was announced on television. A young woman (Franziska Heine) read outraged comments against the government’s intended law on the Internet, sent an online petition to the Minister of Family Affairs, and the next day, on Twitter, found a call for everyone to “sign this petition immediately.” It was her petition. One hundred thirty thousand people signed

the petition before the deadline. It is one of the largest mass petitions in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany.³ What is this about? The protestors fear a general censorship of “unpopular” sites.

The sites are labeled “unpopular” because they are the publicity organs of groups outside the mainstream. The protestors demand unrestricted freedom of the worldwide web based on the Federal Constitution, which states, “*There shall be no censorship.*”⁴ Just as in the 1960s when the APO or Außerparlamentarische Opposition (extraparlimentary opposition) fought against the ‘establishment’, in many cases formed of men who had positions during the Nazi government), a new extra-parliamentary opposition quickly takes shape whose goals in some respects resemble those of the newly founded “Pirate Party.”⁵ Almost 1,000,000 people voted for this party in the national elections of 2009, a political force to be reckoned with that represents almost two percent of the electorate. This new “movement” – we’re not talking about a flashmob getting together to drink themselves into a stupor – fights against the restrictions on civil liberties that began after the attacks of 9/11 and have not been limited to the U.S. In the mean, time it is certain that:

The very controversial Internet ban on child pornography, passed by the parliament last fall, will not become law. Thus, for the first time, the online community in Germany has shown its ability to fight (Welfing 2010, 10).

However, this also means that the online community not only furthered its own demands for freedom, but also provided protection for criminals and their crimes. The online community does not concern itself with what the constitution says about the “reservation of statutory powers”. The rights of freedom *find their limits in the provisions of general laws, in provisions for the protection of young persons, and in the right to personal honour.*⁶ To be sure, the Federal President has now signed a modified version of the law⁷ – “Don’t ban it, delete it!” (although it is in principle questionable whether the executive can substantially alter an enactment of the legislature.) But even this altered law reaches only to the national borders, at most to the borders of the European Union, even though the problem

and the WWW are global. We have no guarantee that the German government is strong enough to do what may be possible and to establish laws against child pornography on the Internet. The only thing we can hope for is that the law still manages to protect children.

5. Portentous consequences on political ethics of the media’s evolution

This issue is important because it shows what the media revolution can lead to. This is how the term “*involution*” found its way into this paper. In sociology, involution means, “decay of a social organism” or, more appropriately here, the *deterioration of democratic systems and forms into pre- or anti-democratic form* (Duden 1989, 778). What does this particular case mean for democracy, for the enforceability of law on the Internet?

With the evolution of technology, with its “seamlessly advancing development,” the Internet creates the possibility for people to come together, for them to demand their “right to the free use of the Internet,” but it also allows them to subvert the legislative authority of elected lawmakers, to “disenfranchise” the elected representatives, who have enacted a law to protect children.

The emerging ethical paradox is, in old-fashioned terms, a dialectical tension between freedom and order, between the state-controlled order of human beings living with each other on the one hand, and individual freedom on the other, of course within the bounds of orderliness, lest the living together become “chaotic” (that is, “disorderly”) or “anarchistic.”⁸ The overarching question is in my mind:

How much order is necessary in order to provide for how much freedom?

or, conversely,

How much freedom can co-exist with how much order (Geissner 2008, 24).

It would be anachronistic to measure contemporary democracies against the Attic prototype. Even back then there were various types of democracies, but as Aristotle says: “The basic form of the democratic state is freedom” (Aristo-

tle 1996, 203). A further characteristic of democracy is “that one can live as one wishes.” Therefore one “does not allow oneself to be ruled,” but even if one does, it is only in a “sense of equality,” that is, “all rule over each and, by turns, each rules over all” (204). And yet even the most useful and most unanimously accepted law is pointless unless citizens have become accustomed to the constitution, have been “raised on it,” so to speak. When they act unconstitutionally, then this is because “they improperly understand the concept of freedom, for obedience to the constitution is not to be understood as subjugation but rather as saving the constitution” (187). Democracy is when “all deliberate about everything, for such equality is what people strive for” (157), but even in a fully achieved democracy there is much that is “tyrannical” (195).

What was true of the democracy practiced in a city-state two thousand five hundred years ago by a few thousand male citizens (foreigners, slaves, and women did not have the vote in Athens) cannot simply be taken as a model for a state with millions of citizens, women and men. Speaking realistically, there is no reason to idealize the *Agora*: viewed as the scene of legislative assemblies, rules of voting and exclusions were in strong force; viewed as a commercial place, an assizer controlled the business transactions. While, in the democratic Athens of the fourth century BCE, at least in the *symbouletic* assemblies in the *Agora* “everyone could deliberate about everything,” this is clearly not possible in a “representative” mass democracy. There is no “marketplace” for all, and thus it is not surprising that referenda and elections are taken as the “essential” hallmarks of democracy. (One often hears, when a controversy arises, “Let’s take a vote! This is a democracy, after all!”) But who is truly “free” in their electoral decisions? Not dependent on traditions, on professional or economic interests? Who is not dependent on religious influences, on clandestine constraints of one kind or another? Years ago Stan Deetz came to the conclusion that, “*Voting and free expression, which gives voice to that which is not one’s own, makes democracy an invisible but effective tyranny*” (1990, 95).

It would be illusory to assume things are different in the global market of the Internet. The struggle between order and freedom is both central and omnipresent. It is more than a marginal phenomenon of communication. But even when it is understood as a marginal phenomenon, then this very marginality shows that it is not the achievement of dialogical communication. While the global enforceability of laws is a question for courts and legal scholars, this struggle between freedom and order remains an enduring challenge for communication theorists.

6. A precarious balance

In contrast to the genetically determined animals, human beings, with their general freedom to choose, are not constrained to respond according to their genetic programming or merely to follow rules. However, again and again, freedom runs into boundaries in which the all-too-often ignored dominant position asserts itself, the dialectical relation between subjective freedom and social order that I mentioned above.

The more people submit to the imposed order, the more stable will become the authoritarian system, but also, the more mechanical will become community life. The more people make use of their freedom, the more precarious will be the states in which they live together, but also the more human these will become. But even then there are abuses in both directions. The more people submit to the established order, the more inhuman the system becomes; the more people make unprotected use of their freedom, the more vulnerable they become (for example, to mobbing on the Internet, and to slander and libel). There can be no lasting “contra-factual” solution to this problem, even if it is troublesome that it often entails the unquestioned execution of blind power. What remains factually is only the never-ending challenge through conflict and the daring attempt to endure the tension, to “democratize” the paradox, that is, the collaborative attempt to create at least a precarious balance between order and freedom.

In concrete terms then: It is important not to leave communication to the un-dialogical power plays of the mighty. This means not only interrogating power claims as to their legitimacy and resisting restrictions on freedom, but also using persuasive arguments in respectful conversation to try to inform each other about the contemporary situation, and, even more important, to inform each other about the goals and paths of future action. But aren't these, too, in "view" of the Internet, "contra-factual" views? No amount of situational attempts to ascertain will produce lasting certainty. There are no generic arguments that are valid in all countries of the world. Even convictions do not fall from the sky; they only arise and take shape in the mundane world, in one's experiences during the span of a human life, or, as Wittgenstein puts it: *Our speech only acquires meaning through our other actions* (Wittgenstein 1970, 63).

7. Epilogue

The things we have learned about in life include –to return once again to this issue – criminal acts against children, the exploitation of these crimes by Internet users, and the fact that, since the abused individuals often do not come forward until years later, the statute of limitations makes it impossible to prosecute the offenders. A concrete, even constitution-friendly possibility for communicative intervention might be for the members of the new "Movement for the Free Use of the Internet" not only to look after their own rights, but also the rights of the abused, and to rally around an effort to rescind the statute of limitations on these crimes.

Translation: John Minderhout, St. Michaels, MD

Notes

- ¹ Urteil des Oberlandesgerichts Hamburg 15.2.2010
² Grundgesetz Art. 5. 2
³ Die ZEIT v. 27.08.2009
⁴ Grundgesetz Art. 5. 1, Satz 3
⁵ Piratenpartei. See: Wikipedia.com

- ⁶ Official translation published by the Bundestag. Berlin, 2008 <https://www.btg-bestellservice.de/pdf/80201000.pdf>
⁷ Gesetz zur Bekämpfung der Kinderpornografie, 23.02.2010
⁸ Plato. *Republic*. IX, 575 ("ohne Herrscher keine geordnete Regierung")

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The Electronic Invasion in the Playroom

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Electronic media are today's front-runners – television, radio, newspapers are losing ground. This raises questions – what, for instance, happens when the media usage of people is limited exclusively to electronic media, and not just for adults but even more so for children and youth. They learn media usage from adults in early childhood. When they grow up, they continue their early-learned behavior and probably develop their own manner of dealing with electronic media. What are the implications for the personal development and the future of children and youth who have been hooked on electronic media – computers, video games, radio, television, cell phones, tablets – for years?

Some effects of the change in media on older adults

Within the last twenty years, electronic media have penetrated every aspect of life. This penetration of every aspect of life there happened at least one decade later than in the U.S.

The infiltration into everyday life with electronic media has led to a drastic change in media usage.

Who has been affected by this change and how? This is age related and depends on the society and the social class. An implication of this change is the demand for more advanced literacy skills in the work place. But not everyone possesses adequate reading or writing skills. In Germany, Switzerland, and other European countries the current estimate is that 13 to 19% of the population still cannot read and write, despite attending school for at least nine years they are still secondary illiterates. Many of these individuals were still able for years to fulfill simple tasks in factories; they could operate machinery and so were able to earn their livelihood. But ever since machinery has been computer-

ized and monitor messages must be read by the operator to click at least a "Yes" or "No" answer, many of these people are now unemployed without a chance of obtaining another job ever again. "If they cannot read, they no longer have a chance" (Döbert/Nickel 2000). Scores of adults have since participated in literacy programs, but they have already fallen behind so far that they can never catch up again. Even worse, they report being shunned by society economically, culturally, and socially. This exactly is the group of people who cannot use the computer and the Internet to benefit themselves. And this is also the group who – due to their illiteracy - cannot extract differentiated information from printed media to form their own opinion on political issues. Their media usage is limited to radio and television – whatever their information is worth. We all know how small and often distorted information from these media are and consequently to what extent information about democratically relevant issues never reaches this group of citizens.

But the new media also affect people who have held distinct positions without ever learning how to use electronic media and to get information about important issues, people who were close to retirement when this technique was introduced. Their secretary cared for the computer-linked tasks. This group can read, write and has access to newspapers and books. Therefore they have different possibilities to get information about relevant political issues and to form a decision on them.

Taking both groups mentioned above into account, it is still estimated that approximately 30 – 40% of the population is unable to take advantage of any possible benefits offered by electronic media in Germany (ard-zdf-onlinestudie.de).

Children and Youth

The present generation of the five- to 20-year-olds has grown up with computers, digital games and the Internet – they are the Digital Natives. By now, almost every playroom is equipped with a computer and video game station. Parents are giving their children these games at an increasingly earlier age. For boys, it holds true that since 2002 the computer is regarded to be even more indispensable than the television, and they are becoming more and more attached to the possibilities the Internet offers. Although girls are catching up, they are still less pre-occupied with computers (Wienholz 2010, 1).

What are the consequences? At the same time, reading competence among male youths has decreased significantly. More than 80% of the youth with weak reading and writing skills are males. The reason for this might be the large amount of time they spend in front of the computer. In 1990, the weak reading competence of these youths – which was already present then but less pronounced than now – was blamed on extensive male television consumption. In 1980, Winn wrote in *The Plug-in Drug (The Drug in the Living Room*, German title of the book) and offered an antidote: “Turn it off!” Today it is apparent that the media consumption of young males has not diminished, but has switched from the television to the computer.

Within the context of German exams held by the Goethe Institute, we interviewed 50 youths between the age of 17 and 22 about their hobbies. Some of them are enjoying sports; quite a few like watching TV, listening to music, and going out with their friends. And all of them said that they chat daily or play computer games on an average of three to four hours each day. To the question, what are they reading, all except for one woman answered that they do not read newspapers or books, perceiving this as a bore, and that books were much too long; they went on for page after page without anything happening. If they are reading at all, it is limited to brief messages such as commonly used in SMS, emails or chats. The reading of longer, mentally challenging or aesthetically appealing texts or even intense reading for pleasure is no longer a treasured activity of these youth.

But reading, the comprehension of the written word, and the ability to question it can only be learned by vigorously reading a variety of different materials. This development towards non-reading and the resulting implications are confirmed in the PISA statistical analyses encompassing more than twenty European countries. According to the analyses of the 15-year-old youths, only 15% of them are still able to comprehend a written text, to extract significant information from it, to form hypotheses and to ask questions about their reading material (cf: PISA 2000). Is this not reason to feel alarmed?

The question arises, what has led to these alarming conditions? And furthermore: what does this mean for the future of young people?

In 2009, the best-selling gifts for five- to ten-year-old children were electronic gifts such as computers complete with games, as for instance “Optimus Prime Leader,” and the evil “Megatron” for boys. For girls there are rosy-red play stations with the games that go along with them ... or the doll “Baby Born”: She can drink out of the bottle, cry, go potty, and she can even swim. An electronically guided doll – in order to play with her, girls must adhere to the instructions, and this limits them in the use of their own playful imagination. This is clearly visible when watching the demo video: Two laughing girls are standing in front of the doll and watch her going potty to the sound of a melody. Games for boys are focused on fighting and competition; but for girls, the rosy-red world of fairy tales remains firmly in place. To be exact, the traditional roles are still prescribed for boys as well as for girls.

At approximately ten to twelve years of age, children sign up with Facebook, or they Twitter; many spend several hours each day in contact with people they do not know, but they call them “friends” anyhow. The time-honored conception of “friend” is being challenged, or else it must be redefined.

With these gifts, parents are strengthening the bonds between their children and the world of electronics. Many of the children concede that they spend four to five hours after school in front of the computer. This has consequences, and by no means only for their reading skills.

There is no lack of criticism for this development. If children are to grow up into mature adults who are able to reflect on their own actions, cope with conflicts, and play in a team – all skills that are requested in job ads for distinct positions – then the basis for these must be laid in childhood. Children who spend a lot of time in front of the PC or play video games constantly have hardly any time left to play with other children. Playing must not be underestimated. Group play stimulates the imagination, for instance, when play scenes are developed, or during ball games, or when building a hut outside utilizing only materials that are found lying around. Same-aged children playing together in a group develop their social skills by paying attention to each other, discussing how to proceed in the game, arguing with each other, and having to deal with losing sometimes.

If any play at all takes place anymore, it can be observed that - now as ever – girls play with girls; boys play with boys; the playgroup formation is defined by gender. Both groups develop a different communication style based on their gender. This puts women at a disadvantage later in their working life, as the masculine communication style is still dominant and perceived as being superior by society, and its use can be a deciding factor for gaining access to job positions – at least in today's Germany and Switzerland (Datta/Dundlach 2011; and www.rp-online.de/beruf/arbeitswelt). Having said that, it can be observed that more and more girls produce better grades than boys and are better educated; in the future this makes it more difficult to exclude them from higher positions even though they would be qualified for them.

Back to playing and another important aspect: Playing with others stimulates motor skills, requires constant motion. Sitting in school for five to six hours, then riding home in a car and continuing to sit for several hours more in front of the computer, then doing homework afterwards, barely leaves any time for physical exercise or group games. Many of today's children can no longer turn summersaults, have problems with balance, and run at a slower pace and over shorter distances than only ten years ago. Today, many of the large number of overweight children and youth are already suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure and arthritis.

According to Lehmann,

The parents - but many teachers as well - are not aware just yet of the consequences [of the lack of exercise, E.S.]. The children experience increasing problems in the areas of aware-ness, motor skills, language, but also in their social behaviors. These are the areas that are paramount for the development of the intelligence of our children (2010).

Susan Linn argues that,

while play is crucial to human development and children are born with an innate capacity for make believe, the convergence of ubiquitous technology and unfettered commercialism actually prevents them from playing. In modern-day America, nurturing creative play is not only counter-cultural - it threatens corporate profits (2004).

Neil Postman spoke of the “disappearance of childhood” (1993). The borders between childhood and adulthood disappear, parents want to remain young forever, and children adopt behaviors that used to be reserved for adults. If Postman's ideas still appeared to be doubtful, Linn makes a firm point by stating that the middle childhood between five and ten years of age is disappearing – a time that is decidedly more fruitful for the intellectual development of the child than any other time. These are the years a child needs for personal development to become a mature and discriminating human being.

The 'Father' Generation of Today's Children – the Digital Immigrants

The father generation referred to here, is approximately between 25 and 40 years old, either still climbing the career ladder or having already arrived on top, and perfectly familiar with electronic media. This is apparent for anyone who watches European people on the morning train. The first-class passengers are mostly well-dressed young men, always busy with their laptops, playing games, solving Sudoku puzzles, creating PowerPoint presentations, writing emails or chatting. Others again are seen fumbling with their cell phones, writing SMS, or talk-

ing on the phone. Every few seconds, a call comes in. Some are leafing through one of the free tabloids and read the bits and pieces of so-called information given there. No one is reading a book – according to their own assertions, this would be a waste of time and give the impression that they had enough leisure time. Nobody would even think that playing Sudokus, or computer games, or chatting might be considered leisure play. For them, apparently, being occupied with their laptops or cell phones does not fall into this category. Thus, it might be true that:

The digital age society moves away from the book culture – and this trend has already caught up irrevocably, even with the socially privileged... Educationally disadvantaged middle classes are created, who – despite keeping a good life standard – no longer value classic education or find reading delightful (Gaschke 47, 2009, 19).

Children do recognize what is important to adults. According to the polls of “Reading Endowment” (Stiftung lesen), 25% of all adults do not read any books at all. It follows that the number of adults who labor systematically to arouse the interest of their children in books has fallen within ten years from 50 to 25 percent. Thus, it is not astonishing that the six- to thirteen-year-olds, state that they never read or do not like to read (ibid.). Children, even those of privileged middle class families, are rarely read to anymore: their interest in the world of literature is no longer kindled systematically. This affects their vocabulary, their ability to develop a sophisticated world-view, their way of comprehension – and finally, their success in school and in life.

Hart/Scott formulate this as follows:

By age three, children from privileged families have heard 30 million more words than children from underprivileged families. Longitudinal data on 42 families examined what accounted for enormous differences in rates of vocabulary growth. Children turned out to be like their parents in stature, activity level, vocabulary resources, and language and in-

teraction styles. Follow-up data indicated that the 3-year-old measures of accomplishment predicted third grade school achievement (2003, 4).

So far, families are defined as underprivileged by level of education, income and social standing. In many cases these families have equipped themselves with every piece of electronic entertainment. Meanwhile, this includes also families who were thought to be privileged – those who belong to the middle class and pass on traditional values to the next generation which might lead to distinguished careers. Even in these families electronic entertainment is also domineering. If it is used without any regard for the consequences, one must ask if this does not constitute a self-induced disadvantage, or rather, a disadvantage for their children. Books, encyclopedias and their use in a household are the best indicator for success in school. “Electronic” entertainment, however, has a negative impact on school success (Gaschke 2009, 47, 19).

Further changes: the effects on print media

It can be observed that not only reading competence and the social behavior of children have changed, but that hidden changes – regarding newspapers, for instance - have also taken place. According to the Basic Constitutional Law (of the Federal Republic of Germany, the press enjoys freedom; it is supposed to control the powerful and therefore, it must be well protected. But now it seems as if this freedom is in jeopardy. Even the largest newspaper publishers are complaining that they are financially ruined. They can no longer compete with the Internet. Daily newspapers are disappearing at an alarming rate, and if they continue their existence, editorial offices must be merged, or closed, or sold to subsidiaries where journalists have to work for low wages. Today, businesses are often requested to provide their own articles, if possible complete with sketches, tables, photos, but with concealed identity. Numerous newspapers now are publishing articles written by ordinary citizens who report about the daily life in their neighborhood. This does fill newspapers, but the contexts of these articles remain in the realm of privatization and are of non-political

nature. Investigative journalism – the traditional watchdog guarding against the political skirting of issues – is losing ground. It is too expensive (Blasberg/ Hamann 2009, 23).

More than forty years ago, Habermas wrote that a democracy cannot exist without the public; he means a public where newspaper journalists are exerting some control (1962, 263). To be able to fulfill this task, they must be independent and not rushed for time. It took months of research for the most important results of investigative journalism in Germany to become ready for publishing. Today, newspaper journalism is governed by the same laws as any other business. In addition, most readers possess only short attention spans any more, and either do not want to or are unable to read long, sophisticated articles. But what does this mean for the development of the political/democratic consciousness of the generation growing up today? Middleclass parents who do not read any more are no longer informed about the real background of a concealed political event. Therefore, they cannot form opinions and defend them in arguments. An opinion is defined by personal values. These values find their way into conversations and become apparent in every-day behavior, also toward the up-and-coming generation. If this generation is fed a steady diet of only short notes derived from tabloids or bits of Internet information here and there, the opportunity to raise a sophisticated new generation is lost. This endangers democracy.

Capabilities for the Society of the Future

Most if not all countries value flexibility, entrepreneurial spirit and personal responsibility. People are expected to not only possess innovation but also creativity, personal responsibility and motivation. The tasks of the future require people who are trained in dealing with antagonism in order to lead businesses; who know adversity – if not from their own experience, then from book knowledge (cf. Jansen 2009, 18).

In order to be prepared for tomorrow's world, children and youths need to become capable of solving complex mental tasks. For them, the OECD Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (document OECD 35693281) has formulated key competences geared to-

wards developing cognitive, practical, and creative abilities. But they are also about attitudes, motivation and moral concepts.

The core of the key competences creates the ability to independent thinking as an expression of moral and intellectual maturity as well as accepting responsibility for one's own learning and actions (OECD, ibid.).

Reflexive thinking and acting are basic components of the competences:

Reflexivity requires relatively complex thinking and acting processes. It demands that the subject becomes the object of the thinking process. Reflexivity enables a person who has learned a certain technique to reflect on this technique after-wards, to relate it to other aspects of personal experience, and to change or adapt it. Reflexively thinking people trans-late these thinking processes into praxis or actions (OECD, ibid.).

Thus, reflexivity requires the application of metacognitive abilities (thinking about thinking), creativity, and a discerning attitude. This is not just about thinking itself but also about dealing with experiences that include thoughts, feelings, and personal attachments. It requires that the individuals attain a level of social maturity that enables them to remain free of social pressure, adopt various views, judge for themselves, and accept responsibility for their actions (OECD, ibid.).

In this regard, the OECD names as central abilities communication skills and reading competence. These deliberations suggest that reading competence is more important today than ever before. "In a society intent on knowledge, reading skills are a basic prerequisite for success in life" (cf.: Plettner, 2009, 18). It must be added: "... provided that they can communicate." Parents talk to their children and guide them in conversations and by their own example towards reading. Insofar, talking to each other precedes reading. The basics for communication skills are laid in the family and in play groups. There, children learn how to deal with different ways of thinking, enter into stable relationships, cooperate, and cope with conflicts (cf. Geissner, 2000). None of this can be learned by children

who are glued to their PCs for hours. This mental isolation promotes an un-social and un-political mindset, doesn't it?

The importance of acquiring sensible knowledge about dealing with electronic media - particularly with the Internet - should not be doubted in any way. It belongs to the inevitable competences in the age of globalization. But the

emphasis must be on "sensible" usage. This contradicts what a newspaper recently called "Le surf sur le web coupe les enfants de la réalité" (Surfing cuts children off from reality) (LAF 2010, 17). The reality must remain, and its pillars are communication skills and reading competence. To ensure their survival, this must be the foremost task of critical communication education.

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European Kids Online: Minimizing Risks and Maximizing Opportunities

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Firstly, I want to give you a European, more precisely an Austrian, dimension of the use of the Internet by young people, especially their use of Facebook. Additionally, I will refer to the European-Kids-Online-Report 2009. For this study 21 member states have charted available data, pinpointed gaps and identified factors shaping the capability of European research institutions, to evaluate the usage of the Internet by the kids. The report surveyed 191 children aged 9 -11, 292 teenagers aged 12 – 14, and 281 teenagers aged 15 – 17. I will also draw on information from TIMESCOUT 2008, focused on 1000 people aged 11-39 in JIM¹ (www.pfs.de).

1. About young Austrian users

1.1 Gender differences in frequency and using

In Austria you find gender differences in Internet usage. More than 42% boys but only 40% girls are online several times per day. Even here you find increasing check frequencies by migrants. An Austrian study published in 2009 was focused on 402 teenagers aged from 11 to 18 years. One of the results: Generally young Austrians check their account very often per day. Different frequencies in checking were found between migrants and natives. Migrants check their accounts more often per day than natives. Especially young boys check the account more often (per day) than girls (Jugendkultur.at, 2009, www.jugendkultur.at).

1.2 How they get in contact with each other

Young Austrians contact each other in several ways: 72 % use PA (public access) and 43 % use cell-phone. When you add public access (72%) to cell phones (43%), you get more than a 100%. So we can say they prefer the

phone to get in contact with others. Fifty-eight per cent of the young people decided to communicate by short messages (SMS) and 71% took part in chat rooms. Additionally you find gender differences. Girls preferred using public access, SMS/MMS and e-mails for getting in contact (Jugendkultur.at, 2009 (www.jugendkultur.at)). This corresponds to the risks and opportunities study in 2009 wherein the authors also distinguish different use and access by gender.

1.3 Which platforms do young Austrian natives and migrants prefer?

They use “Facebook,” “Netlog,” and “Myspace,” but in different ways. Netlog is seen as a platform for performing and expressing themselves. Many young people use Netlog for their first steps on these platforms. Lots of young Netlog users play and deal with different roles and have several identities to perform. Myspace is relatively popular for young people aged 15- to 19. Twitter is a medium that is not really popular in Austria (Jugendkultur.at, 2009, www.jugendkultur.at).

But lots of young Austrians have a Facebook account. Users interpret Facebook as a social community or social platform. But nevertheless Facebook is a virtual social “network”. Who knows the American comedian Jay Leno? In his show he pretended to be astonished and cried out: “Oh, you have more than 2000 friends on Facebook? Ask one of them to help you, to move this weekend and see how many will show up?”

Normally all these social network contacts are short time relationships and involve temporary engagement, less commitment and are managed within short time.

Interestingly, migrants prefer Netlog followed by Facebook: This might be an effect of recommendations by native country friends or by socio-cultural, or socio-economic backgrounds (Jugendkultur.at, 2009, www.jugendkultur.at).

1.4 How do young people access the Internet and what are they looking for?

In the year 2009, nearly 99% used a computer to get in contact. Nowadays I believe young people prefer cell phones, because of further development like apps, or smart phones and minimized fees (Jugendkultur.at, 2009, www.jugendkultur.at).

Most of them try to look at friends' profiles or pictures, lots try to chat, have fun, post comments, look for music downloads, try to add others as friends, check or manipulate their own pictures, videos or profiles. Even here you notice gender differences. Boys prefer to play games, or they try to get in contact with a girl for having a date (Jugendkultur.at, 2009 www.jugendkultur.at).

1.5 The risks of personal profiles

To publish personal information is the most common risky behavior for about half of online teenagers. Note that, as anonymity removes conventional constraints on communication, there are risks associated both with disclosing and not disclosing personal details. You find passwords, phone-numbers, addresses, real names and even birth-data. Normally girls are more careful with personal information. Young boys, especially, are unreflective about opening their personal profiles to everybody. But if you ask them for several kinds of misuse they have noticed, lots of young Austrians lament spam or advertising, false profiles, manipulated videos or pictures, embarrassing photos, pornography, violent, hateful, or racist contents. Many more of the victims in Austria are young boys than girls.

1.6 Data protection and how to delete data

In Austria there is a public debate about data protection and the unsolved problem of how to

delete some data from the worldwide web. Until now it is fruitless and with no result.

1.7 Comparing online risks

The EU-Study shows that in Europe common risks are: to give personal information, see pornography online, see violent or hateful contents, being bullied, and lastly, meeting an online contact. Bullying may take several forms:

Gail Elliott Pursell described 'mobbing as group bullying. It is ganging up on someone using the tactics of rumor, innuendo, discrediting, isolating, intimidating, and above all making it look as if the targeted person is responsible. As is typical of many abusive situations, the perpetrators maintain that the victims deserved it' (www.selfgrowth.com/artikel/Elliott9.html).

Bullying: You don't have to be physically beaten up or hurt to be a victim of bullying. Teasing, being threatened and name calling by mobile phone or social networks can all be classed as forms of bullying (www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/.../DG10031370).

1.8. Who encounters online risks and where?

Findings from the pan-European Euro-barometer survey suggest that, according to their parents, children encounter more online risk through home than school use (though this may be because parents know little of their children's use of the Internet at school). But since children use the Internet at home for longer periods and often with less supervision, this is also likely to increase risk. Further, among those (relatively few) children who use the Internet in an Internet café or at a friends' home, the absence of supervision makes these risky locations.

In most countries, household inequalities and socio-economic status have consequences for risks as well as for opportunities in the use of Internet. Specifically, even though higher status

parents are more likely than those of lower status to provide their children with access to the Internet, enabling more use among children of advantaged families, it seems that lower class children are more exposed to risk online.

There are also gender differences in risks. Boys are apparently more likely to encounter (or create) conduct risks and girls are more affected by content and contact risks. Specifically, boys appear more likely to seek out offensive or violent content, to access pornographic content or be sent links to pornographic websites, to meet somebody offline that they have met online and to give out personal information. Girls appear more likely upset by offensive, violent and pornographic material, to chat online with strangers, to receive unwanted sexual comments and to be asked for personal information, though they are

wary of providing it to strangers. Both girls and boys appear to be at risk of online bullying.

It seems likely that these gender differences are the (mainly) unintended consequences of the choices that girls and boys make in regard to preferred online activities. Lastly, it appears that older teenagers encounter more online risks than younger children, though the question of how younger children cope with online risk remain little researched.

2. How can we minimize risks and maximize opportunities?

The following chart shows opportunities and risks that European children have in the dimensions of content, contact, and conduct. In the discussion that follows, I will examine these factors further.

		Content: Child as recipient	Contact: Child as participant	Conduct: Child as actor
OPPORTUNITIES	Education learning and digital literacy	Educational resources	Contact with others who share one's interests	Self-initiated or collaborative learning
	Participation and civic engagement	Global information	Exchange among interest groups	Concrete forms of civic engagement
	Creativity and self-expression	Diversity of resources	Being invited/ inspired to create or participate	User-generated content creation
	Identity and social connection	Advice (personal/ health/ sexual etc)	Social networking, shared experiences with others	Expression of identity
RISKS	Commercial	Advertising, spam, sponsorship	Tracking/ harvesting personal information	Gambling, illegal downloads, hacking
	Aggressive	Violent/ gruesome/ hateful content	Being bullied, harassed or stalked	Bullying or harassing another
	Sexual	Pornographic/harmful sexual content	Meeting strangers, being groomed	Creating/ uploading pornographic material
	Values	Racist, biased info/ advice (eg, drugs)	Self-harm, unwelcome persuasion	Providing advice eg, suicide/ pro-anorexia

Risk type	Age (years)											
	0-5		6-8		9-11		12-14		15-17		18+	
Content	11%	3	24%	23	33%	62	33%	95	32%	89	25%	48
Contact	7%	2	18%	17	33%	62	35%	102	35%	98	29%	56
Conduct	7%	2	18%	17	28%	53	30%	90	31%	86	27%	51
N	27		95		191		292		281		192	

Percentage (and number) of all studies conducted that address each type of risk by child's age (multicoded for risks and age)

2.1 *Classifying children's online opportunities and risks*

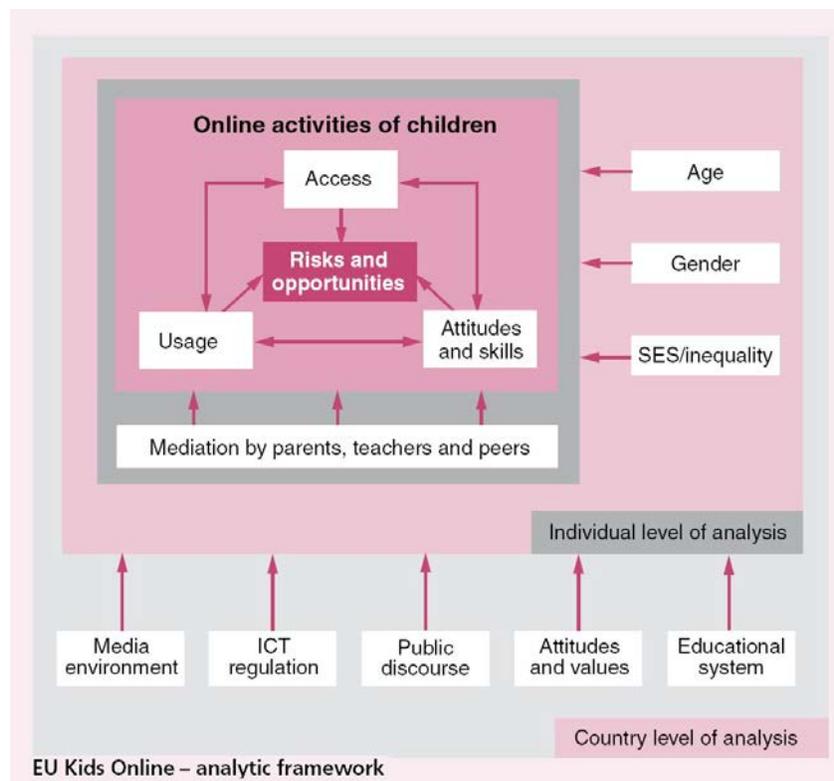
Kids Online, Final Report, 2009, 10 also see Widyanto/ Griffiths 2007, 127-149).

To analyse the available research findings, the EU classified children's online opportunities and risks as follows:

The horizontal axis reflects three modes of online communication:
One-to-many (i.e. child as recipient of mass-distributed content);
Adult-to-child (i.e. child as participant in an interactive situation predominantly driven by adults); and
Peer-to-peer (i.e. child as actor in an interaction which s/he may be initiator:
Despite acknowledged difficulties of definition and overlap, for analytic and practical reasons the vertical axis categorises risks and opportunities each according to four research themes. (Not included: physical/health consequences of Internet use, including addiction (EU-

After having classified available research, it was clear that there is more research on access and use than on online risks, with risk addressed in up to a third of all studies. The most researched topics are children's online access and usage, followed by lists of online interests and activities. Nonetheless, across Europe, a fair body of research evidence finds that children use the Internet as an educational resource, for entertainment, games and fun, for search for global information and for social networking, sharing experiences with distant others.

EU Kids Online analytic framework looked for online activities of children. It assumes that risks and opportunities are influenced by access, use, attitudes and skills in a mutually reinforcing way. To examine this, the research field was divided into an individual (child centred) level of analysis and a country (macro-societal) level of analysis:

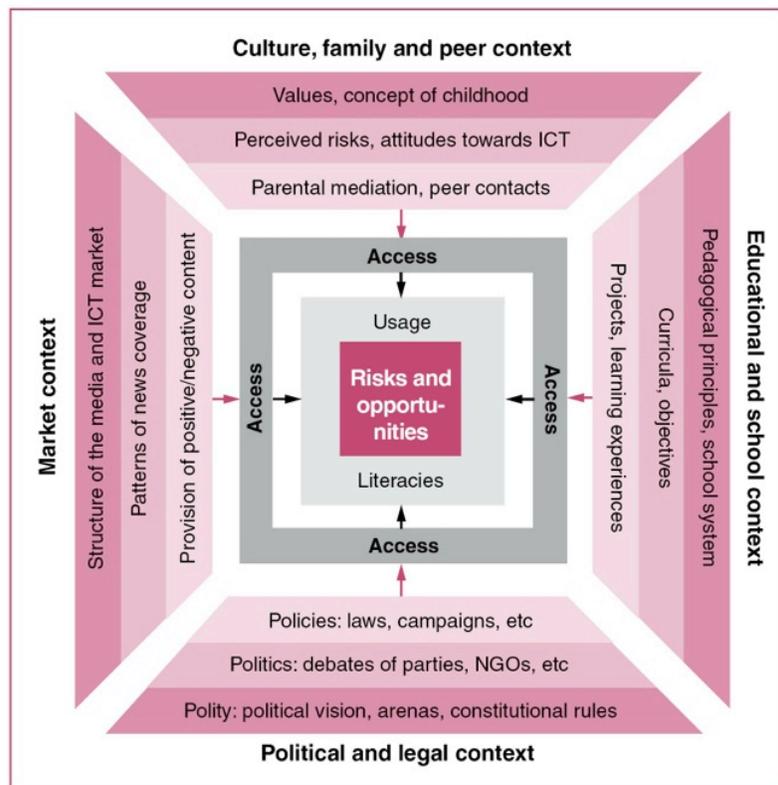


The individual level of analysis (darker grey) examines whether and how opportunities and risks vary according to a child's age, gender and socio-economic-status. This level of analysis also examines the mediating role of parents, teachers and peers. Their conservative assumption would be that these factors influence children's opportunities and risks similarly across Europe as explained above the graphic.

However, contrary to this assumption, actual findings reveal cross-national differences. Hence a second level of analysis is required. This compares countries according to relevant contextual factors, (i.e. their media environment, ICT²). This country level of analysis allows the explanation of observed differences in children's opportunities and risks across Europe.

2.2 EU-Kids-Online tries to explain cross-national differences

The absence of sufficient comparable data, and limitations on the network's resources and time was a challenge and so the original dimensions were collapsed into four overall areas of comparative difference. This shows the different contexts that shape children's online activities, and the different levels (from cultural through discursive to local/domestic) through which they work and interact together. In addressing these factors in what follows, the EU-Kids-Online authors stress that their interpretations are tentative, suggesting rather than establishing explanations as a guide for policy and research.



Contextualising children's internet use

EU Kids Online Final Report, 2009, 20

2.2.1 Market context

Since differences in diffusion and, therefore access, across European countries are still large, this is an obvious and crucial factor influencing children's experience of the Internet in Europe. With access develops familiarity, interest and expertise. It also results in both online opportunities and risks.

In some countries, the Internet is a normal part of people's daily lives; in others people must make a specific effort to possess particular resources not available to all. In countries where access has become commonplace, it appears that gender and socio-economic status differences across households are reducing. However, these differences (or inequalities) remain significant, especially where access cannot (yet) be taken for granted. There are some indications that the presence of a strong public service broadcaster or other public content provider(s) for children plays a role in encouraging online opportunities.

English language proficiency tends to be higher in Northern Europe, where both use and risks tend to be average or high. It is possible that greater access to English language content may bring risks as well as opportunities.

The overwhelming focus of media coverage on online risks rather than opportunities may increase parental anxiety. Since there is a correlation between national levels of parental Internet use and parental anxiety about children's Internet use, the combination of low parental use and media panics may exaggerate parental anxiety in some countries.

2.2.2 Cultural family and peer context

Cultural conceptions of childhood are often reflected in national media coverage. For example, in Norway there is a notion of a 'natural childhood', where sexuality is less of a risk while at the same time discussions of children's rights is strong. Such underlying conceptions will help to shape the nature of how media engage with the topic of children and the Internet. Little is known of how peer

culture mediates children's Internet use, though previous research has pointed to cross-national variations in the balance of family and peers as children grow older, to the constraints on friendships in cultures where outside play is highly restricted and the growth of media-rich bedrooms in individualised cultures" (EU-KidsOnline Final Report 2009, 20).

The European Values Survey permits a classification of countries according to the dimensions of individualism and collectivism. Analyses reveal a relationship between national values and the ways in which parents mediate their children's use of television and the Internet. Countries where parents put more emphasis on the mediation of television use belong to "Catholic Europe," whereas in "Protestant Europe" parents apply rules for online use.

2.2.3 Political/legal context

Broadly, it seems that where the Internet is less common, more efforts are made in promotion of Internet use. Once the Internet becomes more common, risk awareness and then literacy initiatives gain priority on the policy agenda.

Specifically, where national Internet access is greater, self-regulation by the industry, including provision of safety information provided by ISPs (Internet Service Providers) to complement that provided by government and NGOs, appears also greater. It also seems that Anglo-Saxon, Northern and Central European countries have a greater tradition of self-regulation than Latin and Southern European countries; here legislation plays more of a role than self-regulation.

2.2.4 Educational and school context

Cross-national differences in children's online use can be partly explained by different levels of general education. The higher the general education of members of a country is, the higher is also its children's online use.

The technical infrastructure of schools throughout Europe has increased substantially in

recent years. Certainly, it seems likely that greater educational provision will aid both children and parents in developing online skills. However, as several national reports point out, Internet penetration in schools is not the same as actual use by pupils. Most pupils are not permitted to use Internet at school without some kind of control by adults, and only in a few countries is it thoroughly integrated into education as a cross-curricular subject.

It also appears that, in many countries, teachers provide little in the way of safety awareness and training to guide pupils' Internet use, though the range and adoption of new initiatives is now spreading. "Greater Internet use is associated with higher levels of education, at both country and individual levels. Schools are also best placed to teach children the digital and critical literacy skills required to maximise opportunities and minimise risks. There are gaps in provision of insufficient/outdated provision of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in schools" (Eurydice 2005, www.okm.gov.hu/doc/upload/200601/key_data_2005.pdf).

3. What is needed?

3.1 Awareness raising

Awareness raising described by the European Commission as actions that can contribute to the trust and confidence of parents and teachers in safer use of the Internet by children is a central focus of its safer Internet action plan. At the individual level, the priority now must be awareness-raising among younger children (and their parents and teachers) as they are the fastest growing user group and little is known of their activities, skills or risks online.

Additionally, research finds that although girls and boys use the Internet to a similar degree, strong differences in patterns of use and, therefore, patterns of risks persist, suggesting that awareness raising and strategies to encourage coping and resilience should address girls and boys differently. Furthermore, since it seems as if children of lower socio-economic status whose parents may have less resources to support them disproportionately experience online

risks, there is value in specifically targeting less privileged families, schools and neighbourhoods.

Society must also address the question of how children cope with risk once encountered. In short, anticipating risks so as to prevent them is necessary but insufficient, since children also need guidance on what to do after they have experienced a problem online.

3.2 Advising parents

The EU-Kids Online Final Report offers advice to parents concerned with Internet safety:

No one doubts that parents are responsible for their children's Internet safety, as outlined by the European parenting group CO-FACE. Arguably, the more parents mediate the Internet activities of their children effectively, the less government, schools, industry or regulators need do. On the other hand, parents act within a broader social, economic and cultural context that is shaped by factors not of their making, and it is here that other stakeholders play a central role.

High levels of parental anxiety regarding their children's Internet use occur across Europe. Many parents are not anxious enough, regarding the children's Internet use, as they use it themselves regularly. But these parents try to mediate their children more because they knew the Internet for all the good reasons. Given that more parents should be encouraged to explore and understand the Internet

Use of filtering technology has increased in recent years but filters remain difficult to choose and use and much problematic content (eg. user generated) is inadequately dealt with. Cultural differences mean that social and technical tools may be preferred by or more useful to parents in some countries compared with others. Generally, it seems clear that many parents find it difficult to know where to obtain guidance on supporting their child online, choosing a filter, assessing a website, reporting a problem, or setting rules. Therefore a well-promoted, reputable, easy-to-use, publicly founded

'one-stop-shop' or parent portal in each country is greatly needed. First, roles and restrictions do not fill well with the ethos of modern parenting, especially in some countries: parents prefer to use social mediation (talking to, sharing the online experience with children), and wish to trust their children and not invade their privacy (especially as more children gain access in their own room) (EU-Kids Online, Final Report, 2009, 24).

However, the most recent work of the EU-Kids Online suggests that different styles of parental mediation may be more effective in different cultural contexts, depending in part of parental values and preferred styles of parenting (Kirwil 2008). Thus, when designing parental awareness-raising mediation strategies, local contexts matter.

3.3 Online opportunities are a matter of right

The EU-Kids Online Final Report recognized the need for balancing the desire to protect children with the desire to give them freedom to explore and to grow:

One temptation is to seek all means of keeping children safe. But it is inherent to childhood and especially adolescence to take risks, push boundaries and evade adult scrutiny, - this is how children gain resilience. On the one hand, genuine and unacceptable risks should be addressed and where possible prevented, but on the other hand children learn to cope with the world through testing their capacities and adjusting their actions in the light of lessons learned. Balancing all these rights can be demanding, but all should be borne in mind to prevent safety proposals restricting children's rights and to prevent the promotion of online benefits neglecting possible risks.

Balancing empowerment as protection is a crucial task. Research suggests that increasing online access, use and opportunities tends also, if inadvertently, to increase online risks (EU-Kids Online Final Report 2009, 22).

Similarly, strategies to decrease risks can restrict children's Internet use of opportunities more broadly, even at times contravening children's rights to communicate.

3.4 Education and the role of schools

Greater Internet use is associated with higher levels of education. Improving educational achievement in general may therefore be expected to increase the extent and sophistication of Internet use. Beyond this, and to encourage the wider adoption of online opportunities, media education should be recognized and resourced as a core element of school curricula.

Schools are the best place to teach children the digital and critical literacy skills required to maximize opportunities and minimize risks. Schools are also the best places to reach all children, irrespective of socio-economic status and other forms of inequality. For both these reasons, schools have a key role to play in encouraging and supporting creative, critical and safe uses of the Internet, crucially throughout the curriculum but also at home or elsewhere. Especially data protection and the impossibilities to delete data should be focussed on too.

Maybe that this is not an actual problem for young people but it might become a problem when they start their career. Human resource managers use the WWW to get some information and sometimes the results influence a decision.

In Austria, there are gaps in provision or insufficient/outdated provision of ICT in schools. In addition, there are difficulties in ensuring that digital literacy in general, and Internet safety in particular, are addressed across the curriculum by teachers who have been recently and appropriately trained, and with adequate re-sources at their disposal.

3.5 Recommendations for policy makers

The 2006 Ministerial Riga Declaration on ICT for an inclusive society promotes a broad definition of E-inclusion, but makes no specific provision for children. E-inclusion policy for children is largely focused on schools, and here considerable progress has been made. But,

many children lack sufficient, flexible access to ICTs at school to explore the potential of the Internet. So while many measures have been tak-

en, but there is still a lot to do to maximize opportunities while minimizing risks in European children's experiences on the Internet.

Notes

¹JIM = Youth, Information (Multi-)Media 2008, on 1.208 young people

²ICT = Information and Communication Technology regulation and so forth

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Storytelling: Analog and Digital

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The evolving intersection of the Internet, new media, and social networking has been accompanied by an evolution in storytelling practices. Examples of these evolving story-telling practices include community-oriented projects from around the globe, such as Capture Wales (UK), Sharing Stories (Australia), Finding a Voice (Southeast Asia), Men as Partners (South Africa), One Million Life Stories of Youth (Brazil), and Digital Storytelling (USA). Two recent edited volumes chronicle the range of storytelling projects under the umbrella term of “digital storytelling”: *Digital Storytelling, Mediatized Stories: Self-Representations in New Media*, edited by Knut Lundby (2008) and *Story Circle: Digital Storytelling Around the World*, edited by John Hartley and Kelly McWilliam (2009). Advocates claim that these new storytelling practices have democratic potential for society and that they enable new possibilities for personal agency, authentic expression, and community development. Before evaluating these claims, let us examine what is meant by the term “digital storytelling” and then clarify the conceptual issues that arise from its use.

What is digital storytelling?

Practitioners and scholars use the term “digital storytelling” as a convenient label to refer to storytelling that involves computer-based multimedia. Nick Couldry (2008) provides a typical definition: “By ‘digital storytelling’ I will mean the whole range of personal stories now being told in potentially public form using digital media resources” (42). These digital media resources are also referred to as “new media” – the “new” here referring to new *technological apparatuses*, such as digital cameras, digital video and audio recorders, as well as personal computers, workstations, and associated peripherals (scanners, routers, modems, etc.). New media also in-

cludes *computer software and programs* for word-processing, non-linear video editing, photo and audio editing, presentation design and graphics, web-based data management and manipulation and so on. But the “new” in new media also refers to new *sites or public forums* for storytelling made possible by the Internet, such as websites, weblogs, and social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and Second Life, for example). Furthermore, as practitioners such as Joe Lambert (2006) insist, digital storytelling involves a variety of new *practices* for eliciting and developing stories from “ordinary people” (that is, non-professionals) and for transforming and telling those stories in new media.

In discussing the emergence of digital storytelling in the United States, Lambert identifies a variety of influences oriented around the creative expression of “common folk,” such as experimental theatre, performance art, community radio, amateur film and video, social activist movements, folk art revivals, and community arts education. To this mix, Lambert adds the eager adoption and adaptation of new media by artists and the DIY or do-it-yourself movement in order to produce Internet-based art projects, e-zines (electronic zines or self-produced Internet magazines), weblogs, v-logs (video weblogs), and podcasts. Indeed, as John Hartley and Kelly McWilliam (2009, 5) point out, the use of new media in digital storytelling can be considered a new *textual system* or media ecology that challenges mainstream media and corporate control with consumer or user-generated content production, distribution, and consumption.

What distinguishes these storytelling “texts” as digital? Couldry (2008) identifies four features of digital storytelling which distinguish it from what he calls “oral storytelling” and which constitute a common and distinctive “logic.”

They are:

First, a pressure to mix text with other materials (sound, video, still images) and more generally to make a visual presentation out of narrative, over and above its textual content; second, a pressure to limit the length of narrative, whether to take account of the limits of people's attention when reading text online, or to limit the file size of videos or sound tracks; third, a pressure towards standardization because of the sheer volume of material online and people's limited tolerance for formats, layouts or sequences whose intent they have difficulty interpreting; fourth, a pressure to take account of the possibility that any narrative when posted online may have unintended and undesired audiences. (49)

However, we would argue that these "pressures" are not unique to digital storytelling but are recognized constraints in all forms of storytelling. Any storyteller standing in front of an audience is constrained "to make a visual presentation out of narrative" through gesture, dress, and other embodied performance features. Second, storytellers recognize the constraints on their audience's attention and the impact that time and place (such as temperature in the performance space, time of day, and even the hardness of audience seating) can have on the length of a performance. Third, storytellers work regularly with narrative and performance conventions that constrain what kinds of stories can be told, in what ways, in what settings, and for what audiences. Fourth, storytellers regularly exercise selectivity in their material and its performance – in brief, performers adapt material to their audience. Certainly there are differences between different forms of storytelling – such as storytelling at a folk festival and storytelling online in a weblog – but the differences that Couldry identifies are differences in degree and not differences in kind. The use of "oral storytelling" as a contrast to "digital story-telling" suggests two conceptual confusions: first, a confusion over the "medium" of story-telling (as suggested by the use of the modifier "oral"); and, second, a confusion over the communication processes or "logic" of story-telling (as suggested by the use of the modifier "digital").

A Clarification of Conceptual Issues

Couldry's focus on the conceptual implications of choosing between "mediatization" and "mediation" as terms to clarify digital storytelling obscures a more basic conceptual decision to focus on the "medium" of storytelling as its key feature. If by "medium" one means the channel of communication, then (in semiotic terms) oral/auditory storytelling should be contrasted with visual, thermal, olfactory, and gustatory storytelling. Both "oral storytelling" and "digital storytelling," emphasize the physical channels of sound and light. Thus, the use of "oral storytelling" as a term of contrast reduces "oral" to "voice" and ignores other aspects of embodiment that are utilized in narrative performance – the "multimodality" of storytelling as a visual spectacle and of storytellers that can move among and touch and share food with audience members (such as Bread and Puppet Theatre does).

At the same time, use of the term "digital storytelling" obscures the lived-bodies that produce and consume computer-mediated storytelling (Peterson 2008). For example, the focus on story development and technological transformations can obscure concerns for how audiences – most commonly sitting in front of dispersed and isolated computer screens – can participate in storytelling. As Hartley and McWilliam (2009) acknowledge, the lack of attention to audience embodiment in digital storytelling means that "its propagation and dissemination strategies are hopeless – most digital stories persist only as unused archive; and it has a very low profile on the Net, making little use of interactivity and social networking" (15). All storytelling – whether taking place online, in families, in organizations, or in theatres – is embodied (Langellier & Peterson 2004). From a communication perspective, the challenge is to locate the particular ways that different forms of storytelling handle such issues as "propagation and dissemination" techniques and audience participation.

Now, Couldry himself suggests that he is not using "media" in the technical sense of the physical channel of communication but as a focus on the dialectical processes of communication. To explicate the dialectical processes of communication, we turn to Anthony Wilden's (1972 and

1987) landmark discussion of analog and digital communication. Drawing upon work in cybernetics, psychoanalysis, and semiotics, Wilden (1972) argues that “all natural systems of communication employ both analog and digital communication” (154), pointing out that they are “found together in all communication systems, and at every level of communication” (168). Analog processes are organized around continuous differences, more-or-less variations in continuous phenomena. He gives the sounds of speech (continuous variations in amplitude, distribution, organization, and so on) as an example of analog communication. Digital processes, by contrast, are organized around discontinuous distinctions and discrete, either/or boundaries that separate phenomena. Parallel examples to the analog sounds of speech are the digital distinctions of phonology and the alphabet. Speaking a language, then, relies on both analog and digital processes of communication; so, too, does “oral storytelling.” The “oral,” in other words, involves both analog and digital processes of communication and is not in opposition to the “digital.”

If we take it as given that all forms of storytelling involve both analog and digital processes of communication, then how can we account for the differences that distinguish storytelling in traditional settings (on stage and at festivals, in schools and churches, in conversations and town meetings) from story-telling in computer-mediated settings? One way is to take seriously Couldry’s focus on the dialectical processes of communication that makes it possible for audiences “to be in the company” of the storyteller, as Walter Benjamin (1969) describes it in his essay on “The Storyteller.” In our book on *Storytelling in Daily Life* (2004, 163-168), we take up and extend Benjamin’s example of the difference between performer/audience contact in theatre and in film. In brief, the difference that Benjamin identifies, in his essay on “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” has to do with adaptation that occurs *within* a performance and adaptation that occurs *across* performances. In storytelling where audience and storyteller are in direct contact or co-present, participants can adjust their interaction to each other and to the performance within the event itself. In theatre, to take the exemplar Benjamin uses, the storyteller can utilize the continuities in contact to

adapt to the audience as she or he performs (and vice versa). In film, however, Benjamin points out that the audience is out of direct contact – “beyond the reach” – of the storyteller. The film performer must wait for future films to adjust her or his performance. In the case of film, there is a gap or discontinuity in the contact of audience and performer. In the asynchronous and near-synchronous interaction of computer-mediated storytelling (to focus on the temporal aspect), this gap is reduced but not eliminated.

Analog and Digital Storytelling in Practice

Any attempt to expand the “story circle” of audience and storyteller contact must take into consideration the continuities and discontinuities of analog and digital communication. To illustrate this point, we turn to an example of the digital storytelling workshop process advocated by Lambert (2006) – as the subtitle of his book suggests – to “capture lives and create community.” The workshop we describe is part of a larger effort at the University of Maine, the Somali Narrative Project (SNP), that was founded in 2004 as a collaboration between Somali students and four faculty in Sociology, Women’s Studies, Maine Studies, and Communication and Journalism. The SNP addresses three interrelated goals:

- (1) To document Somali immigration to Maine and to preserve Somali culture through narrative interviews;
- (2) to improve intercultural communication by promoting dialogue and understanding about Somalis in Maine; and
- (3) to engage in community advocacy projects serving the needs identified by members of the Somali community (Langellier 2009, 5).

A common concern identified by Somali students and elders is that “people in Maine don’t understand our history and culture and religion.” As one of several responses to this concern, the SNP determined to produce a general audience book, which would include personal narratives by Somalis in Maine. In order to develop some of the material for this volume, the SNP conducted a two-day workshop on storytelling with a group of eight students.

Thus it was that quite early on Saturday, April 18, 2009, eight students and four faculty (all women, a point we'll return to later) piled into a van and car on the University of Maine campus and headed out to Point Lookout in Northport, a retreat center on the coast of Maine. That first day was devoted to exploring what makes a story and what makes good storytelling. While Somalis come from a long and rich tradition of storytelling, they have less familiarity with written forms of storytelling: a written Somali language was not developed until the early 1970s. As a way of introducing students to immigrant stories, they read excerpts from *I Remember Warm Rain* (2007), a collection of stories by teenagers in Portland, Maine from Somalia, Iraq, Sudan, and Iran (a publication that emerged from a non-profit writing center, The Telling Room: www.tellingroom.org). They discussed the qualities that made these selections "good stories" by asking about (1) the point and the point of view of the story; (2) how the story sets up, develops, and resolves dramatic tension; and (3) how the emotional content of scene and voice engages readers as participants in the story.

Then, each student was asked to consider what story she had to tell, why to tell it, and how to shape the arc of its dramatic tensions into vivid scenes, emotions, and images. For the first storytelling round, the students and faculty broke into two groups where students told their stories to each other, receiving encouragement and animated responses from peers and faculty. After a break for supper, students and faculty returned to a second storytelling round where students again told their stories, this time to the whole group, building upon the responses to the first round and receiving a second series of comments, questions, and suggestions. Within each round of storytelling, audiences and tellers continuously adapted to each other. An intake of breath from an audience member could be taken as a sign of interest and identification and thereby encourage the storyteller to elaborate her story. Or, it could be taken as a sign of surprise or shock and discourage further talk on a topic. The highly interwoven play of discourse among storytellers and story-listeners, that moves from storytelling to discussion and back, illustrates the continuous adaptation of analog communication.

At the same time, participants in the storytelling rounds observe what engages the audience's imagination, what storytelling aspects move listeners, what elements intrude or distract from telling a story. These observations and reflections form one basis for adapting and making changes when it is time for another storyteller to take the floor. Another example of such adaptation occurred when one student used a cell phone to call a family member during the dinner break to check on details she included in her story. Thus we see that telling several different stories or telling one story two or three times means that the earlier performances function as a kind of rehearsal when viewed retrospectively from the present situation of performance. That is, storytellers utilize the discontinuities in their experience over time to adapt their performance. In a similar way, audiences build on the discontinuities in their experience to "fine tune" their participation by becoming better informed and more discerning audiences. These ongoing revisions and changes from one performance to another illustrate the discontinuous adaptation of digital communication.

On the second day, the stories generated in the previous day of storytelling were transformed into writing using one of three mechanisms: students composed the story on a laptop computer based on their memory of the previous day's storytelling rounds; or, students used the digital audio recordings from the storytelling rounds as the basis for transcribing parts of their story and revising it as they entered it into the computer; or students narrated their story, this time to a faculty member who would simultaneously transcribe and edit it on a computer. At the end of the second afternoon, each student had produced what would become a rough written draft of their story. All of these mechanisms take up the challenge of moving from one performance context to another. They work to transform the embodied gestures of speech and movement into written expression – not merely a "literal" transcription, but a conscious effort to utilize the expressive conventions of writing to produce a story. In this case, the individual student or student-faculty team relied on the continuous variations in their experiences of performing and audiencing stories to adjust their writing so it "looks right" or "sounds good" and "works well" to tell the story. Analog and digital communication are not

opposed to each other; they overlap and spiral as well as alternate in the shift of storytelling performance to written form.

The next step to “tune” the stories took place after the retreat. The SNP faculty members gathered to discuss the stories and to consider ways they could be revised and edited for a general audience. Based on conversations and written feedback, the stories were then edited by one faculty member and returned to the students for comment, revision, and further editing. Students at this point could accept/reject editing suggestions, substitute alternate material, correct errors, and incorporate new details. These newly revised stories went through a final editorial revising process and then were collected into a booklet, *Bits and Pieces: Stories of Young Somali Women in Maine* (Hough, et al. 2009), for use in the classroom while the larger volume was prepared for publication (scheduled for release in 2011).

It was at the point of seeing their stories in the pre-publication draft that multiple concerns, perhaps dormant and implicit in the workshop, became salient and overt: should students use their names or adopt pseudonyms? Should students allow photos taken by a professional photographer at the workshop to be included in the book? Should they appear veiled or unveiled? How would elders and family members in the community respond to the stories and photos? Would audiences unfamiliar with recent Somali history understand the elliptical references to the civil war and refugee camps? What these and other concerns illustrate are the constraints of changing contexts for storytelling. Because audiences for the booklet would be “beyond the reach” of the storytellers, discontinuities in performance take on added importance.

Critical and Ethical Issues

In reflecting on the workshop process, we see much promise in the contributions digital storytelling can make to “building community” and to the good of society. This promise is particularly evident in the heuristic impact that the workshop process has for its participants. Workshop participants come to know what it is that they have to say about personal experience and important events in their lives; they discover

storytelling as a way to understand who they are and how to take action in the world. This heuristic aspect was illustrated in the SNP workshop during the first evening’s storytelling round when one of the stories sparked an overtly unrelated discussion of the practice of female genital cutting (FGC, also referred to as mutilation and circumcision in other discourses). The discussion erupted with simultaneous and overlapping talk in both English and Somali that was so dense it is impossible to untangle in the digital voice recording that was made of the workshop. Despite the obvious importance of this topic to the participants, no mention of it made its way into the stories or written texts of the storytelling workshop.

We can speculate on the reasons for the presence of this discussion in the workshop and for its absence in the writing that emerged afterward. The most obvious aspect of the situation is the absence of male students or faculty, which may have opened up this issue as a possible discussion topic. So, too, the ability of the students to code-shift between English and Somali makes it possible to exclude the English-speaking faculty from the discussion at the same time that it allows for the comfort of speaking about a difficult topic in one’s native tongue among peers. And, the feminist process employed by the SNP in general, and the participant-centered process of the workshop in particular, creates a safer environment for what is a personal and emotionally-charged issue. The importance of these contextual constraints becomes apparent when moving the stories to print. The transformation to print raises concerns for how others will respond: for example, local concerns for how family and friends will respond, concerns for how elders and the older generation of Somali community members will respond, and more public concerns for how mainstream media might appropriate the stories to the detriment of Somali immigrants in general. Indeed, media coverage in the US tends to use the topic of FGC as proof of the “barbarism” of Islam and of the “primitiveness” of Somali culture. Furthermore, the Somali students are very aware of being marked for surveillance: as women who are typically veiled; as some of the few people of color in Maine; as some of the few Muslims in Maine; as potential recruits for US Homeland Security, and so on.

These speculations lead us to suggest that the promise of digital storytelling is less evident in how it approaches and works with audiences. For the most part, the heuristic emphasis in telling stories (figuring out what I, the storyteller, have to say, or “learning as I go”) is not accompanied by a heuristic emphasis on listening to stories (figuring out what a story means to “me,” as audience, and for “us,” as a community or society) or on communication as a whole. A lot of attention is given to designing workshops that introduce participants to the conventions of narrative and to techniques for moving stories into computer-mediated presentations of one sort or another. However, less attention is given to the situation of the audience and how “common people” might encounter and work with the digital stories generated in the workshops. Digital storytelling challenges mainstream media by turning “consumers” into “producers” of culture; however, when it comes to how it conceptualizes distribution and reception, digital storytelling tends to adopt the same consumerist logic that informs mainstream media practices. That is, the current practice of “sharing” stories on the Internet tends to emphasize dispersed and individuated audience practices of listening /watching and not collaborative forms of participation and responsibility. Posting a story to a website is not working with audience.

As a way to counter the over-reliance on personal narrative and what Hartley and McWilliam (2009) see as a storytelling form that “is too sentimental, individualistic, and naively unselfconscious” (14), we suggest two responses: first, we suggest a theoretical shift to a more critical view of cultural storytelling; and, second, we suggest a methodological shift to a non-individualistic model of storytelling. Amy Shuman (2005) illustrates this theoretical shift in her critique of empathy and the entitlement claims made by storytellers and audiences. She argues that instead of promoting “storytelling in everyday life as a corrective to dominant dis-

course” – as digital storytelling does – we should instead “trouble the divide between situated lives, personal stories, and the contextual productions of meaning” (11). Theoretically, this shift in focus requires that scholars and practitioners work to understand and articulate the continuities and discontinuities, the analog and digital communication processes, of storytelling. Digital storytelling, to use Shuman’s terms, “is as much about the gap in recognizing that other people’s stories are not our own as it is about the use of those stories to make new meanings” (162).

Our second suggestion would shift research from a normative model, which takes the individual in personal narrative as the object of study, to such alternatives as family and group storytelling. Small and large groups, such as families and organizations, employ a variety of strategies and tactics for managing problems of story production, distribution, circulation, storage, and reproduction. Indeed, a family or organization that fails to reproduce its stories over time does not survive. A focus on the strategies and tactics of group storytelling provides a research model that avoids the limitations of conceptualizing storytelling as individual expression. The analog and digital communication processes of group storytelling combine to constitute meanings and identities for the group and for members of the group. At the same time, these communication processes work to organize the group so it can survive over time in both local and more global environments. Group storytelling (as we argue in *Storytelling in Daily Life*, 2004) is always a matter of negotiating boundaries for what can and cannot be told, for what responsibilities and entitlements exist for doing what work, and for identifying what and who belongs and what and who does not. If computer-mediated or “digital” storytelling is to fulfill its promise to enrich society, then scholars and practitioners must attend to both analog and digital communication processes in their theories and models.

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Temporary Celebrity: Media ‘Fodder’ and Diversion

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The late artist Andy Warhol has been quoted widely as having remarked, “In the future everybody will be world-famous for fifteen minutes.” His use of hyperbole pointed out the considerable hold that celebrity has on modern culture. His words also hinted at the subject of temporary celebrity.

Much has been written about celebrity in general and about individual celebrities. Almost all of this attention has been directed at major celebrities, whose renown tends to endure over long periods of time, and their roles in our mass mediated lives. On the other hand, very little attention has been accorded the one-shot or temporary celebrity: someone who is as private as most of us until something happens to thrust that individual into the hot glare of the media—but only for a short while. Soon, this “celebrity with a lower-case c,” having served his or her media purpose, is returned to relative privacy or obscurity.

In the late 1970s, James Monaco, author of *Celebrity: The Media as Image Makers* (1978), made cursory mention of accidental celebrities, calling them “quasars.” Such people, whose celebrity often is short-lived, come to the attention of the rest of us without having sought publicity or exposure.

Twenty years later, in the late 1990s, writer David Brode published *Once Was Enough: Celebrities (and Others) Who Appeared a Single Time on the Screen* (1997). This trade book was devoted exclusively to one-time movie actors and actresses.

In 2001, Chris Rojek published *Celebrity*, a book in which he mentioned one-hit singers and other individuals who have gained fleeting celebrity, calling them “celetoids.” He also wrote briefly about other people who have assumed ficti-

tious and usually temporary show-business identities, such as Sacha Baron Cohen, whose first such character was Ali G but who later became a celebrity of much greater wattage as Borat, a movie character through which Cohen skewered some of America’s less fortunate traits. Rojek called such people “celeactors.”

Not one of these new terms—quasars, celetoids, or celeactors—appears to have caught on in the literature, yet all three of these writers commented, however briefly, upon the neglected topic of the temporary/ one-shot celebrity—people who experience the 15 minutes of fame of which Warhol spoke. A chance conversation on my flight from Munich to Washington, D.C., while returning home from the Vienna colloquium produced a German term that neatly fits temporary celebrities: *Eintagsfliegen*, a term in that language for gnat-like insects that live only one day.

I became interested in this topic while editing a reference book about America’s celebrity culture. The book, *Star Struck: An Encyclopedia of Celebrity Culture* (2010), was published by ABC-CLIO. The book contained no entries about individual celebrities, but instead treated many different aspects of celebrity culture in general. *Star Struck* contained 86 entries, of which I wrote 35, including an entry on temporary celebrity. Most of the other entry writers were journalism or media professors.

To begin to identify and examine some of the types of individuals who become temporary celebrities, I have expanded upon what my book entry had to say on this topic by compiling an experimental informational blog, www.celebrityblogsburg.blogspot.com, which lays out a 21-category typology of temporary celebrities. The blog, completed in May 2010 after about a year’s work, contains just more

than 600 posts organized by type—heroes, miscreants, victims, one-hit recording artists, and the like. Each post is about an individual who achieved fleeting celebrity between 1950 and early 2010. Each individual featured in the blog is accorded a brief write-up that describes what he or she did to come to the public eye, and most entries also include a video clip or a photograph of the person. A joy of using a blog for this purpose, so long as it is done on a non-profit basis, is that video and photos are readily available that can be used free of royalty charges.

Some of the temporary celebrities presented in my blog came to the attention of the media-consuming public because of something good they did, others, by way of accomplishments of the notorious sort. Still other temporary celebrities flashed across our awareness because they were victims of some kind.

Many of these temporary celebrities have become known to us via show business, including sports, which is now one of our most popular and profitable forms of entertainment. Others got their 15 minutes of fame via appearing in what we normally think of as the news. Still others came to us as iconic advertising characters in television commercials. All of these individuals are alike in that they have provided part of the “fodder” necessary to fill the constant and considerable time and space needs of our popular media. Our major, enduring celebrities provide a great deal of the material our modern media demand, but even as numerous as these stars and personalities are, they cannot completely satisfy the media’s ceaseless need for new material, and the public’s ceaseless need for diversion. Thus, temporary celebrities help fill the gap between supply and demand.

If I have succeeded in my online efforts, the 600+ figures presented in this blog will help demonstrate what tends to give individuals their temporary celebrity and perhaps will add in a small way to the attention given this topic.

Some of my blog’s categories are more heavily peopled than others, not by design on my part, but due to what one might think of as “natural selection.” For every hero I was able to identify, for example, there were far, far more miscreants. Also, the media-consuming public

simply tends to find some types of people more fascinating than others. A beautiful femme fatale such as Tai Collins or a hunky one-hit male singer such as Billy Ray Cyrus will tend to command far more public, hence media interest than will a far less glamorous whistle-blower or inventor.

That last observation leads me to another reason I took an interest in the admittedly offbeat topic of temporary celebrity. I refer to two related research studies done more than twenty years apart by myself and Professor Gary Selnow, one of the organizers of the Vienna colloquium and in the early 1980s, a Virginia Tech colleague. In 1984, we published an article in the journal *Mass Comm Review* (vol. 11, 36-40) entitled “Faces In the News: Recognition of Public Figures by Today’s University Student.” Using under-graduate students at two U.S. universities as our respondents, we presented the participants in our study with a selection of head shots of a variety of people who recently had been prominently in the news. The photos were taken from *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines. When we examined the results, we were struck by how very well the students did at identifying those individuals whose newsworthiness came from the world of popular entertainment, and in stark contrast, how very poorly our respondents did at recognizing individuals from life’s more sober pursuits: politics, religion, business and finance, the military, serious journalism, and the like. We were startled that a successful contestant on the television quiz show *Jeopardy*, Ken Jennings, was better recognized by our student respondents than was former U.S. President Gerald Ford.

In our more recent reprise of that study, for which we presented our findings in San Francisco at the 2006 convention of the Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication, we had made it a point to show our student respondents a sample of faces in the public eye split equally between entertainment-world figures (including sports) and news-world figures. Overall, results were quite the same. Students were deadly accurate in identifying entertainment figures, even though we had purposely tried to stack the deck against them by including photos of four slender, blonde, youthful actresses, all of whom looked very much alike to the two of us. The student respondents, however,

knew them cold. And once again our student respondents showed a woeful information deficit when it came to people who had made the news due to non-entertainment, hard-news accomplishments.

It is likely that many of us who teach journalism might agree with a comment made by former *Newsweek* writer Joseph Cumming, whose book, *Bylines: Writings from the American South* (2010), I recently reviewed. When he retired from his magazine career, Mr. Cumming spent several years teaching journalism to college undergraduates. He remarked in his book that although he was very fond of his students, he could not help noticing that when it came to public affairs, they had a couple of blank spots: the past and the present.

Some future communication researcher might do a similar study on older respondents using photos of temporary celebrities. This researcher might confidently hypothesize that entertainment-world temporary/one-shot celebrities would be better recognized than would temporary celebrities who came to the public's attention from hard- news stories.

He or she might also hypothesize that the "15 minutes of fame" type celebrity whose name or image stays with the public longest might be the most physically unusual, whether beautiful or ugly.

Another hypothesis might be that the temporary celebrity who has an unusual name, such as Fyvush Finkel or Herve Villechaize, might have a longer temporary celebrity "shelf life" than someone having a plain and simple name, such as Bob Smith or Mary Brown.

My blog, of course, does none of this hypothesis testing. My intention in doing the blog was simply to provide the raw materials for examining temporary celebrity. For my present purpose, bringing up hypothesis testing is perhaps getting ahead of myself. Let me, then, describe the categories of temporary celebrities that make up this book-length informational blog.

First, however, a word about modern fame, celebrity and stardom in general. Of these three

terms, fame is the most general in meaning. A measure of fame comes to any public figure, but celebrity to only some. Every politician elected or appointed to high office enjoys a certain measure of fame, but most such individuals fail to stand out enough to gain celebrity. Instead, most politicians are well-to-do people in dark blue power suits, team players who get along by going along with their political party. Only occasionally does a politician come along—John Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama-- who has sufficient good looks, wealth, personality or pizzazz to capture the public's imagination and attain the level of celebrity. Fame brings with it admirers and detractors; celebrity brings free-spending fans, and occasional stalkers. Fame's admiration implies quiet respect, while celebrity and stardom (the movie version of celebrity) bring excited adulation and a specious feeling of intimacy that the hardcore fan feels for his or her beloved celebrity. Fame depends upon solid accomplishment, whereas celebrity, which also normally requires accomplishment, tends to depend more heavily upon the added blandishments of good looks, glitz, glamour, and heavy media exposure.

Celebrity is marked by intense public interest that translates into a desire to know what the celebrity "is really like," and, finally, major celebrity has come to imply the "branding" of the individual so that, like products, celebrities or stars can be used to make money not just for themselves, but also for other people or companies.

In addition, a word or two might be said about the other most frequently cited quotation regarding celebrity. Historian Daniel Boorstin, in his wonderful 1961 book *The Image* (1987), remarked that a celebrity is "someone well known for being well known." As much as I admire Mr. Boorstin's work, I must disagree with this statement. While his remark was glib and marvelously quotable, its contention does not stand up to rational examination. It is, of course, possible for someone to gain celebrity merely by his or her physical beauty or great wealth—think Paris Hilton or Vanna White or the late, plasticized Anna Nicole Smith—but most celebrities have had to do something quite substantial in order to gain their celebrity. It was not by being pretty that LeBron James and Shaquille O'Neal became major celebrities, for example. They

gained their enormous international celebrity through the hard work required in order to hone their unusual athletic skills. This need to have accomplished something substantial or unusual would appear as true of the temporary celebrity as it is of the biggest star.

The temporary celebrities in my blog who came to public recognition from the (non-entertainment) news were placed in 14 categories: heroes, mass/serial killers, other murderers of note, spies/traitors, disgraced political figures, disgraced business figures, disgraced media figures, disgraced religious figures, miscellaneous miscreants, victims, hoaxers, *femmes* (and *hommes*) *fatalis*, whistle-blowers, and inventors/innovators.

The temporary celebrities who came to light from popular entertainment were placed in a smaller number of categories, but nevertheless were considerable in number. The entertainment-world categories are: one-shot recording artists, actors/actresses invariably identified with one iconic TV role, reality television figures, one-time movie actors/actresses, and sports/outdoor figures known for one accomplishment rather than for sustained success.

The two remaining categories of temporary celebrities appearing in this blog are individuals known for their iconic work in TV commercials and, finally, a miscellaneous category for people who did not fit neatly into the other 20 categories.

In all cases, these temporary celebrities bring to the public at least a modest amount of informational value and considerably more entertainment value; yet, viewed in aggregate, they also provide easy distraction from the more complex and vital issues of the day. Given the omnipresence of media—old and new—this element of distraction or diversion is a powerful force. Such distractions have always existed, a human trait skillfully described by Mitchell Stephens in his splendid book *A History of News* as “the whisper of the day”: terrible crimes, monstrous births, strange beasts, witchcraft, and the like. It seems natural enough that most people show more interest in the oddity than *The Odyssey*. Today’s enormous web of media, however, tremendously magnify the effect of this human

tendency to prefer easy information that gives them something to chat about with their friends.

Let us now take a quick look at some examples of these now-you-see-‘em, now-you-don’t celebrities. For a hero, consider Lenny Skutnik, a Washington, D.C., office worker whose name was on every lip for a short while in 1982 when he jumped into the frozen Potomac River and saved a woman’s life following the crash of an airliner. But how many media consumers today would recall his name or his brave deed?

Even more villainous than Skutnik was heroic was Ted Bundy, a handsome young sociopath who murdered around 35 unsuspecting young women in the 1970s. Guilty of only a single murder was Ronny Zamora, who in 1977 murdered an elderly woman who returned home while Zamora was burgling the place. Oddly, his temporary celebrity came not so much due to his crime, but because of the absurd psychobabble defense his attorney mounted for him: that he had been brainwashed by watching too many violent television shows—especially “Kojak.”

A great many people have become temporary celebrities due to other types of misdeeds. Mark Foley was a Florida congressman who in 2006 sent suggestive emails to a congressional page. Father John Geoghan was a pedophile priest who was killed in his cell by a fellow inmate in 2006. Jayson Blair was the fast-track *New York Times* reporter who in 2003 parted company with that newspaper because of plagiarism and fabrication of facts. Douglas Cone of Tampa, Florida long was known for his philanthropy but more recently came to be known for being a bigamist; for many years he had kept two homes and families—only about 20 miles apart.

Among temporary celebrity victims, consider Rodney King, an African American beaten like a drum by four out-of-control LAPD policemen in 1991, causing major rioting in Los Angeles. Nick Berg, a Jewish engineer, in 2004 became the first Westerner captured and beheaded by Islamic militants. Mary Jo Kopechne was a pretty young political worker who drowned in 1969 when Ted Kennedy’s car went off a bridge on Chappaquiddick Island following a beach party.

Elizabeth Chapman was a hoaxer who convinced gullible media that her son Justin had an IQ of 298. She put the boy under so much pressure that he attempted suicide. Another notable hoaxer was Rosie Ruiz, who “won” the 1980 Boston Marathon by jumping into the race just before the tired runners approached the finish line.

A *femme fatale*, who stripped in Washington, D.C., as Fanny Foxe, the Argentine Firecracker, in 1974 brought to an end the long career of House Ways and Means Committee chairman Wilbur Mills; and to give equal treatment, a *homme fatale* who gained temporary celebrity was Scott Thorson, when in 1982 he sued entertainer Liberace for palimony.

Turning to temporary celebrities who have come from the wonderful world of entertainment, a surprising number of singers have had only one big hit. Three examples are Bobbie Gentry, C.W. McCall, and Rick Lewis. Their hits? “Ode to Billy Joe,” “Convoy,” and “Get a Job.”

Actors and actresses who appeared in only one movie include Sonya Wilde, star of the race-oriented movie “I Passed for White,” and child actress Mary Badham, Deep-South lawyer Atticus Finch’s daughter Scout in “To Kill a Mockingbird.”

The history of television is replete with character actors who, although they might have appeared on many a show, are closely identified with the one stellar role of their career. For example, Polly Holliday, no matter what else she might do, will likely be forever remembered as Flo, a smart-talking diner waitress on the show “Alice.” Actor Darren Burrows is similarly tethered to his role as Native-American character Ed Chigliak on the series “Northern Exposure,” as is actress Katey Sagal to her portrayal of the lusty housewife Peg Bundy on “Married With Children.”

People who appear in TV reality shows are tailor-made for temporary celebrity. Anh-Tuan “Cao Boi” Bui was a cast member of “Survivor,” Evan Marriott was on “Joe Millionaire,” and Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth briefly was all the rage for her appearances on “The Apprentice.”

A modest number of sports figures have gained temporary celebrity due to one remarkable accomplishment, such as the 1990 upset win in the boxing ring when relative unknown James “Buster” Douglas beat the formidable heavyweight champ Mike Tyson. Douglas just as quickly lost his title to Evander Holyfield later in the same year. My own favorite example from sports was Eddie “The Eagle” Edwards, who represented Great Britain in the 1988 Winter Olympics as their ski jumper. Somehow his gangling appearance and floundering performance gave him an endearing quality that produced short-lived media attention.

Somewhere in the never-never land between hard news and entertainment is advertising. Temporary celebrities coming from their work in TV commercials include Clara Peller, Dick Wilson, and Benjamin Curtis. These individuals played, in turn, the little old lady who growled “Where’s the beef” in commercials for Wendy’s; the Charmin toilet tissue spokesman Mr. Whipple; and Steven the Dell Dude. Another such temporary celebrity was Frank Perdue, CEO of Perdue Chicken, who starred in his own company’s commercials, which was, to my way of thinking, remarkable in that his facial features were such that he himself actually looked like a chicken.

In the blog’s miscellaneous category appear individuals whose temporary celebrity came from being or doing something out of the ordinary. Perhaps most of all, these people are the modern-day equivalent of what Mitchell Stephens described in *A History of News* as having filled the broadsides, pamphlets, and news ballads that existed prior to the appearance of newspapers.

Among those whose characteristics or deeds were brought into temporary focus by the media was Rosalie Bradford, a woman who once weighed 1,200 pounds and who brought a libel suit against media that had compared her in weight to a baby elephant or small car. U.S. ethnic studies professor Ward Churchill enjoyed short-lived notoriety in 2007 when the University of Colorado fired him for academic falsification and plagiarism. Among other things, Churchill

had exaggerated the extent of his Native American roots.

If the name Larry Fortensky sounds familiar, it is because this husky construction worker was actress Elizabeth Taylor's 7th husband. Brian "Kato" Kaylin was O.J. Simpson's famous houseguest who testified in Simpson's 1994 murder trial and who became one of those temporary celebrities who legitimately can be said to be "famous for being famous." Arthur Kent was the so-called "Scud Stud" of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. The swashbuckling Kent covered the Scud missile attacks of that conflict but fell from grace, and celebrity, for opposing the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Roy Pearson is another occupant of the miscellaneous category of my blog. Pearson was a judge who sued a struggling immigrant dry cleaner—for \$65 million—for losing his suit pants. That frivolous legal action cost Pearson

his judgeship and gave the expression "suit pants" a new meaning.

The name Phillipe Petit was widely recognized in 1974 when this diminutive French tight-rope walker connected New York City's World Trade Towers with a cable and performed on it for gaping onlookers.

Some of our more scientifically oriented colleagues might be tempted to regard this topic as a mere exercise in trivia. My reply would be perhaps so, but only if you consider people trivial. The fact is, temporary celebrities today come and go with such rapidity that one might better speak of people's 15 *seconds* of fame. Whatever all this adds up to, one thing is clear: that these "shooting stars" provide vivid and varied splashes of color on our enormous media canvas. More of them are appearing all the time and are very likely to continue doing so.

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Face-to-face and AVT forms of Communication: Pedagogical Interventions – Conditions and Possibilities

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Framework

At Swiss Television, comperes, journalists and employees¹ who work on the TV channel's programs in the widest sense are sent to the communication trainer. The various different tasks, which the employees take on, should then be taught, if these tasks have to do with language-related "forms of communication." The following deliberations originated through and during my work. I teach at a public broadcasting channel – Swiss Television (SF) – and the internal title of my job there is "communication trainer."

The television channel is currently in a so-called convergence process which means that it is doing away with the separation of radio, TV and online presence and products. In the following, we will talk of audio-visual technically transmitted forms or avt forms.

My background as a communication trainer

The task of the communication trainer is formulated here very carefully as "training" in the language-related forms of communication in the processes that the organization uses in order to carry out its "assignment." This careful formulation anticipates the problem: what do we understand by "forms of communication" and what does "language-related" mean?

Those participating in forms of communication probably have an idea or perhaps even an expectation of what they understand by this. In any case, the communication trainer makes a decision: with which understanding of "language-related forms of communication" he/she approaches his or her training assignment. This is certainly varied.

I base my training on the face-to-face (ff) situation of people who are speaking to each other, on people who are acting intentionally both in and through the conversation. The conditions and possibilities of face-to-face situations are then a part of the framework of such speech training. The questions remain:

1. Do the language-related forms of communication in which the organization is interested in also fulfill these conditions and possibilities?
2. Which problems do the speech training solve; what does the speech training achieve if it is based on such communication of face-to-face situations?

If you want to look into these questions it is natural to carry out a comparison between forms of communication in face-to-face situations and forms of communication in avt (audio-visual technically transmitted forms) formations. I do not wish to compare them here but, by means of examples, I would like to raise questions on the differences between face-to-face and avt forms and to put them up for discussion.

Comparing face-to-face and avt forms of communication

It is, however, necessary to say something about the process of comparison. The aim of the comparison here is to find differences. The possible results of the comparison are questions on "other things" in "known areas." What we hope to gain are possible hypotheses with which conditions and possibilities of the formations compared can be examined. The aim is to develop models that prove to be useful or successful. The comparison should therefore not be used

asymmetrically, not as a conclusion by analogy nor be used to form prototypes.

What is compared and what is comparable should therefore be formulated in such a way that this aim can be reached. Thus, it seems sensible to establish the meaning of some terms in advance and to make clear, how they are used or not used in the following discussion.

Definitions

The terms “situation” and “system” are, when related to forms of communication, biased in very different ways. This also concerns the term “context.” The use of these terms normally implies specific connections between different things. For this reason we will speak here of connections of different things and thus we will use the term “formation.”

- Formation is understood as determined by its possible performance, its self-sustenance, by its components and the functions of the components, by being different from other formations and connected to other formations, and by its external conditions and possibilities. Here these are assumed to be created by the organization; the organization is taken as the framework.
- The terms “person” and “role” are also biased and for this reason we will speak here of participants in formations and of people involved in formations.
- The terms “means” and “signs” are also biased and therefore, we speak here of the use of typecast materialized forms and functions.

We understand forms of communication as operations in a formation, creating and maintaining this formation. Therefore, the participants

and the communicative formations are always connected.

A peculiarity of the possible performance of a *communicative* formation can be seen in the fact that it maintains the following features:

- The conditions and possibilities for mutual interpretations by the participants of themselves, of the issue and of the formation. For this the participants use equivalency relations between different factors and create formations in and between different factors.
- The performance, the process, the formation itself prove to be “useful, successful models” for the behavioral possibilities of the participants.

Examples and questions to compare – 1st: “People involved” in avt forms of communication

The chosen examples of avt forms and the questions on the examples are limited to what are, in my opinion, the most important points in the comparison. The examples are taken from Swiss Television’s website.² We use the forms in the same way as they are accessible to every user via the Internet now. We are a “user” of the Sf.tv. website.³

An exception is a video recording – because this example is only on the Sf.tv-website for one day; also in this example we are a “user” of the Sf.tv. website.⁴

For the sake of simplicity, the examples used are transcribed or described in different ways. In the first example we only look at the sequence of the video. The sequence of shown pictures is reduced to larger sections.

Picture⁵

Comment (Author) and Questions (as user with expectations from ftf situations)

	<p>1st start of the videos. You see a “video” When started again, the sequence changes: “Section one” can no longer be seen. Questions: Has my form of participation changed? Am I now a participant in a different way? What was I before? Who is still participating here? Who creates which formation? How can I keep track of this change in my form of participation?</p>
	<p>Last picture of the 1st video at the end of the first start. Related to the time and space orientation of the user different functions of text and picture and different “Etiketten” make it difficult to find out who the “actor” is. “Etikett” in the sense of Nelson Goodman’s “label” (Goodman, 1997, 41ff): forms of the object used as notation.</p>
	<p>On further starting the ‘10vor10’ video (10 to 10 is a weekly SF news broadcast), the following result is produced: Sometimes the advertising is part of the sequence I started – sometimes not – the length of the advertising varies. Questions: Is that by chance – is it an error made when copying? And who copies then – who is the actor? Whom does the picture in the advertisement belong to? Whom does this form belong to?</p>



Then these pictures follow, they have the "Etikett" 10vor10.

I filmed the next example with a video camera. If I additionally used a monitor camera, I could observe, produce, use and distribute my own participation in Swiss TV's website on a split screen. Unfortunately, the certainty about the actor only exists in self-assurance – as far as the

other "people involved" are concerned "it is questionable." In this example we listen and look at the combination of the used forms: "picture – spoken language – sound."⁶ The example is described here – a transcription is too elaborate in this case.

Pictures	Text	Comment (Author) and Questions with expectations from ftf situations)
	<p>(Lehrerinnen) und Lehrer...</p> <p>(original sound) Geräusch</p> <p>Wer (-den in den) nächsten (Jahren rar⁷)</p> <p>"Male and female teachers will become "rare" in the coming years."⁸</p>	<p>(female teachers) and male teacher ...</p> <p>Sound not "identifiable" – only audible "slightly" when listening repeatedly and when your attention is concentrated on it.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>Who is making this sound? Who is taking part in which activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sound engineer? - The actor who is speaking the text? - The figures on the picture? - Another "source" which "belongs" to the sound ...? - Who creates this form?

The Term "Figures" is chosen to maintain the difference between the forms used in avt and face-to-face communications, and to avoid that the visible forms of the pictures here are interpreted inconsiderately as representations of persons, or the other way round, persons as exemplifications of pictures.

In the next example we look at the "figures" in the pictures, we listen to the spoken language and thus we use the picture and the sound as a "reflection" of a "reality" to which picture and sound refer.

Picture	Text	Comment (Author) and Questions
	<p>[...] Christoph Nufer. Sind die Leute gluecklich ... feiern sie schon fast den Sieg ... wie ist die Stimmung? Ch.N. Are people happy ... do they already nearly celebrate the victory ...what's the vibe?</p>	<p>The figures in the picture are speaking – we assume to each other.</p>
	<p>.....</p>	<p>There is a break between the question and the answer. It is a special kind of break. You can see the actor making two moves (2 times moving the micro-phon towards the head).</p>
	<p>Ja, die Stimmung ist unglau- blich, die Leute sind ueberglueck- lich, vielleicht sehen sie das ein bisschen hinter mir [...] Yes, the vibes are incredible ... people are jubilant ... perhaps you can see this behind me [...]</p>	<p>Who creates the break: - The technical staff? - The director? - The character? - Or does it belong to a different formation?</p>

Assumptions

Summarized, the questions are:

Who does what - or - how to identify the participants as actors - as people involved by doing something?

Who owns which “form” and which access to the use of the forms? Who participates and who is involved also and in which way?

Without going into it more deeply, one can assume *that you can use* the Internet address as the actor and so one can say: “On this day Swiss TV said...” *but that you cannot yet decide* who the actor is in the individual program on the surface of the form, neither concerning the figures in the picture nor the forms used. So far, this means:

- Without knowledge of the production and usage formation it is not possible to decide who takes part in which way.
- Without knowledge of the framework and production conditions it is not possible to decide what is due to whom.

How participants see themselves as actors or can be identified as actors is not reconstructable from these clips.

Back to the face-to-face situation

If you transfer these conditions and possibilities into the face-to-face situation, then it is not always possible to allocate – in face-to-face formulations – person and action – fixed on the observed form of the action on the surface of the forms and / or the use of the forms.

We must further consider what this means for the pattern of action which depends on the connection between person and action for its effectiveness. Here is just a clue: What does this mean for argumentations, which are used as reasons for actions?

If they are based on the credibility of people and aim at the attitudes and convictions of people, then the avt person must first be assured.

Only then is it possible to create something like credibility - the credibility of the avt person it should be noted. However, this does not yet solve the problem. Person and action are still not connected – at best the form of the “actor” and the materialized form that is used are connected. It goes without saying that argumentations no longer aim at the search for common attitudes and convictions but at the “framework” in which “people act.”

In this case the framework is the “form” avt forms of communication and obviously the “owners” are those people or those organizations

which can control the access to and the use of the avt forms.

This has consequences for the attempt to give reasons for actions intentionally. These reasons are then not sufficient from the point of view of the actors. In my opinion, they must be combined with further attempts at reasons, e.g. with functional reasons such as: “the participants as actors believe that this form maintains the formation and its performance – on conditions that the actors had alternatives to the form which they used – the actors have used / or use this form within the avt forms of communication.” This of course also applies on behalf of/ from the perspective of the explications of the action.

Examples and questions to compare – 2nd: The forms used and their reference

Back to the previous examples: The following may be banal – much of it is known to us from our everyday use of avt forms. Let us take the arrow with which we play the video, a thing we usually take for granted. We start the video with a “click” onto the “Arrow”:



Questions:

When I “click” onto the arrow where do I act?

- In the form?
- Or is the arrow used as an “object”?
- Am I using the surface of the form?
- What am I changing?

What lies “behind” it:

- The equipment?
- The object on which the arrow is placed?
- The picture, which the arrow is a part of?

Let us look further. This time we look at the first picture of the video. Which relations can be created here?

Pictures

Comment (Author) and Questions (as user with expectations from ftf situations)

 <p>The screenshot shows a video player interface. At the top, a grey bar says "Noch 2 Sekunden". Below it is a large red square with the white letters "SF". Underneath the logo is the URL "www.tagesschau.sf.tv". The main video area shows a crowd of people from an aerial perspective. A large red diagonal line and a blue square are overlaid on the crowd. A red play button is centered over the blue square. At the bottom of the video frame, a digital clock displays "21:50:00" and the text "AXA.ch" is visible. The video player controls at the bottom show a progress bar at 00:00 / 25:26, a star rating, and various control icons.</p>	<p>Questions:</p> <p>Is that a clock or is it used as a "picture" – a picture of a clock?</p> <p>Is the form "picture" in the sense of the framed two-dimensional picture?</p> <p>What then is the frame of the picture at all? The small part or the monitor?</p> <p>Is it a picture whose characteristics I refer to when I say: the cipher stops here?</p> <p>Do I assume the picture refers to something by being a part of something?</p> <p>Is it a specific picture of a specific clock? Of "the clock" of the assurance "axa" at this time?</p> <p>Does the picture show a typical "chronometer"?</p> <p>Is it a "picture" which is recreated, a picture which refers to its recreation?</p>
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This list does not claim to be complete and it may not be surprising that references can be used in different ways. In order to decide what is used here and how, we need tips on the use.

One possible way to find such tips is to look at the connections. Let us see how it continues. The question is then: do I get indications of how the previous form was supposed to be used?

Pictures

Comment (Author) and Questions (as user with expectations from ftf situations)



Questions:

How do I use this: as a picture of a person in a studio?

Or as a part of a program?

Or as a part of a picture from a program?

We continue (except the headlines):



I think that intuitively it is clear that I need knowledge about the use of the forms. I must know:

That is an “event in a studio” – that it is “advertising” – that it is a “signet” (SF TV 10vor10 sign).

Furthermore, I must know here:

Is what I am using there a form with reference to something – or is it an “object” to be used?

We find similar problems when using acoustic forms. Let us take the example “news update” again. The question was: who makes this sound? When using acoustic forms we are used to combining the sound and the source and to take the sound as a sign/index for something. The question is then: What “source” comes to mind when we hear the noise in the example above?

Can it be used as “sound” with reference to something?

We should not have the problem to this extent with spoken language because we are used to differentiating between the speaker, his message and what he is referring to. Let us look at – read – in the example:

Picture

Text

Comment (Author) and Questions



(Lehrerinnen)
 un(d) Lehrer
Geräusch...
 wer (-den in den)
 nächsten (Jahren rar)⁹
 (female) an(d) male
 teachers will become rare
 in the next years¹⁰

In which way does the spoken language refer to the “picture”? To what does the picture refer to and in which way?
 Does the picture become a document of an event through the use of spoken language? Does it become typical of certain events?
 Does it become a fictional event?

The difficulties can be found not only in the sequence but also in the synchronous use and in the combination of the forms.

Assumptions

It seems that it is necessary to reconsider the use of avt forms and their references that one cannot reconstruct from the use of the forms, their combination and spatial and chronological order, and which possibilities of the reference are weighted in which way. No principle of any stable continual emphasis can be reconstructed. You must reckon with the fact that the references used change *fast* and that forms without references are used.

“References” in communications should be seen here under the assumption that equivalency relations are used and formed with them. These are simple existential statements such as “that *and* that” and combinations such as: this form in this modality, for example, visual, is used to refer to it. So this optical form is used for example as a picture “of it.” To put it colloquially: Which reality do the used forms and their use refer to?

Which reality do people involved model with these forms, which they combine and arrange in time? Do they model a reality of the “objects” and of the physical possibility of manipulating the objects? Do they model a “reality” of the used forms? Do they model a combination of both?

Back to the face-to-face situation

Here references and their conventionalization, in and through the use are an essential achievement of the formation. This proves useful or successful for creating formations and to act both in and through conversation.

In the **avt forms** it seems that on the side of the forms I sound out the possibilities of the combinations of forms and their temporal and spatial configuration. Sounding out combinations means applying forms to characteristics of forms. In the best possible case, I will reach the limits of the formation in which these forms exist. At the same time that is what becomes possible as a result of the use of the forms on actions.

How can one then communicate concerning the “subject matter”?

You could now conclude that from the point of view of the person who uses the forms the use of the form and the contents of the form are identical. This form refers to itself as a characteristic (the contents) and this form refers to itself as a creation, to its technical reproduction.

You could come up with the idea that the use of the form and the “used” contents are not distinguishable. From the observer perspective one still does not know “who” can be pinned down as the “actor”. If, however, there *were someone*

whom I could still see as the person acting, he/she would not be distinguishable from the forms and from the contents which are used.

If you continue along this line of thought, avt forms offer the possibility for actor, form and contents to be used identically, without being clearly reconstructable who the participant is. You need no longer create any equivalency, no longer honor or negotiate any usefulness or any success. Making the forms and their use *mutually common* is replaced by the acting – the doing – in the presence of the others. The vulnerability in the mutual interpretation is replaced by the observability of “I am what I do and what the other person sees – observes that I do something.”

Examples and questions to compare – 3rd: the used forms and their typification

Back to the examples: In avt formations, how do participants gain typifications of the forms which they use functionally – always assuming that you can attribute sensory impressions to communicative functions? Thus gained typifications then fulfill the conditions and possibilities in a communicative formation. The following are at least plausible:

- a. the distinction – thus also the differentiation
- b. the recognition

- c. the reproduction – the completion is also part of this
- d. the use of references
- e. the combinability of the types

The problems are well known: selective listening, differentiating between useful and disturbing noises, orientation in space and time – where – what – paths when watching etc. These will not be listed in more detail. Here again the differences between face-to-face and avt forms of communication and their connection in face-to-face based speech trainings are questionable.

Before we had the example of the “noise” which was not identifiable and the example of the spoken language in which sounds and sound sequences were hard to differentiate and identify. One cannot decide in which formation these acoustic forms belong, which functions they can have, how we can distinguish them from other “noises,” whether we would be able to recognize them again and how they could be combined with other “noises.” Maybe they are forms without function in this formation? But, what do we base this decision on – above all, as all technically reproduced forms follow instructions on production because they are reproduced forms?

With the optical forms, too, it is often not easy to decide what the used functions are in an avt formation. Another short example:

Pictures



Comment (Author) and Questions (as user with expectations of ftf situations)

Questions:

What is the compere focused on:

- On an object in the room?
- On a picture of herself on a monitor in front of her?
- On her movements on the screen in front of her?

Assumptions

If we assume that this is a picture of an event in a room – no matter what kind of event, then the questions are:

- How does the actor gain or create typifications of the form of himself or herself assuming he or she is acting in a communicative formation and is not without form?
- Does he or she use the framed two-dimensional picture with its contrasts and movements etc.; or
- Does he or she use himself or herself in the room and towards his or her opposite; – or – Does he or she use a combination of both: a picture as a typecast form of oneself?
- Which kind of production of the form does he or she assume?
- Does he or she assume the technical reproduction?

Then for the reproduction, the recognition and the combination, it is sufficient to have characteristics and technical instructions on production – in the simplest case a “copy paste” and thus it seems functional typifications can be gained. Distinctions and exploration and maintaining the typifications by using them functionally in the way it is done in ftf communication, are then not necessary.

Face-to-face and avt communications in speech training

If you follow the considerations up to this point, it should become clear that conditions and possibilities of face-to-face forms of communication cannot be accepted unquestionably for avt forms of communication. At least this applies to the following points:

- “People” can be used as technically reproducible components in functional formations.
- References created by the use and the combination of typecast forms are not stable and can be used as “models” of differing “realities”.
- The typifications of forms can be gained by characteristics. It is not necessary to

gain and save them functionally in use. Thus, it seems that conventionalizing forms follows other mechanisms.

- Who takes part and with which activity must be newly defined: all people who have access ... users, participants, people involved, actors, spectators ...?

If one follows the deliberations so far, it goes without saying that one must differentiate between face-to-face and avt communication and that they must be accepted as different forms of communication. Thus, it is possible to pursue the second question, which was asked at the beginning: which problems does “speech training” solve, what does speech training achieve when the training of avt forms of communication is based on face-to-face situations? This means one must ask what kind of connection speech training creates and uses between face-to-face and avt contexts.

- Is the face-to-face situation used as a problem solving metaphor and thus – in the sense of functional explanations of actions – maintains the performance of the avt formation and the formation itself? e.g. the technical possibilities for distribution and access as “possession” of an organization – that would mean, in the examples above, that the speech training keeps the organization as the framework of the avt forms of communication.
- Is the face-to-face situation used as a prototype and are we then looking for deficits or exclusions of avt forms of communication?
- Is the face-to-face situation used as the starting point for an asymmetrical comparison and are, thus, avt forms of communication at a deficit in comparison to face-to-face situations?
- Is the face-to-face situation used as a conclusion by analogy? The picture and the sound as images of reality? If the conclusion by analogy proves to be effective, does it support and maintain the effectiveness of the “medium,” the effectiveness of the avt forms?

Conclusion

The question remains as to whether there is a way out, without giving up, so that “speech training” can develop and encourage communicative abilities by using the forms of communication. If one assumes that face-to-face and avt are different communicative forms and if one takes into account the differences but also the connections between the forms of communication, then there should be other solutions. By the way, in the 1960s, Nam June Paik already created a possible setting for this with his installation “real fish live fish.” It could then be possible to approach avt formations with the following questions:

- How do the participants use the materialized forms and within which framework do they use the forms?
- What access do they have with avt forms of production, distribution and use?

- Who takes part in which *communicative* formation? Within which framework? What access to the formations do the participants choose?
- How do the participants differentiate between face-to-face and avt forms of communication and how do they connect them in such a way that they remain differentiated?
- How do the participants discover, develop and use typified forms in avt forms of communication. How do they combine different kinds of types?
- How do the people involved differentiate and maintain communicative formations?

At the end of the day, it looks as if the answers were questions.

Notes

¹ This always means both male and female employees

² The examples are chosen randomly close to the time of writing this article.

³ We use the website:
Sf.tv/videoportal/sendungen/10vor10:
10vor10 - 25.06.2010

10vor10 - 30.06.2010

10vor10 - 28.06.2010

10vor10 - 29.06.2010

Sf.tv./videoportal/sendungen/10vor10; 6.7.2010;
C. Nufer and S. Klapproth talking about football.

⁴ The recorded example is: Sf.tv/interactive;
news update of 2.7.2010

⁵ The software “snag it” is used to print out the pictures from the website

⁶ Tone = international Tone (it), Effects, Music. In this case, everything one can hear when listening.

⁷ (*italics*) = difficult to understand, sounds and sequences of sounds cannot be differentiated and identified exactly.

⁸ (*italics*) = hard to understand: sounds and the sequences of sounds cannot be identified exactly.

⁹ (*italics*) = difficult to understand: phonemes and sequences of phonemes cannot be differentiated.

¹⁰ (*italics*) = hard to understand: sounds and sequences of sound cannot be differentiated and identified exactly.

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Forms and Functions of Listener Behaviors in Audio-Based Feedback Communication

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Abstract

A typical method in speech courses at the university is for students to deliver a speech and then seek and offer feedback to improve performance. This feedback communication obeys specific rules, is expressed in different forms and is mainly based on audio- or/and videotape. The course should help students to give seminar papers in an attractive way and to prepare them for professional life. These are criteria established by the European Bologna reform. In this context, self experience and learning by doing are some of the most important aims to prepare students to take their professional life in their own hands, guided by a teacher. Media, such as audio- or videotaped speeches of students and the feedback of their colleagues and the teacher, are a convincing method to reach these aims. So, the classical audio- or videotape is a means that also points to the future of the media in the 21st century. There is a lot of research about feedback in psychology, but a research deficit about feedback communication in the field of linguistic discourse analysis (see Kluger /DeNisi 1996; Slembek / Geißner 2001; Mönnich 2010). With regard to listener behaviors, I explore in my paper which forms of listener activities the teacher uses to influence learning processes (see Mönnich 2010; also for the analyzed transcripts in German). By investigating these forms, I focus on audio-/video based feedback communication.

1. Introduction

A listener is not only a recipient, but also a “co-creator of interactive talk” (Gardner 2001, 2). In linguistic research this insight is meanwhile unquestioned, so that the research on forms and functions of listener activities plays a more essential role. For example, Gardner (2001) gives a review of listener activities. He points out that

for the research on response tokens it is important to investigate them on one hand “as items in themselves, for example their phonetic form, prosodic shape, or intonational contour” (4) and on the other “in the context in which they occur, particularly their timing and their precise placement within a sequence of talk, or whether the token is an ‘only’ in its turn” (4).

As typical uses of “activities participants in talk-in-interaction do in the role of listener” (2) Gardner summarizes: continuers, acknowledgements, newsmarkers, change-of-activity-tokens, assessments, brief questions, collaborative completions and many vocalizations and kinesic actions. Gardner characterizes “continuers, acknowledgment tokens, newsmarkers and change-of-activity tokens” as response tokens (3) and explains:

These tokens are a prime example of action types of a non-primary speaker (or current listener) in interactive talk, and demonstrate the non-primary speaker’s power to influence the course of the talk, by providing evidence on the stance that the recipient in the talk is taking at that moment (...). Together with assessments, response tokens provide information to other participants in the talk, not only about how some prior talk has been received but also some information on how the response token utterer is projecting further activities in the talk, for example whether they approve of, agree with, disagree with, will remain silent on, or have something to say about the prior talk. This is not done in a way that says something topically or semantically precise, but through the general characteristics of the brief response that has been given. (3)

Allwood et al. (2005, 131) point out that “a communication sign – whether uni- or multimodal – may well, and often does, play several communicative functions at the same time. It may be *multifunctional*.” As main kinds of interactive functions they consider feedback (give and elicit), turn-managing and sequencing (ibid.). As basic linguistic feedback features they distinguish continuation/contact, perception, understanding and attitudinal reactions (134; see Allwood/Nivre/Ahlsen 1992, 3).

Participants in a conversation continuously exchange feedback as a way of providing signals about the success of their interaction. They give feedback to show their interlocutor that they are willing and able to continue the communication and that they are listening, paying attention, understanding or not understanding, agreeing or disagreeing with the message, which is being conveyed. They elicit feedback to know how the interlocutor is reacting in terms of attention, understanding and agreement with what they are saying. While giving or eliciting feedback to the message that is being conveyed, both speaker and listener can show emotions and attitudes; for instance, they can agree enthusiastically, or signal lack of acceptance and disappointment (Allwood et al. 2005, 132).

The data used for linguistic studies about response tokens mostly are of every day conversation to find features of listener activities in general, or the data are suitable to research the influence of individual or cultural factors. There are also linguistic studies about response tokens in the context of teaching foreign languages (e.g. Rasoloson 1995). But how far are forms and functions of listener behavior influenced by institutional contexts and the identities the interlocutors have because of this institutional context?

2. Purpose

In my paper I focus on listener behaviors in ‘feedback communication’, a special type of classroom conversation communication in the institutional context of the university. My research on ‘feedback communication’ includes participant observation and a data collection of

audiotapes and videos of three speech courses (in each case with 30 lessons) at German universities. In my paper I will investigate one of these audio-based ‘feedback situations’ particularly with regard to forms and functions of response tokens.

3. Context information about the data corpus

The transcripts date from an introductory two-day seminar in applied rhetoric. The purpose is to prepare a group of twenty students to speak more eloquently and become listener oriented. The first day the students prepare and deliver a short speech, which is tape-recorded. The following day the seminar shows a typical setting: 1. Students and lecturer rehearse the tape with the recorded speech. 2. The speaker comments on her/his speech and communicates her/his self-perception during delivering and rehearsing the speech. 3. The students and the lecturer communicate their external perception while listening to the speaker. 4. The speaker sums up, which lessons s/he draws from the exercise and the ‘feedback communication’.

This setting is based on special concepts to learn rhetorical communication: ‘learning by feedback’ (e.g. comparing self-perception and external perception), ‘learning by reflection and self-monitoring’ (adapting cognitive and metacognitive competences) and ‘learning by doing’ (training skills).

4. Thesis

In ‘feedback communication’ the response tokens *hm (well!)*, *ja (yeah)* and *ah (oh!)* are used in several variants. My thesis is:

- Response tokens have general functions, applying to the characteristics of communication as verbal interaction. Response tokens in ‘feedback communication’ have typical functions, e.g. as continuers, acknowledgments and assessments.
- In addition, response tokens have specific functions, depending on the special type of communication in the specific institutional context. Forms and functions

of response tokens in 'feedback communication' depend on the lecturers' and students' self-esteem (Richards) in the context of classroom conversation (seminar communication) at the university.

5. Analysis: The specific functions of response tokens in 'feedback communication'

Richards (2006, 51) demonstrates "how shifts in the orientation to different aspects of identity produce distinctively different interactional patterns" in classroom conversation. In the 'feedback communication' I investigate as an example the use of two different orientations and identities and two different interactional patterns of lecturers and students:

1. 'Feedback communication' is *classroom conversation*, connected with the picture of an asymmetrical teacher-learner relationship and an identity construction of 'being the teacher' – 'being the learner'.
2. 'Feedback communication' is communication in an *encounter group*; the relationship between the members is symmetrical.

The response tokens are part of these two different interactional patterns.

5.1 Functions of response tokens in 'feedback communication' as classroom conversation

5.1.1 Response tokens are part of the initiation-response-follow-up (IRF) pattern

The lecturer fulfills typical tasks of a teacher, e.g. by opening, structuring and finishing the conversation. As a teacher the lecturer is controlling the floor. The typical "Initiation-Response-Follow-up (IRF) pattern" (Richards 2006, 52) of classroom conversation is observable, but instead of evaluating the responses explicitly, the lecturer uses several forms of follow-up and evaluates implicitly:

- The lecturer uses the response tokens *hm hm* and *ja* as a teacher to accentuate what the students are saying. Due to the fact that these response tokens are multifunctional (continuer and acknowledge) the lecturer keeps the evaluation in suspense and opens the floor for the student's comments and evaluations (e.g. Extract 1, line 47).
- Even the absence of response tokens fulfills teacher functions: (a) to indicate what will not be important in the following classroom conversation; (b) to invite the students to enter into the conversation.
- As one of the students makes a mistake, the teacher marks the error by making use of a comment and a re-formulation. Implicitly the teacher asks the student to correct his wrong wording. The teacher evaluates the corrected formulation by using the response token *hm hm* (duplicated form of *hm [well!]*) with a falling-raising intonation, which means in German 'I agree' (Ehlich 1979, 1986; Extract 1, line 47).

Extract 1

39	S 3	can't you? Like you notice if someone is playing a role
40	S 3	and is exactly considering that as a play (0) don't you?
41	S 3	So this (0) you do notice that a little bit (0) the (0)
42	S 3	[you say (0) you (0)] That is my
	L	[That is YOUR way of seeing it, Christoph?]
43	S 3	way of seeing it yeah. (0) Er (0) OF course. (0) As I have
44	S 3	said it. Er
	many	((laughing:2))
	L	You said [YOU notice.]
	Kom	< <quoted S 3> >
45	S 3	I see okay (0) yeah. (0) Well it MIGHT appear
	S u	((coughs))
46	S 3	as if (0) as if that was somehow FAKED
	pv	<<softly>>
	L	a-a
47	S 3	as if you were playing a role and (0) like
	pv	<<softly>>
	L	[hm hm]
48	S 3	[laughingly] weren't you? (0) So. And perhaps (0)
	S u	((clears his throat))

5.1.2 The answer particle *ja* (*yeah*) and the response token *hm hm* indicate learning by example.

The purpose of 'feedback communication' is to initiate a wealth of new knowledge for the individual and the whole group: The individual speaker gets feedback to his/her own speech in order to be able to improve on his/her competence so that all participants have the opportunity for new insights in rhetoric. For the lecturer's conversation style this involves a double addressing: With her/his feedback s/he addresses one participant and at the same time the whole

group. Furthermore s/he marks knowledge, which the speaker gains throughout the review of her/his speech, as being generally relevant ("[That's] interesting", line 163) and elicits that the speaker shows her/his broad agreement with the evaluation ("That is totally interesting", line 164) in order to focus on an important rhetorical insight for both the speaker and the listeners. After that (line 165) the lecturer evaluates the speaker's response by the answer particle 'ja' (*yeah*) and student 17 echoes the response token *hm hm* not only as acknowledger and continuer, but rather as a sign of learning by example.

Extract 2

161	R 20	like that.	((clears his throat) (3)
	many	((smirking: 2)) (2)	
	L	Yeah.	And
162	L	at the beginning you have been more concentrated? (4)	
163	L	Interesting.	isn't it? (0) What that causes even as
164	L	change. (...)	
	R 20	That is totally interesting	(0) because
165	R 20	it just (0) differs so much.	
	L	Yeah.	It's as if the first
	Sin17	Hm hm	
166	L	part was one more try to speak out what you're thinking	
167	L	for you personally, (0) then read the thesis again (0)	
168	^{pv} L	<<very soft>>	
	L	and then [...]. (2)	How did others feel the irritation or the

5.1.3 The response tokens *ah*, *ah ja* and *aha* evaluate students' responses and mark relevant topics

The lecturer uses the interjection *ah* in several variants: *ah*, *ah ja* and *aha*

- **Ah:** The lecturer uses the normal form of *ah* with a falling contour (line 46). The general function of this *ah* in German is to express attention and a pleasant surprise (Ehlich 1986, 75 f. and 305). Norrick points out that the English *ah* as a free-standing interjection is also common as back-channel or an attention signal (2007, 164). That is applicable to the German *ah* in general and to the lecturer's *ah* in the feedback communication in particular. The *special functions* of *ah* in the context of feedback communication as classroom communication are (a) to mark a relevant topic (line 99-212: later, the aspect student 3 remarks to the speaker becomes the central topic of the feedback given by the lecturer); (b) within the Initiation-Response-Follow-up pattern the lecturer's *ah* evaluates the corrected feedback of student 3.

- **Ah ja:** The lecturer contracts *ah* and *ja* (*yeah*) (line 71), so that these response tokens sound like one word with a rising-falling contour. The lecturer uses the response token *ah* in the general function as a discourse marker "signalling a change in cognitive state" (Norrick 2007, 164), because student 19 has brought up a new aspect, and the lecturer uses the response token *ja* (*yeah*) as acknowledger and continuer. The *special functions* of *ja* in this context rise within the Initiation-Response-Follow-up pattern: Instead of an explicit evaluation given by the teacher, student 3 speaks in high terms of the speaker, but by using the response tokens *ah ja* the lecturer implicitly compliments the speaker on her/his speech and evaluates implicitly both the speech and the student's comment.
- **Aha:** The lecturer uses the normal form of *aha* with a falling contour: *ahà* (line 66 and 117) and with the general function to refer to the previous turn and with the meaning of "Now I understand". Moreover the German *aha* marks an aha-reaction or aha-experience (Ehlich 1986, 77). The *specific function* of *aha* within

the IRF-pattern of feedback communication is to acknowledge the student's evaluation (line 66) and to highlight a relevant aspect of a student's response (line 117). The lecturer also uses the interjection *ahâ* (line 113), the intensified form of *aha*, which expresses understanding and amazing in German. (Paraphrase in German "Ach, so ist das!"

(Ehlich 1986, 77) "Oh, I see!"). The *specific function* of *ahâ* in the context of feedback communication is to highlight the contrast between the external perception and the speaker's self-perception. With the aid of *ahâ* the lecturer directs the learning process and keeps the learners in suspense.

Extract 3

112			
	<i>pv</i>	<	< <i>fast</i> >
R 20		[have usually	absolutely nothing to do with
113			
	<i>pv</i>		< <i>fast</i> >
R 20		the topic, [(and) it] is to establish contacts with the	
L		aha	
114			
	<i>pv</i>		< <i>fast</i> >
R 20		audience, (0) er the listeners I'm looking at them	
115			
	<i>pv</i>		< <i>fast</i> >
R 20		then (0) and I'm losing (0) a lot of (0) my excitement.	
116			
	<i>pv</i>		< <i>fast</i> >
R 20		This is something which I have found for myself.]	>
117			
L		Aha , (0) virtually like a strategy (0) [that you're	
118			
L		interacting with], (0) You say [I notice with the	
<i>Kom</i>			< < <i>paraphrases R 20</i> >
R 20		hm hm	
119			
L		help of it that I establish contact to the audience], [I'm	
<i>Kom</i>			< <i>paraphrases R 20</i> > > <
120			
L		interested in how you reacted on it], I've	
<i>Kom</i>			< < <i>talks to the plenum</i> > >
121			
L		noticed that for me it was causing irritation.	
122			
L		(0) On the one hand in content, why do you	

5.2 Functions of response tokens in 'feedback communication' as encounter

The examined feedback communication is based on feedback rules, which were verbalized in the context of social psychology, especially of the group dynamics, e.g. to mark self-perception and external perception as subjective.

5.2.1 The response token *hm hm* and the answer particle *ja* (yeah) help to avoid explicit evaluations

The rule to verbalize feedback without evaluating the performance of the other group members was taught too in this course on rhetoric

and classroom conversation. In contrast to this rule, it is conspicuous that speaker and listeners do not only pick out their subjective experience as a central theme; they rather evaluate the speech explicitly (e.g. "I performed *badly*" / "Ich hab *schlecht* geredet" [speaker = student 20]) or implicitly ("you performed *not authentically*" / "Die Rede *wirkte aufgesetzt*." [Student 3]). Only the lecturer refrains from explicit evaluations and uses just implicit forms of evaluation. Extract 4 shows as an example that response tokens also fulfill the function to avoid explicit evaluations: Student 19 reveals in his comment that he feels positive about the speaker's performance. Students and lecturer agree to this implicit evaluation, using the response token *hm hm* as acknowledger or the answer particle *ja* (yeah).

Extract 4

87	S 19	seemed as (0) confident as if you've still had
88	S 19	[all] quoted words in mind and as if you [were] able to
	Sin u	[hm hm] [hm hm]
89	S 19	report them [once more] easily. (0)
	Sin u	[hm hm]
	L	Yeah.
	Sin 6	Yeah.
	S 3	I've one

The interplay of *hm hm*, *ja* (yeah) and echoed *ja* (yeah) shows that students and lecturer are on very good terms with each other.

5.2.2 The response token *hm hm* and the answer particle *ja* (yeah) mark a more equal encounter group

In the last part of this 'feedback communication' the lecturer wants to compare her impressions with the impressions of the group (line 168-212). As a result, she is instructed by the students why she, as the lecturer, had a problem with the beginning of the speech. On the one hand the normal student / teacher relationship is reversed, because the students instruct the lecturer and the lecturer thanks the students for their advice. On the other hand, the lecturer

maintains her dominance, because she invites the students to instruct her; furthermore she opens and ends the conversation. Added together, the last part of this 'feedback communication' is an example of a "shift away from the situated identities of the classroom and the asymmetries associated with them, towards a more equal encounter" (Richards 2005, 65), in which the parties involved explore their experiences.

The high frequency of the response token *hm hm* and of the interjection *ja*, spoken with emphasis, expresses a high level of the lecturer's involvement, not as a teacher, but as an individual member of the encounter group. Especially by laughing together with the students, the teacher marks that she holds herself at a distance from the role of 'being a teacher.'

Extract 5

193	S 3	Whereas you can say that humor draws off
194	S 3	the attention of oneself, (0) and furthermore
195	S 3	You can win the audience's attention. And
	L	hm hm
196	S 3	because of this irony that also comes into that, (0) the
197	^{pv} S 3	one who has prepared this concept as [a serious concept] <<laughing>>
199	S 3	will have [problems]
	Sin u	((smirks))
	many	((-----laughing-----))
200	S 3	serious meant [sentences] from the good book er should
	L	Yeah
201	S 3	have been intercessions then one is of course [(...),
	L	((laughs))
202	S 3	(0)] but [all the others] are (0)
	L	[(I don't care about that)]
203	S 3	won as listeners and when they are laughing
	L	yeah
204	S 3	for a start then you have got them and you can
	L	yeah
205	S 3	talk fluently and that's(0) well that's
	L	yeah
206	S 3	actually (0) that is a good rhetorical device.
	L	Yeah. That's

207	L	one more (0) helping (0) advice for me.
208	L S u	[Well] that I'm experiencing that in my position as super ((clears her throat))
209	L	visor, who has planned that, differently
210	^{pv} L	< <faked surprise (0) [WHAT my NaDOLny-thesis
211	^{pv} L many	and laughing> > < <softly> might be intercessions? [[[laughs]])] [than you as [[laughing]])]
212	^{pv} L S u	<softly> > listeners. That is very helpful more for me. Thanks] ((coughs))
213	L	(1) Shall we leave it like that, Peter?

6. Conclusion

Listener behaviors are multifunctional and adaptable. In the context of feedback communication, the response tokens *hm hm*, *ja*, *ah*, *aha* and the answer particle *ja* have not only general functions, but also *specific functions*, depending on different interaction concepts:

- Belonging to *classroom conversations* listener behaviors are used *to vary the IRF-pattern, to indicate learning by example, and to mark relevant topics*.
- Belonging to *communication as encounter* listener behaviors help *to avoid explicit valuations, they express personal*

involvement and underline *symmetric relationships*.

- For the lecturer the response tokens *hm hm*, *ja*, *ah*, *ah ja*, *aha* and the answer particle *ja* seem to be instruments to hold the balance between 'being the teacher' and 'being a member of an encounter group'.

Looking for the composition principle for the using of listener behaviors in feedback communication, I conclude it is the student's and lecturer's self-esteem and the identity they gain during this course, which set the tone.

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Conventions for Transcription

[...]	omissions in the transcript
(...)	unintelligible passages
()	assumed wording
< >	extension of a comment or a paralinguistic conspicuity
[]	extension referring to a, a paralinguistic conspicuity or simultaneous utterances
YOU	capital letters mark striking stresses
.	falling intonation
?	raising intonation

(0)	pause, shorter than one second
(1)	pause, duration one second

Speaker table

R 20	speaker 20
L	lecturer
S	student (male)
S 2 – 19	student two to 19
Sin	student (female)
Sin 17	student 17 (female)
S u	student (unknown)
Many	many students

Internet – the Agora of the 21st Century

Communication of Young People on the Internet

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1. Different ways and styles of communication

I want to consider how young people communicate today on the Internet. They do this as a new generation, as the generation of digital natives. Maybe young people always have communicated in another way than adults. Plato described Socrates' complaints about public discussions on the agora,¹ – the ancient marketplace in historic Greece. Today, young people are communicating in the world of the Internet especially on platforms. So I call these platforms the “agora of the 21st Century” – the marketplace, where nearly everything is possible, for different groups with different aims.

But as a first step let me tell you about my own family and how we communicate with each other through the Internet. For about six months our eldest son was living in New Zealand. And we communicated by email, by sms, by Skype, by video-Skype, by Facebook-chat and also by the good old post card. But, for us the new situation was that another world entered ours. Suddenly today was tomorrow (because of the distance between Switzerland and New Zealand). Two worlds – spaces – were built in our real life in a temporal synchronization but in completely different contexts.

So, at the same time, our eldest son was both very close to us and very far away as well, concerned with the same global issues, connected by the same technical possibilities for spoken and written words, for pictures and movies; but we lived in different contexts with no logical connections like the volcano on Iceland that occupied us, or like the great hospitality of the people in New Zealand our son enjoyed. For the first time we really felt the intensity of how the Internet may help to communicate across diffe-

rent living spaces different cultures, in different worlds.

The famous “global village” became a reality for us; as did another reality of becoming calmer parents, concerned about their son who began to discover another world, far away from us. It wasn't *one* communication or one style of communication we used. It was completely different to feel our son, to “read him” in the Facebook-chat or to talk with him by video-Skype, to read his short messages by mobile device or to read his wall posts on Facebook and so on. The languages, the syntaxes, the icons, the vocabulary and the Internet environment opened us to completely different ways of communication with just one particular person.

2. Communication on the Internet: Content First

Question: Do young people talk (on the Internet) about politics, religion, ethical questions, the meaning of life? Yes, they do; and, no they don't. “No they don't”: this means no, they don't communicate like adults do in structured situations and, in a deepened or intensive way (provided that adults do so). But on the other hand: Yes, they do talk about religious questions, but how?

Let me mention this: You can find research on connections between young people and the Internet – or on their communication on the Internet. You also can find some publications about young people and their life-topics like work, the future, global warming, and politics (Hurrelmann, 2010). You can find research about religiosity today (e.g.: published by the Religion Monitor of Bertelsmann¹). But there is no study on the combined topics: young people on the Internet and their communication about

religion. And exactly this topic would be interesting to me as person in charge of the radio and television performances of the protestant church in Switzerland and as a member of the management of the 'Reformierte Medien' (media company of the protestant [reformed] churches). I did not find any study on religious questions young people deal with, or on the importance of religious questions in their life.

There are multiple reasons that could be responsible for the lack of research on young people and religion. One of the reasons may be: in Europe religious questions and their importance are far away of the mainstream of social issues; the tax-supported churches in Europe are losing members due to various social circumstances and there is also the phenomenon of people leaving their churches. Another reason may be: the Internet is a constantly changing, constantly growing and self-innovating system – with a speed to develop we never had before. Perhaps studies on a field, such as religion, are judged to be marginal and therefore not in the foreground of research on it.

Today the Internet allows young people to communicate using various skills. The Internet offers them to just consume content, but also to participate in collaborations, to build up communities, to form or change an opinion about social and political facts, and to form a collective know-how.

From the point of view of *broadcasting stations* there are some implications. The forced process of convergence of radio, television and the Internet to unique multi-media companies gives them new opportunities to develop their presence on the Internet. This is important for the broadcasting stations, given that their target audience is young and, as research shows, young people watch less and less television on traditional channels; they watch news and other telecasts—if they look them at all—more and more on the Internet: this means, on demand.

Other groups strongly interested in the presence on the Internet are *organizations* like governments, schools, and universities. As for churches, the use of the Internet by young people challenges them to intensify their presence on the Internet. The development of online imple-

mentation for religious content gives new opportunities to reach young people, too. What is new and specific to young people: if they google, they do it in searching specific topics, they choose sites connected by searched contents, but they don't do it by looking for organizations, such as, for example, television stations, the official sites of political parties, or even for churches.

If content sites are read and accepted by young people, this may encourage another identification with the organizations sponsoring them. Looking for content, for a special subject is the first step they do. If they are interested in the content they identify - in a second step - the organization. This procedure is the opposite way of a traditional identification, e.g. first look for the political, social or ecclesiastical organization and then for the content they offer. For young people it is just the other way round: first content, then organization.

Finally, there are businesses. For them, communication on the Internet has implications. Since mainly young people visit their sites on the agora "Internet" and, since they are mainly digital natives, businesses must install various files on different platforms to reach this target group. And businesses do it on various platforms. They carefully observe the different platforms young people visit and try to place their messages appropriately.

In only a few years, platforms have grown up very fast. "Facebook," "favourite," "yahoo," "xing," "delicious," "digg," "reddit," and "myspace" are well-known platforms, called: "social media" or "social communities." Lots of economically motivated sites or inclusions are present on these platforms. We have no public surveys on the influence of sites produced with economic motives.

Nevertheless these social media are more and more important on the Internet as communities and as tools for developing public opinion. And they are available for all users and their opinions. In Europe, companies started recently to understand that it could be important to observe the feedback of users on social media. "BP America—for example and, well-known in the U.S.—created a site on Facebook after the oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. They tried to

explain the disaster and to win readers' understanding of their position, sadly too late. There were already a dozen of other sites about BP, but with completely different content, with different interests and different aims: with criticism, questions, and scoffing filmlets.

These sites – made and circulated mainly by young people – may be funny in one or the other case but, they may give offense in others; in any case they are the expression of today's youth. Their meanings expressed on the Internet form a unique landscape and at the same time a wild scenery of opinions with a lot of possibilities to communicate in a vice versa, reciprocal way.

3. Social Media as platforms for ethical and religious content

Let us make the following note: Digital natives discuss politics and economy in the open space of social media. Digital natives take their time to exchange with others even if this is not a question of a particular generation. Whoever is on social media takes part in this kind of discussion; it is a question of "social media culture." They discuss in social media, on platforms defined by topics, by emotions, by life-styles and so on and open for everyone.

Immediately the question arises how to consider this flood of conversations. Do digital natives understand the same things with the same words as other digital natives? As other people on the Internet? As people who don't communicate via Internet? I guess this is a context of pluralism, perhaps comparable to the communication on the ancient agora. It is right that only on the former agora did equal citizens deliberate on political and social questions important to Athens. What is comparable is that people who are able to understand each other in a face-to-face conversation with an approximately comparable horizon and open to the ways of thinking of others should also be able to understand Internet contributions. People who are firmly rooted in their specific social milieu and its way of thinking and understanding will probably not understand what other milieus are talking about. But this is an experience of daily life: who understands what others mean? There is an offered opportunity to clarify by asking

questions and providing answers. But it is never clear if Internet users do understand each other or not. A smile icon at the end of a sentence, for example, can be a hint to emphasize how the author meant what s/he wrote: ironic? serious? But even if the author's intention were clear, one could not be sure that the addressee would really understand. In real life, I observed discussions in which people were continuously sorting out what they meant and others did not grasp the idea. So real understanding of what the other meant is a complex process in real life as well as on the Internet. There is no guarantee of understanding.

And I would accentuate again: we are concerned with people's communication on the Internet. This communication does not concern people themselves. An example: on Twitter an abbot from Switzerland constantly posts his thoughts and opinions; he tells of his every day life, the difficulties he has, what he is doing next. Astonishingly: more than three thousand young people who read his tweets (short-messages) are touched by them and follow him. He expresses his thoughts and impressions two lines per two lines in a very simple but comprehensible language. There you can read, for example: "This week pilgrimage of Gypsies. I'll visit their locations. They are less protected than we are." Or: "Tempest left obviously large damage in the monastery. Holidays cancelled." And: "Every day I have again and again a date with the boss ;-)." These messages communicate his thoroughness as a clergyman, but stay open for the reactions of the users.

Although we know how difficult it is for the clergy in Europe to signal presence on the Internet and to get the attention that these short contributions show, even a clergyman is able to adjust his language skills for a specific public and to reach it. He writes his two line contributions to reach young people. This is possible on an Internet platform not specifically designed for young people. The abbot has numerous reactions to his postings, such as existential questions and religious opinions, and he answers them with his religious thoughts. It is like pastoral care in digital space.

As to the language on Internet chats, it is short. The vocabulary is small. Users create new words, combine words into new ones, the

spelling is often somewhat strange for people who are used to writing, and the syntax is easier than the written one – such as mine in this lecture. The language on the Internet is definitively more a spoken language than the written one people should have learned in school. This language is not stupid, but simplified; a language we are used to in everyday spoken language. It seems as if it were possible to let participate all these people who are able and want to understand this style of language, to accept it and to react to it.

As to the content of Internet contributions, it has to be of interest for young people. It has to meet them in the problems they are confronted with and they are thinking about. If you have a look at chat rooms, at blogs or at e-mails, digital natives discuss not only superficial issues. Of course, often you can observe a never-ending conversation without a specific aim and without a focused interest. But you can also find questions about serious topics young people are dealing with: their uncertain future, their situation as young employees, their worries about the environment or questions around an unwelcome birth or a welcome one, around an unwelcome death or a welcome one. These are questions about the meaning of life and how to manage it—these are ethical questions, not really the religious ones I was searching for, but religion is mainly based on ethics. Even if young people do not discuss explicitly religious questions, they deal with them—perhaps unconsciously—via the questions they have and the discussion about them. Young people look for a responsible life.

So, the communication on the Internet is not only for fun, it also contains discussions about serious problems young people may have. As I mentioned before, I did not find explicit discussions on religious matters. I found discussions about ethical matters. And these are often implicitly religious too.

4. Communication paralleled and synchronized

In Europe, television, radio, print media today – and churches too – work basically on one-way communications; the know-how and the knowledge is located at a fixed point, person or an authority. The audience is a consumer or

member. Still, in Europe, not too many years ago, the Internet was a one-way-communication too. It was like a digitalized copy of the broadcasting program, the aims of the organization, or the company guide-lines. Today the Internet, with its social media (such as Facebook and others) seems to be an example of civil society. It is not a top-down system, but a networked system – basically for content, with a lot of players in politics, economics, cultures, NGOs and specific and specialized enterprises. In my view it is astonishing that on YouTube a posted filmlet with religious content is visited by more than 34 million users (Handel's Messiah in a supermarket). Political changes such as democratic processes and ecological interventions are more and more supported successfully by social media-interventions.

This system functions only as a multi-way, interactive system and as a system of permanent “synchronization.” Digital natives today are organized and are working in exactly that way, parallel and synchronized. Let me give an example of this parallel system and of networked synchronization using the Internet. During a World Cup match in South Africa: It was possible to get information about current players and about their home bases and their families. It was possible to watch the last episode of the Simpsons, which showed a scene about racism. It was possible to google (e.g. on the website of *Wikipedia*) news about Nelson Mandela's life, because he was one of the famous guests at the soccer evening. And not excluded: It was possible to do homework for the next school day while chatting with friends on Facebook. And let me mention again: It was a parallel situation, but it was the one and only happening during this period of time. This is not a theory; it is a real life description of the country I live in.

For digital natives all this is normal: To be online, to consume online, to find solutions online only, to discuss in online social media often synchronized with others and at the same time to be present on different platforms. It's something else, the way digital natives are able to recognize what a situation means, to be a part of a community. For many users to be networked seems to mean: “it's just great” and they enjoy and consume. For others, the Internet offers other possibilities.

5. To share, to collaborate and, to create

There is no one in the Internet who would define general rules or could specify instructions; and this is a fascinating fact, especially for young people. Everyone can be his or her own author. Everyone can edit and publish anything, for example: After 9/11, a 21-year-old man (Eli Pariser) created an online community against the violent reaction of the U.S. Administration; this community developed to a protest group (moveon.org), now a half-million strong. Eli Pariser visibly spoke for a great number of people.

On the Internet young people can *share*. It is possible to share their own know-how, products, experiences, emotions, nonsense, and opinions with others. The Internet is really like the ancient agora where even young people are basically respected partners. Social media are really open for everything on one hand for serious discussions on the other for humoristic slapsticks and for nonsense, too. Often you can't see the difference – sense and nonsense are merging. For example, there is a short movie on YouTube, produced by some professional actors, of a slapstick parody in a conference-room. This movie shows the BP oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico shown as a business meeting in which the actors are fighting against spilled coffee without any solution. It's only a slapstick indeed, but it stimulates a moment of political discussion. There are a lot of serious comments written beneath, shared by over ten million users. I don't expect that this movie helps to find solutions for the Gulf of Mexico, but obviously it initiates a sensitivity to and discussion of questions about the environment.

On the Internet young people can *collaborate*. Collaborate means: To develop papers, software, political or ethical statements, presentations in real time, alone or as groups. Other young people read and think about these presentations and put their reactions as answers on the Internet. So it is possible to intensify the commitment on the Internet. Young people find different forms of participation between just consuming content up to constructing recommendations for behavior.

Nevertheless, the question arises: Do young people have time to commit to something? One year ago, I examined the Forrester research about participation of users on the Internet (2010). The results were: ninety percent are consuming, nine percent are communicating and only one percent is creative on the Internet. Today the same online survey service declares: thirty-three percent are communicating and twenty-four percent are creating. These results seem to be unbelievable; are they credible? I don't know. Also, each study could be completed in the way the researcher wants, and with suggested targets formulated by the institution who paid for it. Anyway, even if the results of this research and its evaluation opens only a perspective, it may prove that the Internet and its use is changing constantly.

6. Structure of social media, structure of religious communication

Let me close my paper with the following thoughts: For organizations with a top down view such as churches, at least in Europe – I see one current question: If an "authority" is convinced it knows what the truth is, is convinced it knows what life means, is convinced it is the one and only ethical authority, there will not be communication on the Internet about religion and there will not be religious discussions with young people or between young people. These seem to be the main points churches have to think about in the near future. Churches will only reach young people when they learn to deal with problems young people have and when they learn to reach them in their reality. Young people need open systems of communication; this holds also true for communication about religious questions. Young people need partners not involved in a top-down system, such as churches, but committed in a dialogue where they are on an equal level as partners.

For organizations like churches in Europe this means, first of all to discuss their petrified top-down structures and come to a more flexible and more audience oriented attitude. Second, to go to the "agora," to observe the "marketplace," to choose what is obvious to do, and to verify what is evident for the society and to consider what is possible to offer as current "religious

products.” To understand what the current topics of the users are, and as a result, to learn to see the world with the eyes of the users, this is the consequence of being a part of social media.

Finally, churches should learn to be equal partners in the main topics of the global society. Churches aren't omniscient; but they have a

long and important tradition to question, and question until answers are given by the people. This seems to me to be the way European churches (I refer to the Protestant churches) should enter into and maintain a dialogue with young people – especially mobilized via the possibilities the Internet offers.

Notes

- ¹ The idea of 'agora' follows the concept developed at the beginning of the 'agora thinking' in ancient Greece.
- ² The Bertelsmann foundation RELIGION MONITOR is an instrument that looks at the issues of religion and faith to an unprecedented degree. It was developed by religious scientists, sociologists, psycho-logists and theologians and was first employed in 2007.

In a representative survey, 21,000 people from all continents and world religions were asked about their views on the world and the meaning of life, their religious practices and notions of God. The project will be repeated and expanded at regular intervals in order to carry out and produce an empirical study of the development of religiousness.

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Communication Possibilities in Religious Pedagogy: The Austrian Protestant Diaspora in Times of Media Networking

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1. Introduction – two observations

What would Vienna be without its coffee shops? I am in one of those cafes on the “Ringstraße”, deeply involved in a conversation. At the next table a person is talking to someone as well, at least according to her expressions and gestures, but to whom and why?

In front of her is a laptop, the secret is disclosed: Skype and webcam are the key to her communication. The exclusiveness of face-to-face communication is broadened by the possibility of virtual reality. The digital world has found its way into coffee shops.

Two primary school children are sitting in front of a computer. They are trying out Google for the first time, searching for pictures and texts. Supervised by a teacher they are allowed to try out new things. Soon they find information about the topic “horse” and they like it a lot. A bit later they find pictures about “Michael Jackson” and they are shocked. The two students approach the teacher and discuss their horror.

Thesis:

These two examples of daily communication can show us how natural the digital world has become for people of all age groups. At the same time we need clear borders – especially for teenagers. The process of talking and communication with the goal of mutual action can be furthered through the use of virtual reality.

2. Abstract of the talk

In Austria, Protestants live in a society mainly shaped by Roman Catholicism. Protestants live under the condition of diaspora. The *historical background* explains the development of this

situation – especially according to the situation of Protestant Religious Education nowadays.

In the educational field, methods of communication are of major importance for the cooperation between students and school administration. The question must be posed: what kind of help can be offered by digital connections (networks) and what potential dangers may be hidden in virtual realities? Methods of communication may have a lasting effect on processes in areas where society, the school system, the church and the school subject, “Protestant Religion,” overlap.

3. The term “diaspora“

The Greek term “diaspora“ originally means scattering and dispersion. It refers to the Jewish diaspora, Jewish people who live scattered in the Mediterranean area. In the context of the Bible, Paul used the term for Judeo-Christian or Christian minorities and church communities, which live in diaspora.

Today diaspora applies to religious minorities living in a country with a different religious majority, e.g. Austria, being mainly Roman Catholic. Approximately four per cent of the Austrian population belongs to the Protestant church (approx. 330,000 members).

4. Historical development – the beginning of Protestant life in Austria

The reformation as an intellectual and spiritual renewal movement would have been impossible without Johannes Gutenberg, who introduced modern book printing. In doing so, Martin Luther’s writings were spread all over Austria. The term “evangelic” is inseparable from the name of Martin Luther and implies the rediscovery

ery of the “Good News,” the New Testament. It’s important for all people to be able to read the stories of the Bible. Therefore, the freedom of conscience of each individual has highest priority and must be acknowledged. For this reason the Bible was translated from the original Hebrew and Greek texts, and not from Latin, into German. In 1522 the German translation of the New Testament was finished. In 1534, the entire Bible was translated.

In Austria, it was the beginning of an active Protestant life, including protestant preachers and its own school system. Via mail the Austrians kept in touch with Martin Luther in Wittenberg. In 1498/99, Huldrych Zwingli, one of the most important reformers of German speaking Switzerland, studied at the University of Vienna. (Born 1484; he died 1531. He was killed [quartered] in battle at the age of 47.)

The “Loosdorfer school rules,” published by Lower Austrian nobility, are classic examples of the attempt to develop Protestant Education. The church services are discussed in a separate agenda (“Chyträusagenda”). The majority of Austria was sympathetic to Protestantism at that time. The development of a structure for the Protestant national church was impossible due to lack of power. Initial attempts were stopped during the counter-reformation. From 1520 onwards, Protestants were persecuted, being turned over to the inquisition and killed.

During the counter-reformation, Protestants in alpine regions were either forced to leave the country or to reconvert to the Roman Catholic Church and fully accept their teachings (e.g. expulsions from several regions of Austria: Salzburg, Defreggental and Zillertal). An example for the persecution of this heresy in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church can be found in a painting on the dome of St. Charles’s Church in Vienna: Martin Luther is displayed surrounded by thunderclouds, writing a biblical text. This text falls into hell and an angel sets fire to it.

The response to this persecution was a period of secret Protestantism. Protestant life was secret and hidden, with high personal danger, and at the risk of one’s own life.

Thesis:

The invention of modern book printing was an educational revolution. Suddenly new ways of education were possible for all members of society. In this ‘Zeitgeist’ (spirit of the age), the reformation came to be. Today’s networking through a digital basis is similar: new media makes communication faster and personal individuality possible. The question remains: who’s taking advantage of it?

4.1. Historical development – on the way to equality and acceptance

The year 1781 was a turning point for Protestantism in Austria. Joseph II enabled the tolerance of non-Catholic religious minorities, e.g. Lutheran and Reformed Protestants. The Edict of Tolerance didn’t bring equality, but was the first step in the right direction on the way to the “Protestantengesetz” (Protestant's law) 1961.

During this first period of tolerance, education was closely connected with the foundation of Protestantism. Examples include the so-called “tower schools” in Burgenland. Some villages built schools in towers instead of churches or religious meeting houses. Classes took place during the week. Church services were held on Sundays.

For the land reclamation of inner alpine valleys (logging), Protestant lumberjacks were hired. They, too, wanted both: education and church. Reading and writing skills became basic requirements for the Protestant life.

Finally the “Protestantengesetz” brought full acceptance by the state and a regulation of religious education in Austrian public schools (slogan: “free church in a free state”). In comparison, Islam was awarded state recognition in 1912, LDS Church in 1955, and Jehovah’s Witnesses just recently in 2010.

Thesis:

On the long path to equal rights, communication and education have been constitutive components. Education processes through communication are the basis of Protestant iden-

tity, not as a borderline, but as an interoperable opening for new dialogues. A broader range of rhetorical and communicative competences are enabled by digital media.

5. Structure of Protestant religious education

Members of official religions must be registered as such. All churches and religious communities which are recognised by the state, have the right to Religious Education funded by the government. The details are regulated by the law of Religious Education (“Religionsunterrichtsgesetz”).

The curriculum for Protestant Religious Education in various types of schools is made by the church and authorized by the state. These curricula are centered around the individual’s own critical self-reflection of his/her own personal religious experience.

The state enables and funds Protestant Religious Education. Teacher training and teacher’s appointments are organized by the church. The education officers of the church are responsible for the content taught; organizational problems concern the head offices at school. Religious Education is compulsory for members of the respective church or publicly recognized religious communities. Within the first five days of a new school year, it is possible to drop the subject. While students under 14 need the permission and signature of their parents to deregister, older students are considered religiously mature enough to make their own decision. Students who are not members of any recognized religion are allowed to attend Religious Education classes.

A minimum of three students means a paid lesson; when a group exceed nine students, a second period per week is funded. Because of this, a teacher only knows five days after school begins how many periods he/she will be teaching and with how many students. The ideal situation enables religion lessons within a grade level. In the worst case, students of different ages and grade levels are put together. The lessons are held either first thing in the morning or in the evening. Naturally, it is possible to do the graduation exams (“Matura”) in Religious Education

and to write a scientific paper in lieu of one of the final exams.

Thesis:

Protestant Religious Education cannot ignore the topic of digital networking. It is a useful research source for Protestant students and for applying certain topics of the syllabus. Digital networking can’t replace face-to-face contact as the most important communication tool with school administration and students.

6. Methods of rhetorical communication and digital networking in connection with Religious Education at school

6.1. Meeting students

For the teacher, it is important to interest students enough so that they will not deregister from Religious Education, and at the same time, to win the interest of students who are unaffiliated with religious denominations. Personal conversations can help. Therefore, the first days of a school year are like an advertising campaign for Religious Education.

In all Religious Education situations, careful planning regarding topics needs to be taken into consideration. A case in point would be the fact that the topics discussed will be different for thirteen-year-old teenagers compared to grown up students in an evening school, which has been noted by developmental psychologists.

Here it is necessary to involve topics of religious education in an assuring – not persuasive way – and to keep up the acceptance and appreciation for the student at the same time. If this works there will be lots of possibilities for communicative lessons involving critical thinking.

One successful example: A young woman who attends my class wanted to know the meaning of “evangelic.” At first I didn’t give her an answer. Instead, I asked her what motivated her to attend Protestant Religious Education. She started telling me about her life. In the following years, the young woman wasn’t in my class an-

ymore. One year before the general qualification for university entrance (Matura), she returned. Full of enthusiasm she told me that I was the only teacher who took her seriously as a person. As a consequence, she did the final oral exam in Religion and we worked on religious topics from a Protestant point of view. Later she asked me to conduct her wedding ceremony and to baptise her first child. The quality of personal dialogues and relationship skills as the basis for rhetorical communication opens the door to successful teaching and continuing student interest and participation in Religious Education.

Since the groups of students are rather small in Protestant Religious Education, it is even possible to communicate via e-mail. This form of communication is useful for the preparation of student talks concerning grades and final exams.

By now, all schools in Austria have their own websites. If it is possible to present Protestant Religious Education there (e.g. topics, details about the teacher in charge, etc.), it would be good publicity for the subject. Personal communication can be supplemented by the digital world. The digital network makes information accessible in advance prior to face-to-face communication in class. Some schools operate already that way; very often it is still in the beginning phase.

During classroom time, work on computers and Internet research are possible. Often the students want to go to the computer lab. Religious Education is a place to practice responsibility and freedom or in the words of the Apostle Paul "law and Good News" ("Gesetz und Evangelium").

Students should find out for themselves what they are able to do and which sites on the Net they understand and find useful. However, there are some taboo topics such as, pornographic, sexist, and Nazi topics; these should be forbidden.

The result of such a lesson is that students learn how to handle search engines. They get trained in doing research about religious topics on the Net under the guidance of a teacher. If pupils come across a webpage that is disgusting

or inappropriate, the teacher has to intervene. Students feel as though they are being taken seriously. The religious topics with reference to "law and Good News" can be integrated into the personal horizon of experience.

6.2 Encounter with school administration

Especially in technical schools, the Religious Education classes are viewed critically. Though the legal situation is clear, Religious Education is not integrated into daily school routine. In this case a very sensitive way of communicating is necessary to awaken solidarity amongst principals and colleagues. Communication is taking place through digital networking, exchange of information, time planning, time tables, e-learning and entering grades (into grids).

The timetable for Protestant Religion is set after the definite number of students is fixed. The general timetable has already been fixed by that time. The job of the Religious Education teacher is to intervene in a sensitive way to make sure that Religious Education is not always scheduled in the first and last periods. The same thing applies for school services and inter-religious celebrations.

Teachers of Religious Education are also very often needed in crisis situations at school. For example, in emergency situations such as in the event of death or drug abuse, competences like listening attentively and being able to conduct a conversation are required. Digital networking does not work in cases like these. It is only one way of exchanging less personal and emotional information.

Another example shows the importance of communicative networking as a secondary form of communication connected with E-media: a practical example is "Evening High School for Employed People" in one quarter of Vienna. There is very little interest in Religious Education; the number of students is continuously dropping. I decided to stop working at that school and sought a meeting with the principal. My aim was to hand back in the keys and quit my job at that school. After a long talk, I decided to stay at the school and I became a form teacher. In addition to that, I am participating in a

school pilot project to establish “Rhetoric and Communication” as a school subject. Further developments include articles about Religious Education laws in some school publications and the launch of a church related homepage.

6.3 Meeting with church school authorities and further teacher training

A few years ago it was a difficult process to assign teachers to schools: letters and never ending discussions during staff meetings were needed. For this process the world of E-media is a great advantage. Ready made word documents and PDF-files make the information and the assignment to schools more transparent and exact. E-mails and adequate websites enable a better and faster exchange of information between church, school and society. Newsletters play an important role as well: information can be passed on to all colleagues within a certain period of time.

The program and applications for further teacher trainings for teachers of Religious Education was shifted to a digital and electronic system. The trainings for mentor teachers work with e-learning, online learning tools, e.g. Moodle platforms to supplement course material. Tasks can be accomplished in group work and within peer groups.

Thesis:

Successful communication in school is dependant upon open dialogues between the people involved. Therefore, attentiveness and esteem are required. Especially in the situation of a religious minority like the Protestants in Austria, this type of open communication might become a starting point to move beyond just being tolerated towards equality and cooperative teamwork concerning school life.

With digital networking it is possible to achieve sustained success, if respect and appreciation during the communicative process (“analog and digital” in a manner of speaking) can be felt by all participants.

7. Digital networking as improvement of the quality of Religious Education

7.1 At each school

The starting point is a school’s website. Introductions to Religious Education can show a short abstract including topics and methods. The Protestant Secondary School Donaustadt includes a picture and a short biography of the teacher there. In doing so, personal experience lowers inhibitions and can help enable successful communication.

There is a variety of possibilities for varied usage of digital networking in Religious Education. Online links could connect texts from the Bible, the Koran, and the Torah about interreligious topics. Articles from Christian Religious Education classes could be linked, in the sense of ecumenism, on the website. This could not only be used to explain the denom-inational separation of students, but all the opportunities for team teaching and cooperation in class, e.g. religious texts and pictures for meditation could be put on the website.

In addition, online platforms could be set up for students, in which small groups could work on religious topics within their grade level. The results of these projects could be displayed as well. The “news” section on the home page could be used for publicizing recent events and projects in Religious Education. The decision to take part in social networking has to be made by each individual teacher based on her/his personal opinions.

While participation in the digital network broadens the communicative spectrum, it also opens the door to misuse.

7.2 School authorities and teachers

There are official documents and teaching requirements provided by the Austrian state. There are also prerequisites for Religious Education. Here it would be helpful to link these two aspects, e.g. a separate homepage with the corresponding legal documents, curricula and teaching materials. Additionally, a list of all Religious Education teachers and the schools they work at could be provided, thus minimizing the

time spent searching for telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Such a digital connection could be linked to the official homepage of the Protestant Church in Austria. This could focus on swapping teaching ideas and teaching materials throughout Austria.

Teachers of Religious Education need to be able to communicate with their colleagues in a safe forum, e.g. a 'Coffee House' on a Moodle-platform. In addition to a monthly exchange, the digital connection would offer a secure area to discuss their emotions.

Additional aspects that should be mentioned are the terms "crisis" and "emergency" in a school context. This could develop into an "emergency data base" where a short summary of specific situations and possible responses is available. This could include bullying, death or questions about rituals found in schools. In dealing with such difficult questions, it is important that both digital communication and further teacher training opportunities are offered. The issues of rhetorical communication and digital communication must be connected here.

Another aspect is teacher training, for which the choices and offers of different institutions are

communicated and connected digitally as well. For those teachers who did not have any computer science courses at school and have to acquire computer skills on their own, it would be a sensible investment to provide teacher-training courses for them in the direction of the "European Computer Driving Licence (ICDL)."

Conclusion

Rhetoric and communication are essential tools for a religious minority in diaspora in relation to the interaction between schools, church and society. The requirements for communication skills are very high in the everyday running of schools. This model gives teachers of Religious Education the necessary inner strength to be able to deal with the great need for mobility and flexibility in schools. Digital communication and concepts of rhetoric and communication connect themselves to a necessary addition: on the one hand, it is necessary for Religious Education teachers to connect more closely; on the other hand, central pieces of information are accessible more easily. The hunger for education seen in the reformation period continues in the 21st century: communication and connections via media can thus be seen as a new reformatory stimulus in the area of Protestant Religious Education in Austria.

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The Psalm: Ethical and Critical Notes Referring to its Media History

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Structure:

1. Goal; 2. Psalms in Antiquity; 3. Psalms in the Middle Ages; 4. Psalms in the Modern Age and in the New Media; 5. Conclusion

1. Goal

1.1 In the beginning there was this one human being with his word, his prayer, his song. He murmured, spoke, sang, screamed, swore, blessed and prayed it: his suffering, his joy. Others recognized the expression of their own situation in it. They repeated the text – privately or in public. Thus, models and forms (psalms) are generated voicing out human basic experience and remaining valid for more than two millennia. We use numerous verbal expressions in our daily communication without thinking of the psalms from which they originated, such as, “From everlasting to everlasting” (Ps. 90) or “Wine pleases the heart of man: (Ps. 104). The rhetorical meaning of the psalms throughout the centuries lies in the fact, that they have been spoken and heard (orality), set to music and sung, written and read (literarity), and calligraphically designed, updated and digitally alienated (electronically) today. This begins with a song accompanied by a lyre (also harp), goes on with synagogical and later Gregorian responsorial psalms, Bach’s motets, goes to gospel singers, records, broadcasting and finally ends (temporarily) with performances on the Internet.

In some notes (1-5) the media history of psalms, using the examples of selected psalms, shall be illuminated.

1.2 Psalms have arisen between the 10th and the third century before Christ. From their original cultic place in life they “wandered” into

religion and developed their own forms and genres. They are religious prayers and songs of and to Yahweh (God); (for glossolalia, the ‘speaking in tongues’ from God to the human, see Barthel 2009).

Psalms can be considered as poems, that is, in the “parallelismus membrorum” created texts. Their distinguishing mark is that their second verse expresses a similar thought to the first one. The rhyme is unknown. But other rhetorical means can be found, e.g. alliterations, puns or the beginning of each verse with a word that begins with a letter in alphabetical order. In the broader sense psalms indicate not only clerical songs and psalm poetry, but also music compositions.

The comprehensive cultural-rhetorical meaning of the psalms appears here again: they are significant in the history of life and religiousness, and they are the intersection of the liturgy and poetry. A broad analysis shows that psalms are defined by rhetorical forms, which display the fundamental speech acts such as praise, thanks, pleas, complaints, but also lessons and appeals (Schroeer 2005, col. 401).

Psalms can be coarsely differentiated into seven basic categories, according to structure and function: lament, plea, praise, thanks, Zions, Kings and wisdom psalms (Zenger 2005, col. 396f.). The Hebrew Text as well as the Septuaginta (and its follower, the Vulgata) combines 150 psalms – of different sources and times – in the (biblical) “Book of Psalms,” the “Psalter.” The Greek word “Psalter” goes back to a stringed instrument, a standing lyre (Hossfeld/Zenger 1993, 3). On the one hand the texts of the Psalter want to be read and understood as single texts; on the other hand they are also part of more sizable “psalm groups,” or rather the whole

psalm book. (But psalms can also be found in other, frequently structurally outstanding places of the Bible, for example in the Song of Solomon, in the King's and prophet's books.) For poets and musicians, the Psalter has always served as a source of inspiration.

1.3 Basic hypothesis: The responsible handling of (selected) psalms shows the history of reception and attitudes of people. Referring to these notes the handling shall be reflected in (selected) psalm performances, this means in visual, musical and/or rhetorical communications. Thus, the notes try to demonstrate how people deal with psalms in a visual, musical and/or rhetorical manner.

1.4 Methodically seen, a synthesis in a new time-related frame is taken: It is precisely the synthesis of acoustic and optic culture, that is a co-existence and a cooperation of "mute" texts to

be read on the one hand, and of pictures and sound as well as action on the other hand. A pattern of criteria for the usability of psalm performances should help to comprehend the psalms' media history better – from the biblical chanting song (accompanied by instruments) via the acoustic "tribal culture" of the Middle Ages and the constricted one channel typographic culture of the (early) Modern Age to the multi-channel culture of the new media today (McLuhan quoted from Küpper 2008, 432f.).

Being committed to the basic idea of a social-pragmatic "Ethics of Dialogic" results in the claim to 'truthfulness', 'correctness' and 'responsibility' (Geißner 1995, 443 and 449f.).

The following pattern then shows the "Tools of Rhetoric," with whose help the psalm performances – according to their ethical dimension – can be analyzed and interpreted:

	Contents of the psalm performance	Design of the psalm performance	Structure of the psalm performance
(Ethical) claim for veracity, i.e. considering the dialogue	(not) fulfilled	(not) fulfilled	(not) fulfilled
(Ethical) claim for correctness/truth of the "things" displayed	(not) fulfilled	(not) fulfilled	(not) fulfilled
(Ethical) claim for liability, i.e. acceptance of perspective ("You-orientation")	(not) fulfilled	(not) fulfilled	(not) fulfilled

Chart: Pattern of criteria for the "usefulness" of psalm performances (based on Geißner 1995 and Küpper 2008, 473-484)

1.5 The following notes (2-4) cover psalm performances of the Antiquity (1000 B.C. – 4th century), Middle Ages (4th – 15th century) and the Modern Age (15th – 20th/ 21st century).

2. Psalms in Antiquity

2.1 For the description and interpretation of the psalm performances in early Antiquity, the

Deuteronomistic and the Chronistic Works of History – beside archeological materials – are available. The following notes are based on psalm 15 and 150, respectively. Hereby, this section introduces King David (around 10th century B. C.) as an initiator of the cultic music and Hieronymus' "Commentarioli in Psalmos" (Engl. "Notes on the Psalter") as well as musical performances (performance practice); (for the exist-

ence of a psalmodic practice in the early synagogue see 3.2).

2.2 Psalm 15 “LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary [...]” presumably comes from the time after exile, that means after 539 B. C.

Psalm 15
A psalm of David

¹ LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary?
Who may live on your holy hill?

² He whose walk is blameless
and who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth from his heart

³ and has no slander on his tongue,
who does his neighbor no wrong
and casts no slur on his fellowman,

⁴ who despises a vile man
but honors those who fear the LORD,
who keeps his oath
even when it hurts,

⁵ who lends his money without usury
and does not accept a bribe against the innocent.
He who does these things
will never be shaken.

(New International Version 1984,
www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm 15&version=NIV1984)

It is mostly interpreted as a ‘liturgical form’ (e. g. Groß/Reinelt 1978, 83; Krauss 1961, 111; Schneider 1995, 113). As usual in the old oriental cult it is about a kind of ‘exchange talk in three acts’:

1. Question of the pilgrims in front of the temple gate to enter the sanctuary of Jerusalem (v. 1);
2. Answer of the (Levitic) gatekeeper who introduces a number of conditions (v. 2-5c);
3. Acceptance/Promise spoken by a priest (v. 5de) (Zenger 2005, 40).

The main point of the answer lies in the preservation of human dignity and integrity as well as in law and truth (Weber 2001, 95), in the ‘truthful speech out of nobleness’ (v. 2b; Hossfeld 1993, 107) and in the fellow human ethos (v. 3b – see second mosaic table of the Decalogue; Deissler 1964, 67). “This strong accentuation of the moral accounts for the inner highness of the simple psalm” (Gunkel 1986, 48). The ethical claims should be reflected in its performances.

2.3 King David (title in psalm 15) is almost the true Israelite, the representative of obedience to the commandments of God (Torah) (Weber 2001, 94).



David Playing the Harp, Jan de Bray, 1670

According to 2 Samuel 6, 5 the obtaining of the ark took place at the planned foundation of the temple with music and the cultic dance of King David. According to psalm 33, 2-3 and psalm 92, 2-4 an established ensemble of cultic instruments seemed to have existed. The most interesting information is found in psalm 150 “Praise God in his sanctuary [...]”.

Psalm 150

¹ Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.

² Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.

³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,

⁴ praise him with tambourine and dancing,
praise him with the strings and flute,

⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the
LORD.
Praise the LORD.

(New International Version-UK;
<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%20150&version=NIVUK>)

The literary structure of the psalm corresponds to the temple structure: First God is praised with horns (trumpets) outside of the temple building. Musicians with harp (also lyre, psaltery) and zither follow at the margin of the atrium. In the atrium of the laymen the women praise God with kettledrums (frame drums) and dancing. Professional musicians strike up with stringed instruments. The people make noise with cymbals (According to Seidel 1994, 443).

During the Hellenic-Roman Age (3rd – 1st century B.C.), David is considered as the most important music organizer, as poet of psalms and songs as well as a builder of music instruments (Seidel, 444).

2.4 Hieronymus (ca. 347 – 419/20) wrote the “*Commentarioli in Psalmos*” between 386 and 388. The attraction of this psalm explanation lies in the fact that it only consists of short notes. For example, Hieronymus gives these notes on Psalm 15 (LXX and Vulgata; Ps. 14):

3d *Et obprobrium non accepit adversus proximos suos. Numquam a suis vicinis quasi noxius accusatur.*

4b *Timentes autem I Dominum magnificat. Non divites glorificat, non potentes: sed eos tantum qui Dominum timent.*” (Hieronymus 2005, 106)

(“3d *And abuse against his next he did not accept. Never is he indicted guilty by his neighbors.*”

4b *But those who fear the Lord, he praises. Not the rich he praises, not the mighty, but only those who fear the Lord”* (translated from Latin).

Hieronymus compares his action with that of a cartographer who describes the position of countries and towns drawing a few lines and signs on a small board and thus provides a survey over extended areas. The notes do not only offer explanations to understand the psalm texts, but also clues of the theological thinking and the debate with the heretics of this time (Risse 2005, 7, 23 and 54ff.).

2.5 Interpretation of the psalm performances in Antiquity

There were professional musicians inside as well as outside the cult. Only men were cult musicians. They played the lyre, the harp and – in the time after exile – the cymbal. As the psalm titles say, the musicians commanded a stock of texts and performance sessions. The poetical structure of the psalms implies a liturgical exchange song and a responsorial exchange between a chorister / cantor and the choir / community. The community answered with calls and acclamations like “Amen,” “Hallelujah,” “Forever lasts his faithfulness” and similar things. The musicians were able to accompany the song with instruments. The psalm titles contain little information about the practice of the performances (Seidel 1994, 445). That is why the psalm performances cannot be assessed.

In contrast to more detailed comments, the notes of Hieronymus demand more meditation from the reader. The reader is not guided along the text of the psalms, but will rather be put at one particular spot and has to unlock the context with the help of the short note (Risse 2005, 7). Thus, the translator, commentator and theologian Hieronymus fulfills the (ethical) claim of liability, i.e. acceptance of perspectives (“You-orientation”).

3. Psalms in the Middle Ages

3.1 Before the interpretation of psalm performances in the Middle Ages, the psalmodian

practice in the early synagogue has to be addressed to understand the basis of the Gregorian choral.

3.2 Psalmodia marks the musical presentations (cantillation) of the psalms and psalm sounds in the Old and New Testaments (Praßl 2003, col. 1785). As newer ethno-musicological research prove, the Hebrew psalmodia already was positioned in the synagogue at the time of the 2nd temple (21 B. C.) (Adler/Flender 1994, 448). The reciting of the psalms belonged to a broadly anchored custom among the Jewish people, being hardly bound to a fixed liturgical context. As the Torah and prophet reading, the psalmodia is a specific form of the chanting song of the holy scripts. Its most important structural reciting elements are: rising melody (initium), the tenor to recite the psalm, turn in the half cadence (mediato) and descent to the final cadence (finalis) of the psalm form (Michels 1997, 163 and 181).

3.3 Around the year 400 all of the (responso-rial and antiphonal) forms and presentations of the psalmodia were already developed, which were to be constitutive for the later Gregorian choral. (Harden 2007, 19) The Latin liturgical singing, still practiced today in the Catholic Church, is named after Pope Gregory I (590-604).

The basic idea of the Gregorian choral consists in the fact that each liturgical “station” is allocated to a specific “variation” of choral music play in the masses. Thus each of the ritual services gets its own distinctive course profile. In its entirety the Gregorian choral displays a highly complex architecture of great variety and balance (Harden 2007, 22).

Excursus:

Orlando di Lasso (1532-1594), the most famous composer of the High Renaissance (!), has gained fame with a cycle of seven extensive motets, whose texts are psalms (6, 31, 37, 101, 129 and 142). They have been felt as a group of repentance texts belonging together since the time of the late Antiquity.

Each page of the choir books (with the psalm motets) was equipped with gorgeous miniatures by the Munich painter Hans Mielich, which ranks among the most important of illumination from the 16th century (see also Leuchtmann/Schaefer 1994).

3.4 Interpretation of the psalm performances in the Middle Ages

The rhetorical meaning of the Gregorian Age lies in its originally public meaning. The acquisition of the manner of social publication (performances) serves primarily the conveying of the “message” and gives this vocal music not only an edifying and laudative sense, but also public sense (ethical claim to truthfulness, talkability). At the same time, the psalmodia allows the text its own right. Psalmodia is not the art of expression, but rather a non-sacral form and function in itself, using the eight psalm sounds (Schroeer 2005, col. 404).

About 1455, the first large printing of the “42-line Bible” of Johann Gutenberg is published. The book printing quickly spreads throughout Europe and opens up unimagined new options of education and teaching.

4. Psalms in the Modern Age and in the New Media

4.1 There are manifold documents in literature and music for the depiction and interpretation of the psalm performances in the Modern Age and new media. Pluralism in every way is characteristic... (Krieg 1994, 483).

4.2.1 Examples from the Modern Age

- 16th century: Martin Luther has exposed (Vorreden zur Bibel, WA DB 10, 1, 102) the rhetorical meaning of the psalms affectively referring to God and faith: “Da siehest du allen Heiligen ins Herz, wie in den Tod, ja wie in die die Hölle [...] Also auch wo sie von Furcht und Hoffnung reden, brauchen sie solche Worte, dass dir kein Maler also könnte die Furcht oder Hoffnung abmalen [...]”. (“You look into all the saints’ hearts, like you look at death,

just like you look into hell [...] Thus, even if they speak of fruit and hope, they need such words, that no painter could depict [...]; translated from German.) (See also Luther's abstract for psalm 15 in WA 38, 23, 1-8.)

Since the Reformation, the psalm has belonged to the most used literary forms (Kurz 1997, 259). That was to be reflected in numerous musical compositions...

- 17th century: e. g. Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672), "Aus der Tiefe ruf ich, Herr, zu Dir [...]" (cp. 18th century, Bach), psalm 130 from: Psalms of David; Johann Rosenmüller (around 1619-1684), "Vespro della beata Vergine."
- 18th century: e. g. Johann S. Bach (1685-1750), "Aus der Tiefe ruf ich, Herr, zu Dir [...]," a setting of psalm 130 from BWV 131 (1707/08), *De Profundis*.

Dingeman van Wijnen (2001, 272f.) wrote about this work of one of the greatest composers in music history:

The 'Aus der Tiefe' theme is present at once in the orchestral introduction, and is then sung many times in ever changing combinations of voices. The word 'Rufe' gets long sustaining notes. A vivace follows, homophonous at first, then with separate voices singing a prayer to God, with the word 'Flehens' effectively set. Then it is andante again, a recitative-like aria with chorale, the two texts commenting on each other as usual in such combinations. The next chorus once again starts with chords on 'Ich harre des Herrn' followed by intense climbing figures for alto and tenor and then a delightfully long fugue. The next duet 'Meine Seele wartet' combines free verse and a chorale again, indicating that what we are waiting for, is to be washed clean from our sin. The final chorus has the by now familiar homophonous entry, three dramatic cries of 'Israel!', followed by an allegro and another adagio with a beautiful oboe melody, then another allegro and then a double fugue with long runs on 'erlösen' and chromatic steps on 'Sünden'.

With the Enlightenment, Idealism and Classicism, a next step in the media history of the psalm unfolds. Poetry takes over the function of religious edification with a detached attitude towards the church (perhaps in the sense of Goethe's secular gospel). Odes and hymns are written; F. G. Klopstock, F. Hölderlin and F. L. Novallis offer explicit examples.

- 19th century: e. g. Franz Lachner (1803-1890), psalm 15 from sacred choir works; Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1849), "Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied [...]", psalm 98.

After Romanticism there was a restraint, but in the Expressionism the genre of psalm poetry (without the necessity to rhyme) is newly discovered and used in many cases up to the present.

- 20th century: Paul K. Kurz (1978 and 1997) published excellent anthologies of such psalm poetry. A distinctive example is Bertolt Brecht (quoted by Schroeder 2005, col. 403), noting: "I have to write psalms again, the rhyming delays too much." The free rhymes as a new poetical alternative further this tendency. Strongly involved is always the poetry of Jewish tradition, even if some of the poets (E. Lasker-Schüler; N. Sachs) clearly avoid the genre name, but virtually write psalms all the same. One highlight is P. Celan's often-quoted psalm "Nobody forms us again." I. Bachmann and P. Huchel also created poems with the title "Psalm" of the highest standard. The changes in the literary situation are shown in the "Tutzinger Poem Circle" (1951) by M. L. Kaschnitz. New texts are taking over the psalm poetry in an alienating style. Also, the psalm poems of K. Marti, E. Eggimann and Th. Bernhard are phrased poetically insistent. Even if abandoning the title "Psalm," poetical closeness comes up, e. g. in P. Handke's poem "In the length of time." The function incumbent on the *ornatus* in the rhetoric, performs the music in the (Lutheran)

church song... (Schroeer 2005, col. 403f.): e. g. Mahalia Jackson, "The Lord is my shepherd [...]", psalm 23; Bob Marley, "Rivers of Babylon [...]", psalm 137.

4.2.2 Two examples from the 21st century (new media)

- Volker Eigenbrod, (www.psalmen.de). Here you can read and listen to the biblical psalms, interpreted by V. Eigenbrod.
- "The Psalm Project," (www.psalmenprojekt.de). In the psalm project, famous artists like Eva Mattes (actress), Xavier Naidoo (pop artist), Florian Sitzmann (live-keyboarder, lecturer), and others sing and speak psalms.

4.3 Interpretation of psalm performances in Modern Age and in the new media

When it comes to an interpretation of literature and music in the Modern Age, due to the quantity of psalm performances, numerous moments have to be considered... It can be roughly stated, that from the 16th to the 20th century, there is very impressive evidence of the responsible handling of psalms. In Internet performances of the 21st century, the "psalmists" sometimes encounter the limits of their own finiteness, and the "psalmists" show their search for identity detecting an 'absurd' world, whose meaning fades at the margins into something unrecognizable (B. Russel quoted from Krieg 1994, 492). Thus, very often the "usefulness" of psalm performances seems to be not fulfilled!

5. Conclusion

These notes have illuminated the media history of selected psalms throughout Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Modern Age. Since the data presented here are not representative of the Psalms in their entirety, the analysis of the chosen psalm performances cannot verify the beginning thesis (see 1. 3). Nevertheless, the first results of the analysis show rudimentarily, how the history of the reception and attitudes of the people shows itself in the (not always) responsible handling of psalms. This can serve as a preliminary study for a larger investigation of the media history of the psalms. Future studies could investigate how stronger still artistic music has been influenced by the psalms (20th century: P. Tschaikowski; A. Bruckner; M. Reger; I. Stravinski; K. Pederecki; L. Bernstein; K. Stockhausen et al.). The relationship between liturgy and concert, cult and poetry would also be emphatically recognizable, as in poetry. (Schroeer 1997, 635).

It should have been understood, that every single psalm passed down to us has to be heard and read out of its history of origins: out of a long and broad (oral and written) prehistory, at whose end, perhaps, the 'electronic revolution' (W. S. Burroughs) of the psalm is standing?

The importance of the psalm in the visual arts has hardly been explored yet, although there are strong samples for it as well. They are more than illustrations (e. g. the standard work "Das Buch der Psalmen: Ein Eschbacher Bilderpsalter in acht Bänden", ed. by Schmeisser 1990). The biblical psalms are prayers, songs, and texts from our own history: That is why they should be taken out of the religious niche and studied in their full sociocultural context, through the ages and in various media.

(Transl. by Sylvia Iden and Henner Barthel)

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How to Sell Wars

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This paper addresses the subject of “How to Sell Wars” will be addressed, delving most into the Gulf Wars II and III (the two wars conducted by the United States and its allies against Iraq), the wars in the Balkans in the 1990s and a short examination of the deployment of German Forces in Afghanistan.

1. Why must wars be sold?

On 17 March 1813 King Frederick William III of Prussia issued his appeal “to my people.” It was a call to arms for the struggle against Napoleon, a war of liberation, “...*It is the final, decisive struggle that we must endure, for the sake of our existence, our independence, our fortune. There is no way out except an honorable peace, or glorious defeat.*”¹ The proclamation appeared in the newspaper, the *Schlesische privilegierte Zeitung* of 20 March 1813.

It was the first time that a monarch communicated with his subjects about the reasons for conducting a war. The medium of communication was a newspaper. In this document Frederick-William III deviates from the previously accepted relationship between ruler and people. He does not command, rather he appeals to the decision-making capacity of his people. He was convinced that he needed the support of his people for this war and he sought to obtain it through the arguments in his appeal.²

To be sure, this manner of “selling” a war did not immediately establish itself as a universally recognized standard. Since the middle of the 20th century, however, Western governments, when they wish to achieve political goals through a war, have given the impression to wish to gain consensus among the organs of state power on which they base their legitimacy: that is, the people and the people’s elected representatives. They seem to follow the political requirement to

“justify their military interventions by reference to the world-wide fight for freedom and democracy.”³

To make a point very clearly at the beginning: This paper is neither out to determine, if the Gulf Wars involving the U.S. or the wars in the Balkans were justified from one side or another. Nor is it going to determine the question what is going to be more important: a free and independent press without censorship and governmental news-management or the protection of national security. Not that these questions are not worthy of serious consideration, but questions here go to the “how” rather than the “why”. In particular: how do political and military leaders try to obtain and maintain support for the wars they choose to wage, for whatever reason.

Using Harold Dwight Lasswell’s model of mass communications and his famous enumeration of the elements of this field of inquiry: Who (says) What (to) Whom (in) What Channel (with) What Effect, this paper focuses on the channel. What are the channels through which the message is transmitted by the political representatives? What are the organizational forms, the media techniques?

The other elements in Lasswell’s formulation seem more obvious. The senders (“who says”) are always those who have a monopoly on information and opinion-making or who are seeking this monopoly. They are usually governments. The content, or message (the “what”), always consists of the reasons why the war is legitimate and worthy of support. The receiver (“to whom”) has already been named above: the masses or, in democratic terms, the voters and their representatives. (In economic terms: the consumers of information.)

“To what effect” will not be examined here. For the wars in question it is often impossible to answer this question, because they are so recent and their long-term consequences will certainly be re-evaluated many times over the coming decades.

2. Representations of war in the light of changing media

In 1863, during the American Civil War, a reporter for the *New York Times* was arrested on orders from U.S. Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, for not submitting an article for censorship. Some 130 years later on 20 January 1996 General Alexander Michailov, press secretary of the Russian secret service (FSB), was summarily dismissed without reason. Russian troops had fired upon a Chechenyan village with “Stalinorgans.” Michailov had had the event recorded by TV cameras and broadcast. The thus documented behavior violated official Russian policy.

These two episodes not only demonstrate that wars are media events, but also show the pressure on those in control to sell their wars as justified. This is to be accomplished with a near-total monopoly on information and by determining which opinions are authorized. Sympathies must be awakened for one’s own side. The opposing side must be discredited.

Authorization of opinions is informal and fluid. Under the new global standard for a justified war, in particular the imperative to protect human rights, the authorization of opinion deploys all available means. This leads to focused instrumentalization and manipulation of the public media.

The methods used to control public opinion-censorship, propaganda, public relations can be traced back to antiquity. By censorship it is meant “state surveillance and suppression of communication.”⁴ Propaganda is the biased information serving political power. Finally, public relations is biased information serving economic power.⁵

Until about the middle of the 19th century, war news was communicated indirectly and with significant time delays. Since then, up to the Vi-

etnam War, various innovations were made in the instruments and methods of information distribution:

- Illustrated reports, furnished with aerial photography
- Telegraph, telephone, the new media of film and television
- News agencies and Media-conferences
- War reporters
- News departments in governments
- No film or TV reports about own casualties
- No realistic picture of what is really going on in the field.

3. The Two U.S. Gulf Wars

3.1 Before turning to the Gulf wars, a few remarks about the wars against Vietnam, Grenada and Panama.

Analysts have disagreed about whether the U.S. lost the war in Vietnam because leaders underestimated the effects of television, but in the mean time, the tendency has been, to view this explanation as a “stab-in-the-back legend” of certain U.S. administrations and politicians.⁶ Most analysts downplayed the impact of television on the Vietnam War, because those reports supported the pro-war voices.⁷

With respect to the topic, *how to sell wars*, two conclusions seem to be possible regarding the war in Vietnam: U.S. administrations had progressively *less* control over information and its interpretation. The government could not exercise comprehensive control over the media. This may have been due to the specific nature of the Vietnam War, which made a comprehensive censorship impossible. Political-ideological power arguments were not able to overcome the essentially ethical reasons for ending the war, that were advanced by print media and citizens.

After the loss in Vietnam, U.S. military planners resolved not to run the risk of uncensored media reporting in any future wars. They were helped to this view by England’s behavior in the Falklands war. Twenty-nine correspondents, photographers, and technicians were organized into pools. They were placed on ships of the

Royal Navy and their reports were subjected to strict censorship.⁸ The U.S. government and military then used this new kind of information policy during the U.S. wars in Grenada (Oct.-Nov. 1983) and Panama (Dec. 1989).

3.2 In the two Gulf wars that were waged against Iraq largely under American leadership, the U.S. administrations of George H. Bush and, later, George W. Bush, crafted justifications for the wars and constructed images of the enemy that suited their ends. In order to win support for the wars, primarily among the American people but also internationally, the Bush's respective administrations, with help from the Pentagon, manipulated the relevant flow of information.

Despite the fact that, on August 2, 1990, approximately 100,000 Iraqi troops had invaded and occupied Kuwait, it was necessary, from the American point of view, to internationalize the conflict, which could only be accomplished within the framework of the U.N. The goal was to liberate Kuwait. At the same time, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region's vitally important oil had to be protected against a possible Iraqi attack.⁹

About eleven years later, President George W. Bush issued a general call to arms against international terrorism, which led to another war against Iraq. The purported justification for this war — weapons of mass destruction and Iraq's implication in the terrorist attacks of September 11 2001 — have since proved unfounded. Basically, there was sustained popular support in the U.S. for both wars. Outside the U.S. the general opinion has been much more skeptical.

In both wars the administration and the defense department demonstrated increasing ability to win and maintain control over the media. Censorship and the use of disinformation helped. The Pentagon had succeeded in establishing very efficient methods of press control and they had support from politicians. Two examples of these methods of press control, which are still being used:

Formation of pools: Selected journalists are accredited by the Defense Department, organized into a pool, transported to the region of military activity and assigned to a military press post. In theory, members of the pool are obliged to share their

knowledge and reports with other representatives of the media, who do not belong to the pool. The official rationale for forming pools is that only military transport can provide safe access to the battlefield, but seats are limited. The advantage of this method is complete control of the media by means of a monopoly on transport and control of information by means of military escorts and press briefings. This includes control of images. Photo- and television journalists are taken only to selected, possibly contrived "shootings", or they are furnished only selected images from so called "combat camera teams." (Military combat camera teams have the same professional competence as their civilian colleagues.) They provide selected material from events to which the pool has no access. Therefore these teams provide the pool with material that is of excellent quality but that is also manipulated, material without which the media cannot operate. Basically, the military press offices also have authority over what is transmitted, since they have total control over access to electrical power and to satellite uplinks.

Speakers' pools: Not only in wartime, but also during crises or military or political controversies, the military makes competent informant-consultants available to the media. In most cases these are former military members - no longer in service - whose lasting connections to the military and to the defense industry are not immediately apparent to the public. They are in demand by the media in proportion to their visibility and popularity. They are kept abreast of events by official sources, which provide them with exclusive information and offer them to the media as experts for conversations and interviews, both on-air and in print. The control of information is thus contrived to remain in the hands of the military.

3.3 The run-up to the war for the liberation of Kuwait saw an innovation: For the first time a public relations firm and a non-governmental organization (NGO) played a decisive role. The PR firm Hill and Knowlton (H&K) was able to place a story in the media that had Iraqi soldiers murdering babies in a Kuwaiti hospital.

H&K was assisted by an NGO by the name of "Citizens for a Free Kuwait." This committee was supported by private contributions, but primarily by \$11 million from the government of Kuwait. It used these funds to hire H&K, which had good contacts in the U.S. government and with former members of the Reagan administration. After the war the story about the incubator turned out to have been totally fabricated. But the task was accomplished: By means of successful agenda-setting, Iraq had been portrayed as repulsive and criminal, an inveterate offender of human dignity.

3.4 Compared with the Vietnam War, the methods used to represent the Gulf War as "unavoidable" show some marked innovations. The *news management* was stricter. It was essentially impossible for a reporter to report on the war without permission from the Pentagon. The now more refined pool system allowed an almost complete control over the media. Admittance to the pool — the only possible way to report from the scene of action — could be granted only by the Pentagon. Journalists received their information only through military press officers in military media bureaus. There was no way to assess the veracity of this information independently. The transmission of media reports could only be accomplished by means of technical equipment and broadcast channels that were controlled by the military Media Office. Media opportunities with the fighting troops often ended in the middle of nowhere, due to ostensible errors on the part of the military facilitators.

After the war, journalists' suspicions, that they had been manipulated, were confirmed:

- The strength of Saddam Hussein's army had been greatly exaggerated. The Iraq's capacity for chemical warfare was not verified.¹⁰
- The U.S. army's attack schedules had been falsely stated.
- Many U.S. weapons systems failed.
- Twenty-three percent of all allied personnel deaths and fifteen percent of non-fatal U.S. casualties were caused by "friendly fire."¹¹

While journalists from the national media jockeyed for a place in the pool, media people from smaller local papers and regional broadcasters, were invited by the Pentagon to spend a few days with the units to which soldiers from their regions had been assigned. These media people were naturally grateful for whatever the military offered them, because, without such assistance, they would not have been able to produce any home stories. They were ideal contacts for the military's news managers.

Thus the war's planners were able to portray the war as well - reasoned and acceptable - at least in the beginning. The need for media pools was accepted also. There were of course protests from journalists regarding this policy, but in the end, the national media could ill afford, not to belong to the pool, and so they went along.

Michelle Stephenson, a photo-journalist with *Time*, explained: "The Defense Department refined this system to such a degree that the public representation of the war was completely controlled by the government, and it functioned one hundred percent according to the government's wishes."¹²

3.5 In the third U.S.-led war against Iraq (March-May 2003), which was waged ostensibly against international terrorism and the Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. media were for the most part already prepared to go along with the administration and the Pentagon.

The Pentagon saw to it that journalists were "embedded" into battle units, so that they could report on the action from these privileged vantage points. This gave the impression of responding to protests against the strict censorship that was practiced in the Second Gulf War, as well as the wars in Grenada and Panama. Essentially the situation remained the same.

Direct censorship was avoided, but journalists always had to request permission to record, which the military granted according to their own criteria. This amounted to an indirect censorship. It was just as effective as the more blatant practices of the earlier wars.

Embedding also had a side effect, as the journalists came to bond with “their” battle units and subjected themselves to a voluntary auto-censorship. Thus their objectivity was compromised. Research into the matter has shown that the reports of embedded journalists tended to lack military and political background and focused on very small parts of the war.¹³ The American war dead were not shown.

By the end of the 1990s the Pentagon had re-organized its entire PR apparatus. It produced video footage through its own camera teams (“Combat Camera”), which was then provided to the media. They gave only the official view.

So-called independent experts in the U.S. stood ready to explain the military actions without fully revealing the extent of their relationship to the military (Implementation of Speakers Pool).

U.S.-run radio stations broadcast the American position in Iraqi-accented Arabic, while transmissions from foreign stations were jammed by U.S. aircraft or had stronger signals superimposed over them on the same frequency. All of these new capabilities were then used to communicate the necessity for the second U.S.-led war against Iraq.

At the same time technological developments had transformed the reporting and management of the news: These included:

- PC and satellite technologies,
- digital image processing,
- video technologies,
- portable PCs and cameras with satellite access,
- computer graphics.

Using these new electronic tools, direct, round-the-clock coverage would have been possible.

However, since the military had total authority over all communication from the battlefield and controlled all the transmission channels, the Pentagon was able to steer the continuous reporting, toward its own ends, by choosing which stories to promote or suppress. The so-called “live reporting” always showed the waging of a “clean” war by American troops. Only CNN

broadcast images of destruction at the beginning of the war. Ugly images of the dead were not allowed.

Another notable innovation in this war was the extensive use of mercenaries, or “private military companies” (PMCs) by the U.S. The deployment of these private entities, whose actions were not in the purview of international laws pertaining to war, were another feature of the U.S.’s information management. U.S. propaganda could always maintain that American troops were fighting a “clean” war. Crimes could be blamed on the PMCs. Only later did their connections to the Pentagon become known.

For the most part, the U.S. propaganda apparatus was successful, in representing the U.S. involvement in two Gulf Wars as justified, and in maintaining support for them at home. To this end, a strategy of strict, top-down information management was executed. Only after the second Iraq War and after the first phase of the third Iraq War, did sobering skepticism return, as the population and the media began to notice that they had been deceived. Rising U.S. casualties and images of scandalous treatment of Iraqi prisoners by U.S. personnel (Abu Ghraib) have contributed to this change. However, as John MacArthur has put it, “hardly anyone in a big news organization has discussed seriously the demerits of pool system, military censorship, or failure of the media owners to fight back” [against the Pentagon].¹⁴

4. The wars in former Yugoslavia

After the collapse of European communism, subsidiary republics in the former Yugoslavia began to declare their independence, which they proceeded to establish either diplomatically, or simply by fighting for it. Although in 1991 most Western countries were still committed to keep Yugoslavia as a united state, the EU stated already in 1992, that the borders of the formerly subsidiary republics, were now to be considered international borders between sovereign states.

The goal of all parties to the conflicts was to win for their particular interest the support of the

Western nations — whether they were fighting for independence or trying to maintain the status quo — this could be expected to result in recognition by the international community and financial and military support. To achieve these goals all of them relied on the medium of public relations.

Although the inner workings of PR agencies are basically inaccessible to public view, foreign clients of US public relations firms must reveal the nature of their activities. According to the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), anyone who represents foreign interests in the U.S., must register with the U.S. Justice Department. He must furnish information regarding the contract and the dollar value of income and expenses. In the case of public relations, the goal and the nature of the activities must be indicated.¹⁵

An analysis of the information in the semi-annual reports of the Justice Department indicate, that all of the belligerent parties in former Yugoslavia had hired public relations firms to conduct political activities between 1991 and 2002.¹⁶ Target groups in the U.S. included international institutions (the UN, for example), political decision-makers, national and international media, and socially relevant “multipliers”.¹⁷

Public relations firms were able to “set agendas,” that is, to get the media to take certain issues and present their side as the truth. The reporting in the media then caused target groups outside the media — politicians, think tanks, NGOs — to assume the point of view of the firms; clients, a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy.

Public Relations firms had the use of large sums of money during this time. They were successful for several reasons. They had close contacts among well-placed people in politics, business, and the military. Former high-ranking officers in the military and intelligence services, politicians and influential business representatives, often find their way to public relations firms and cash in on their insider knowledge.

Public relations firms have now far surpassed the print media in terms of personnel and financial resources; they are professional equals and globally connected. At the beginning of the 1990s there were 160,000 public relations

agents in the U.S., but only 120,000 journalists.¹⁸ The editorial staffs of publications appear increasingly unable to evaluate the accuracy of in-depth reports on current issues. This is certainly the case for press releases from military organizations.

As remarked above, public relations agencies can determine issues. Ruder Finn, a U.S. agency, was able to compare the Serbs with Nazis. Such keywords, as concentration camp, genocide, holocaust, and Auschwitz — all of which characterized the Serbs as perpetrators — dominated the Western perceptions of the war in the Balkans.¹⁹

In the information trade surrounding the Balkan conflicts, PR agencies and NGOs were tightly interwoven. These extra-governmental organizations are essentially lobbying groups that compete among each other for donations, and other contributions, and of course, for public attention. For this reason it is “in *their* interest to prolong catastrophes and wars.”²⁰ Even if they view themselves as advocates for humanitarian causes, their structure, their network of contacts, and their spheres of interest are diffuse.

They are neither democratically legitimized, nor financially transparent. The fabricated story about the incubator, which was nonetheless so important for mounting the first Gulf war, was supported and propagated by the NGO “Amnesty International” for a very long time. Not until April 1991 did AI’s leadership distance itself from the story.²¹

Other PR agencies and NGOs:

- exploited alleged catastrophes (mass rapes, humanitarian emergencies “MEDICAAMOUNDIALE” [a German founded NGO supporting victims of sexual violence])
- conveyed one-sided political messages (e.g. OTPOR [English: resistance, a nonpartisan civic youth movement credited for its non-violent struggle against Slobodan Milosevic])
- supported peace negotiations and organized them as well (e.g. CMI [Crisis Management Initiative; Aartisari, president of Finland]).

In some cases national states even bestowed sovereign authority on PR agencies. Agencies and NGOs — which are often government-funded — provided public moods that enabled governments to take the political and military decisions that suited them.

The intervention of NATO troops on the side of the former subsidiary republics against Serbian interests and the creation of new states in the former Yugoslavia show that the efforts of the PR agencies were successful.²²

They were able to establish the legitimacy of their clients' claims to independence, in the public mind. In many cases this went so far as achieving independence by means of war.

5. The deployment of German Forces in Afghanistan

So far the focus of this paper has been on how states try to “sell” their wars. Now I would like to take a moment to consider how the Federal Republic of Germany has staked its foreign deployments on convincing the public that German soldiers *are not* involved in a war.

After Reunification, German troops participated in more interventions around the world: in Africa, in Turkey, in the East Asia, and in Iran. There was no need for the German governments to “sell a war” to the public by news-management whatsoever, because the engagement of German military forces in former Yugoslavia and in Afghanistan was generally accepted and supported as “auxiliary” or “humanitarian” among the population. Despite the fact that once in a while a journalist asked publicly if these engagements were in reality wars, this was strictly denied by officials.

For example, on 4 December 2002 then Defense Minister Peter Struck explained the deployment in Afghanistan as follows: “The Security of Germany will be defended in Hindukusch as well”. However, he would not characterize this “defense” as war.

In 1994 the Constitutional Court of the Federal Republic did not deny the constitutionality of such a deployment.²³ To this day the impression

remains that, for historical reasons, Germany believes it must avoid involvement in wars under any circumstances.

Since the founding of the Federal Republic's armed forces in 1955, German governments have never shown unambiguous commitment to them. The information management practiced by the various German governments has operated according to a motto that sees German soldiers as “citizens in uniform” and always maintains the impression that these soldiers will never have to fight.

Although German armed forces participated in the wars in former Yugoslavia and are deployed in war in Afghanistan, to this day, neither the Defense Ministry nor any German government, has provided these soldiers with unambiguous federal guidelines regarding their legal status as combatants, including their claims to medical and economic assistance. Also, the military armaments that have been deployed to Afghanistan do not meet such technical standards, as would be necessary, in order to ensure the best possible security for the troops.

No German government has ever exercised information management on a par with that practiced by the U.S. Still, the Ministry of Defense has created a kind of informational authority for itself. The information operations of the individual German military branches are strictly regulated and, due to insufficiencies in conceptualization, personnel, and other resources, their effects appear to be negligible. By means of the monopoly on military transport, however, the Ministry has most likely already done its best to curtail opportunities for communication. The practical limitations on transport to Afghanistan have enabled the establishment of a tacit pool system. Only selected representatives of the media can participate, if they go along the official line that Germany is not involved in a war. (Journalists from regional markets are largely excluded.)

Pictorial representation of German soldiers in action is taboo. Thus the soldiers' faces are hidden and they remain anonymous. In this way, German military information managers, have so far been able to prevent the German public from

identifying with the German troops deployed abroad.

The increasing number of German casualties however makes it impossible for any information management strategy to disguise the fact that German soldiers, too, are at war. In contrast to the PR concerns of other countries, which must find rationales for their deployments, the German government is now faced with the task of communicating to the public that their soldiers are indeed at war.

Not until Easter 2010 did the current minister of defense, zu Guttenberg, become the first to deviate from accepted usage and assert that German soldiers are engaged in a “non-international armed conflict.”²⁴ He went on, to speak of “war-like conditions.”²⁵

6. The outlook

The spread of more democratic forms of government in the 20th century, the emphasis on human rights by the UN, and the rise of the mass media, have compelled countries to persuade the public — both national and international — of the righteousness of their wars.

Since the middle of the 20th century, however, these countries face an increasing risk that their rationales, under the unrelenting scrutiny of real-time reporting, will be revealed as contrived, if not completely fabricated.

To suppress this possibility, states avail themselves of information management strategies whose democratic legitimacy is dubious at best. But so far, these strategies seem, for the most part, to have been successful in limiting

and channeling the media’s access to information.

However, in the context of the continuous technological modernization of communications capabilities, especially in the internet, even the power of these highly developed techniques of information management is being eroded, and governments are becoming increasingly unable to further impose censorship and maintain sovereignty over public opinion. On July 27, 2010, national papers reported on the publication of 91.000 confidential US documents about the war in Afghanistan and later also refer to a *Red Cell CIA Report*, how to manipulate public opinion among allied countries to support the war in Afghanistan.²⁶

Depending on their access to financial and technical means however, motivated parties outside official governments are becoming increasingly able to gain public support for political or military campaigns. In the future such ends will increasingly be pursued, by deploying hackers, who can bring down the networks of entire nations or infest them with foreign programs that globally modify or simply delete targeted web-sites.

Political and military leaders are trying to prepare themselves for these developments, and they are devoting ever more attention to the possibility of waging electronic wars.²⁷ The significance of the traditional media would seem to diminish to the vanishing point.

In future conflicts, the global increase in waging “cyber war”, will make it very difficult for governments to maintain one-sided authoritative control of information in order to sell arguments for waging wars.

Notes

¹ Cf., http://www.documentarchiv.de/nzjh/preussen/1813/an-mein-Volk_friedrichwilhelmIII-aufruf.html am 16.03.2010

² Cf., Wilke, J. 2009: Massenmedien und Journalismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart,

[Wilke, Massenmedien, Journalismus] Bremen, 154f

³ Elter, A. 2005: Die Kriegsverkäufer, Geschichte der US-Propaganda 1917-2005 [Elter, Kriegsverkäufer], Frankfurt am Main, 12

- ⁴ Elter, A., *Kriegsverkaeuffer*, 21
- ⁵ Cf., Becker, J., Beham, M. 2006: *Operation Balkan: Werbung für Krieg und Tod* [Becker, Operation Balkan] Baden-Baden, 14ff
- ⁶ Beham, M. 1996: *Kriegstrommel, Medien, Krieg und Politik*. München
- ⁷ Cf., MacArthur, J. R., 1992/2004: *Second Front, Censorship and Propaganda in the 1991 Gulf War*, [MacArthur, Second Front], Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 134f
- ⁸ Ibid., 128
- ⁹ Cf., Innacker, Michael, J. 1991: *Bonn Berlin, Unter Ausschluss der Oeffentlichkeit?*, 12
- ¹⁰ John R. MacArthur, John R. 1993: *Die Schlacht der Luegen*, Muenchen, 194ff
- ¹¹ Ibid., 165
- ¹² Ibid., 174
- ¹³ Cf., Elter, *Kriegsverkaeuffer*, 301ff
- ¹⁴ Cf., MacArthur, *Second Front*, 232
- ¹⁵ Cf., <http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fara/links/annualrpts.html> v. 3/8/2010
- ¹⁶ Cf., Becker, *Operation Balkan*, tables on pp. 66 - 123
- ¹⁷ Cf., *ibid.* 31
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.* 16
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.* 41
- ²⁰ *Ibid.* 74
- ²¹ Cf. *ibid.* 67
- ²² In spring of 1999, Germany's foreign and defense ministers, Joschka Fischer and Rudolf Scharping respectively, revealed a so-called "horseshoe plan," which was claimed to prove that Serbia was pursuing a policy to drive Albanians out of Kosovo. According to

- the plan, it was claimed, Serbian forces were to be arrayed in a horseshoe along the Albanian border. By drawing this formation in [on itself] the Albanians were to be driven out of Kosovo. The truthfulness of this plan, which occupied the German media for weeks, was never proved. Scharping had allegedly received his information from German officers stationed as observers in the Balkans. Other indications suggest that the plan was created by U.S. intelligence operatives and found its way to Fischer and Scharping by way of various intelligence agencies. Defense Minister Rudolph Scharping was on occasion assisted by two media consultants, Nortiz Huntiger and Norbert Essing.
- ²³ Cf., Judgment of the Second Senate (of the German Federal Constitutional Court) from 12 July 1994. The decision's reference to parliamentary prerogatives [Parlamentsvorbehalt] with respect to armed deployments of German forces continues to stir controversy. Cf. "Deutsche Verteidigung," In: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3/22/2010, N. 68, 8
- ²⁴ Cf., "Bewaffneter Konflikt," in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3/16/2010, N. 63, 10
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ Rieger, F. "Krieg nach Zahlen," in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8/7/2010, N. 181, 29
- ²⁷ Lucius, R. von, "Am Boden, in der Luft und im Cyberspace," in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8/14/2008, N. 189, 5

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Rhetorical Strategies of Environmental Cyberactivists

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Environmental organizations fighting to solve the interrelated problems of global warming and climate change, mountaintop removal mining, and deforestation use the Internet rhetorically to motivate citizen action. Such cyberactivism relies on computer-mediated communication and Internet technologies to advance political and social goals (see <http://archive.greenpeace.org/cyberstory/cyberactivism.htm>). As the anti-global warming organization, 350.org, says in its New Media Press Kit, “the technology that will stop the climate crisis isn’t solar panels, it’s the Internet” (www.350.org/sites/all/files/350.org_New_Media_Kit.pdf).

Greenpeace, one of the first environmental organizations to use cyberactivism, pioneered the use of image events or “mind bombs” on its website to call attention to its anti-whaling messages (Deluca 2006, 1-3). Other organizations have followed suit, using image events as arguments based on ethos, logos, and pathos. But various environmental organizations are using other rhetorical techniques as well to persuade people to take action. Through their web sites, these organizations use critical rhetoric to question or denounce “a behavior, policy, societal value, or ideology” and to articulate an alternate policy, vision, or ideology (Cox 2010, 228). On the Internet, rhetorical strategies make use of a variety of visual, audio, and verbal communication, including new media, new technologies, and new relationships with their audiences.

This paper examines the critical rhetoric of four different kinds of environmental websites:

- 1) an organization’s website, represented by Rainforest Action Network (www.ran.org);
- 2) a social movement, open source campaign website represented by 350.org (www.350.org);

- 3) a coalition-mounted, single-issue website, represented by iLoveMountains.org (www.iLoveMountains.org); and

- 4) Hactivist (rogue or parody) websites, represented by: www.americascoalpower.org (launched by Natural Resources Defense Council) and www.coal-is-clean.com and its affiliate site, www.coal-is-dirty.com (launched by the desmog.blog, Greenpeace, USA and Rainforest Action Network).

Comparative impact data from the Internet web information site Alexa provides the worldwide traffic ranks and reputation of the sites studied in this paper, helping to evaluate the audience appeal of various rhetorical strategies. It is my hope that this analysis will be of use to those searching for effective ways to use websites to build public support for addressing pressing environmental issues.

The Rainforest Action Network: RAN.org

The Rainforest Action Network (RAN), founded in 1985, has a mission to campaign “for the forests, their inhabitants and the natural systems that sustain life by transforming the global marketplace through education, grassroots organizing, and non-violent direct action” (<http://www.ran.org/our-mission>). RAN is similar to Greenpeace in that it makes use of symbolic actions to challenge harmful environmental practices. Its web strategy is also similar to Greenpeace, as it uses the web to reinforce and spread its message, and to fundraise.¹ It does not use its website as a forum for exchanges between its members and others.

RAN calls its hallmark “market activism,” which pushes companies “to balance profits with principles, to show that it is possible to do well by doing good” and leverages “public opinion and consumer pressure to turn the public stigma of environmental destruction into a business

nightmare for any American company that refuses to adopt responsible environmental policies" (<http://www.ran.org/about-ran>; see Graydon 2006). RAN's market activism has been successful in helping to convince "dozens of corporations—including Home Depot, Citigroup, Boise Cascade, and Goldman Sachs—to change their practices." RAN claims that it has helped "to protect millions of acres of forests in Canada, Indonesia, Brazil, Chile and beyond" (http://www.coal-is-dirty.com/who_we_are).

RAN's Ethos: Powerful, Rooted in Nature, Radical—and Trustworthy

The Black Panther image, a charismatic megafauna, prominently displayed in its logo and on the top left of its home page, serves as RAN's totem figure, an embodiment of its ethos. While some environmental organizations use charismatic megafauna to tug at the heartstrings of supporters, RAN's charismatic megafauna is portrayed as dangerous, instead of loveable and cute. RAN appropriates the panther's symbolic power and its association with radical action, as in the revolutionary Black Panther Party in the U.S. The image also suggests stealth, power, and an identification with the rain forests, home to the panther. RAN's slogan, "Environmentalism with teeth," superimposed on the back of the black panther, suggests an ethos far stronger than stereotypical anti-environmentalist depictions of "tree-huggers." Immediately to the right of the black panther is a "Take Action" window that seeks to involve viewers in online actions. This Take Action window furthers the action-oriented ethos of RAN, by asking readers to send online letters and sign online petitions.

Despite the radical connotations of its icon, the black panther, a close look at its Board of Directors and the members that it features on its website reveals a solid mainstream leadership and base. RAN's current Board Chair, Jim Gollin, comes from a background in International Management and is a founding member of a socially responsible business organization, Social Venture Network. Gollin says that "Every social change group lies somewhere on the spectrum from radical absolutism that is ideologically pure but can get nothing done, to reformist instrumentalism that can get a lot of fundamentally unim-

portant things done." Gollin says that RAN occupies "a sweet spot, as one of the most radical of the mainstream groups, or one of the most mainstream of the radical groups, depending on how you look at it" (<http://ran.org/jim-gollin>).

One way that RAN builds a credible and trustworthy ethos is by featuring a number of highly educated and middle-class donors, displaying their photos and short bios. One donor, for example, is Josh Pryor, who the website says is a "Recent Cum Laude graduate" who is "environmentally conscious." Another window features a picture of a 100-year-old woman, Eleanor Wasson, who "in one of her last great acts," made RAN "the beneficiary of her 100th birthday presents, helping RAN net over \$12,000" (<http://www.ran.org/donor-profiles>). Displaying images of middle-class donors somewhat tempers the radical connotations of the Black Panther logo.

RAN's Image Events as Arguments

The dominant way that RAN catches the attention of the media and those it wishes to communicate with is through the creative use of image events, or what Robert Hunter, the co-founder of Greenpeace, calls "mind bombs," simple images that "explode in people's minds" to create new awareness. One of Greenpeace's first and classic image event took place on January 1, 1977, when an activist on a tiny Greenpeace rubber boat confronted a Russian whaler in the North Pacific and painted Greenpeace on its bow. Galia Yanoshevsky argues that "Image events are a subcategory of visual arguments." She quotes John Delicath and Kevin Deluca's definition of image events as "'staged acts of protest designed for media dissemination' (315) that have a strong appeal to audiences" and adds that they "foster public discussion by offering fresh, new ways to look at issues at hand by supplying new claims and refutations that fuel debates in the public sphere" (Yanoshevsky, 2009).

Two examples of RAN's image events against Canada's tar-sands oil mining use strong metaphorical images of the death that such mining will bring. In one photograph, RAN protestors lie down, as if dead, with crime-scene

tape draped over them. In another, an activist dressed as a polar bear holds a sign of a devastated landscape that says, “No to Toxic Tar Sands Oil.” Since tar sands oil production

emits far more CO₂ than conventional oil drilling, it will add to the global warming that threatens the survival of polar bears (as well as humans).



Tar Sands oil production, like mountain-top removal mining, is an outgrowth of industrialism, which is an almost unquestioned ideograph, defined by McGee as an “ordinary-language term found in political discourse” that is “a high order abstraction representing commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal” and is hegemonic in its power (McGee 1980, 15, cited in Deluca 2006, 36). Deluca argues that to be effective in challenging such ideographs, an image event needs to foreground at least one antagonism. Antagonisms “make possible the questioning, disarticulating, and rearticulating of a hegemonic discourse” (Deluca 2006, 40).

RAN turned its July 8, 2010 occupation of the Environmental Protection Agency’s headquarters in Washington, D.C. into an image event through a photograph of activists holding a banner across the front entrance to the building. The sign read, “EPA—Easier to Poison Appalachia’s Water than Defy King Coal.” This wording suggests that the Environmental Protection Agency poisons rather than protects as it serves its master, the metaphorical “King Coal.” The antagonisms present in RAN’s image events often evoke strong emotional reactions and serve as arguments based on pathos, or what Aristotle defined as emotional appeals.

350.org: Distributed Political Action

In contrast to Rainforest Action Network’s more centralized approach to communicating with its members through the Internet, 350.org, dedicated to stopping global warming, is modeled on the concept of open source politics and distributed political action. The idea of open source politics that “opens up participation in planning and implementation to the community,” takes as its model open source computer coding: “Steven Johnson, the author of *Emergence*, recently wrote: ‘Using open-source coding as a model, it’s not a stretch to believe the same process could make politics more representative and fair. . . . If the people receiving the message create it, chances are it’s much more likely to stir up passions’” (Sifry, 2004). By encouraging the people viewing a political website to co-create the content of that site, 350.org achieves what McKibben calls distributed political action, which was key to the success of the first computer-based organizing event that led to the founding of 350.org. On April 14, 2007, McKibben and several of his students at Middlebury College began by sending emails to their friends asking them to hold rallies calling for an 80 percent cut in carbon dioxide emissions. They asked these friends to forward the email to their friends, and the idea quickly spread throughout the nation:

We'd told everyone that as soon as their rally was over they should upload pictures to our Web site, and we rented a hall in Washington, inviting all the politicians we could find to come watch the results. By early evening the photos were streaming in. It turned out that we'd 'organized' 1,400 of these rallies in a single day, one of the largest days of grassroots environmental protest since the original Earth Day. We'd had our march on Washington, just in 1,400 different places (McKibben 2010, 208).

By publishing the photos of the demonstrations on the Web, McKibben's group achieved "distributed political action" that "added up to more than the sum of its parts." McKibben recounts a vivid example of the collaborative nature of distributed political action that enabled photographs and video of a demonstration in Ethiopia to be quickly transmitted around the world:

When we heard that there was going to be a 15,000 person march in Ethiopia on October 24 and no one to film the event, our African Media Coordinator based in New York City Skyped a friend in South Africa, who called a friend in Ethiopia, who biked to the event, took photos and videos, then biked to the only high speed internet connection in Addis Ababa, bought a drink at the bar so she could use their internet, uploaded footage to our online media library, and we got it to major news networks 3 hours later.

Many of the demonstrators created striking image events to demonstrate the urgency of taking action, such as a Jacksonville group that suspended a yacht twenty feet above ground to show that when the Greenland icepack "slides into the ocean, . . .that is where the ocean would rise across the country's most expensive real estate" (McKibben 2010: 209).

After James Hansen's NASA report established 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide

"as the maximum atmospheric concentration compatible with maintaining the planet 'on which civilization developed and to which life . . . is adapted,'" McKibben and his students tried to see "if we could make our same tactic—distributed political action—work on a global basis." Their goal "was simply to drive those numbers into hearts and minds around the world. We found other college kids who could translate the message into a dozen languages, and we started writing emails" (McKibben 2010: 209-210). By 2012, 350.org had websites published in 13 languages in 18 countries on six continents.

The mission of 350.org is "to inspire the world to rise to the challenge of the climate crisis – to create a new sense of urgency and possibility for the planet." Articulating its theory of change, the organization says it is "simple": "if an international grassroots movement holds our leaders accountable to the latest climate science, we can start the global transformation we so desperately need." Since its self-defined focus is on the number 350, as in parts per million of carbon dioxide, and getting people around the world to understand the importance of bringing CO₂ levels below that level, the website encourages people throughout the world to create image events related to the number.

In order to reach "the back of beyond" where people often lack access to computers and may not be able to read, 350.org crafted a short animated video to reach people throughout the world, no matter their language. The animation depends on readily recognized icons and pictures to convey the science of 350 parts per million (ppm) of CO₂. It is short enough – one minute, 38 seconds – to be transmitted to and viewed on a mobile phone. McKibben tells the story in his book *Eaarth* about a farmer in Cameroon who saw it on his cell phone, organized his neighbors to plant 350 trees, and sent a picture to 350.org. He says, "our ninety-second animat-ed wordless video looked great on cell phone screens" (McKibben 2010, 210).



The photos posted on 350.org range from pathos-centered to logos-centered image events. One fear-inducing image from Dalian, China, shows students, wearing 350.org shirts, standing on top of their desks, which are piled near the edge of the ocean and lapped by the waves, symbolizing the effects of rising ocean levels on children. Another pathos-centered image shows

three activists hanging a banner on Table Mountain, in South Africa, relabeling it “Table Island” by showing how the waterline in 2065 will be high enough to turn the mountain into an island. This image event also has a fear-inducing edge, with one climber suspended by a rope high above the water in order to hang the banner.



Other image events are more logos centered, focusing more on the number 350, framed by the persons who created a photo display. In one, American soldiers pose by their sand bags,

which have been arranged to spell out 350; in another, young schoolgirls from the Dominican Republic lie in a circle around the number 350.



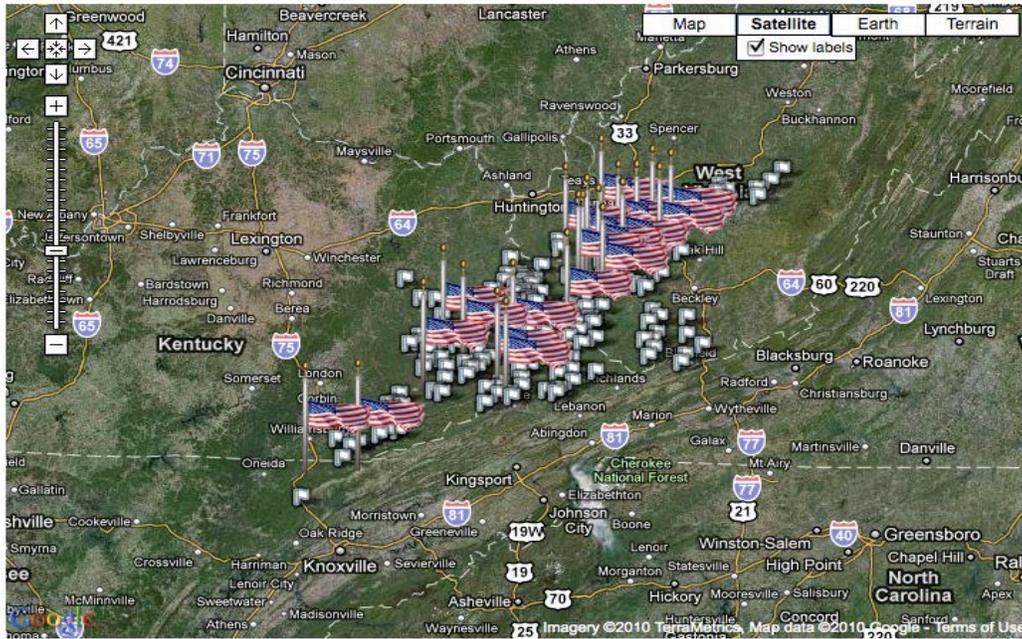
The strategy of distributed political action quickly garnered growth and praise for 350.org. Johann Hari wrote in the *Nation*, “In just a year, the brilliant 350.org has formed a huge network of enthusiastic activists who are demanding our politicians heed the real scientific advice--not the parody of it offered by the impostors. They have to displace the corrupt conservationists as the voice of American environmentalism, fast” (Hari, 2010). The success of 350.org’s open-source, distributed political action is taking cyberactivism to a new level, as it encourages people to go beyond online actions to real demonstrations in their communities.

iLoveMountains.org

Early in 2006, several Appalachian grassroots organizations, such as Appalachian Voices, Coal River Mountain Watch, Keepers of the Mountains Foundation, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Ohio Valley Environmental

Coalition, Save our Cumberland Mountains, and Southern Mountain Appalachian Stewards, began working collaboratively on a focused website to serve as a platform for information and activism on mountaintop removal mining (MTR). They hired consultant Mathew Gross, who had launched the first Presidential weblog for Howard Dean in 2003 and became Director of Dean’s Internet campaign, to help them make the site innovative and interactive.

The iLoveMountains.org website uses the relatively new technology of Google Earth satellite imagery and mapping to help viewers understand the sheer scope of the destruction caused by mountaintop removal coal mining in Appalachia. By carefully framing their use of these satellite maps through a page called the “National Memorial for the Mountains,” the website creates a series of interactive image events and memorials to some of the more than 500 mountains that have been destroyed.



Each flag, at half mast, is located on a map showing where a mountain has been removed. Clicking on the flag brings up the name of the mountain and connects viewers to stories, photos, interviews, and videos of the local residents affected by the mountain's depredation. The flags function metaphorically to transform the mountains into historical sites of struggle and loss. They also help to personify and place value on the mountains—their loss is worthy of a flag at half-mast. Ironically, the coal companies who produce such horrific destruction have created the core images for anti-coal coalitions, captured by Google Earth technology. But the *ilovemountains.org* website creates a powerful social context for interpreting the image through skilled rhetorical framing that uses metaphorical images and language, along with video testimonials from the mountain residents.

Use of Google-Earth's satellite imagery brings into public view the often hidden and

guarded devastation of MTR. The mines' security guards cannot stop these aerial views of the horror that MTR has wrought on the land. The Internet furthers the dissemination of these images. It turns the mountains back into a commons – a virtual commons – where people can freely view the land that has been turned into private property and then destroyed. According to Mary Ann Hitt, Executive Director of Appalachian Voices, "This has revolutionized our thinking. It's given us the ability to give the kind of tour of the mountains that we only could give previously to the media or government officials. This gives an audience of 200 million people" (Olsen, 2007).

Each Mountain Memorial skillfully frames the image events captured by Google-Earth. Here, snapshots of before and after images of Kayford Mountain visually demonstrate what has been lost:

Load image overlay to show Kayford's terrain before mountaintop removal coal mining began.
(Download these images by clicking on the pictures below)



before
(image overlay)

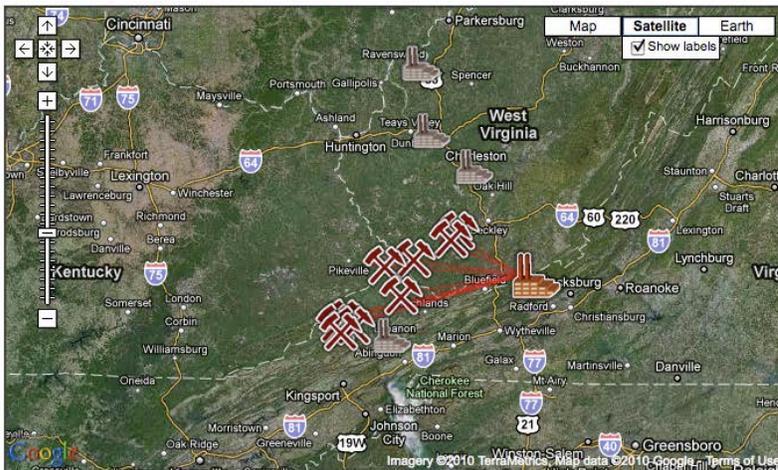


after
(image overlay)

Photos of community events, such as a prayer vigil on Kayford Mountain, inject moral arguments into the issue. The picture also enhances the ethos of iLoveMountains.org, associating the site with mountain people of faith, thus countering pro-coal claims that those who object to MTR are outsiders who are environmental radicals and somehow un-American.

Personalizing Connections to Mountaintop Removal

One way that the website helps to educate and involve viewers is to enable them to track their personal connection to mountaintop removal through a mapping tool that links their electricity provider to any mountaintops that have been removed to obtain the coal. After typing in one's email address, the site produces a map, such as this one:



Mary Farley was sound asleep on the couch when a loud blast went off from the mine above her small house. First, the kitchen wall above the sink separated from the ceiling in a 1-inch crack. Next, the floor dropped 6 inches in one corner. "I thought the house was coming down around me," said. The inspector from the Division of Environmental Protection checked the seismograph records at the mine. He reported that the blasts were all within permitted limits. [Read more.](#)

LEGEND:



The closest power plant on your grid that is connected to mountaintop removal: **Glen Lyn**, operated by **Appalachian Power Co**



Other coal-fired power plants on the **Appalachian Power Co** grid that are connected to mountaintop removal



Mountaintop removal mines that are connected to your power grid

NAVIGATION HINTS:

Click any power plant to see how it is connected to mountaintop removal or any mine symbol to get a close-up view of that mine. The controls on the top left of the map allow you to zoom in closer to the ground or back out to get a broader perspective. Even easier, though, is to navigate with the "hand" tool. Clicking and dragging on the map will move the map in the same direction, double-clicking on a point will center the map on that point and zoom you in a little closer, and double clicking with the right mouse button (ctrl-click for macintosh users) to center on a point and zoom out.

According to the web technologist, Benji Burrell, the My Connection tool is the most heavily used part of the site that has been talked about the most (Burrell, 2010).

Like 350.org, iLoveMountains also uses distributed political action through an innovative

challenge to involve bloggers in spreading the word about mountaintop removal mining. The use of networked bloggers to spread its message reflects the influence of their consultant, Mathew Gross.

help spread the word

Share this page

JOIN THE BLOGGER'S CHALLENGE!

* First Name * Last Name * Email

* Zip * Website/Blog (example: myblog.com)

Keep me updated on the effort to end mountaintop removal coal mining

Submit

Take action today by joining the Blogger's Challenge. You'll receive a personalized "Spread the Word" widget for your blog. You'll be able to make a real difference and track your impact on your personalized "Spread the Word" map.

Bloggers "Spreading the Word"

Listed by the number of people who've joined the campaign using a personalized blogger's widget.

ilovemountains.org/news	193
appvoices.org/index.php?frontporch	53
samsva.org	17
benjiburrell.com	17
anniekathec.blogspot.com	13
hownottosmelltheroses.blogspot.com/	12
coffeemuses.com	7
kharris.wordpress.org	7
havefundogood.blogspot.com/	6
blog.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=blog.ListAll&friendID=174578374	5
myspace.com/dancollinsmusic	5
weloveitdontwe.blogspot.com/	5
wayfaring-...	4

Blogger's Challenge Impact Map

Bloggers are making a BIG difference in the campaign to end mountaintop removal - and here's proof. This map shows bloggers in the Blogger's Challenge by zip code who've pledged to help end mountaintop removal through a personalized blogger's widget.

Map Satellite Earth Terrain

Show labels

As of January 2012, 3,255 bloggers accepted the challenge to spread the word to help end mountaintop removal and 102,709 persons signed the pledge on the website to end mountaintop removal coal mining. Bloggers can track their impact through a map that shows where their message has been spread. Similarly, those who sign the pledge and send emails to friends asking them to sign, can map their own personal impact.

iLoveMountains.org encourages dialogue on its web pages. It allows people to post comments and to respond to comments about many of its entries. This feature is particularly important in the coalfields of Appalachia, where it is often difficult for people to find a safe space to critique the coal industry and mountaintop re-

moval mining. The site functions as an interactive knowledge commons where people can freely exchange views. To its credit, the website lets the opposing side post on its website. The following interchange between an anti-MTR person and a pro-MTR supporter can be found on the Kayford Mountain Memorial link:

Anti: My god, these people who are coal mining and stripping Kayford Mountain are just plain sick. What is wrong with them? I know that sounds like a lame question, but isn't that what it comes down to? If we do not come together as one and realize we are literally destroying our planet... OUR HOME....we will be destroying ourselves as well ... STOP THE MOUNTAINTOP STRIPPING!!

Pro: What powers your house? It is coal if you are so serious about what you believe [sic] in call the power company and tell them to cut your power off. Why would you want to use more power shut down the web sites cut off your power and go back to living in the 1940s. You don't tell about all the good things that coal brings . . . You continue to do what you think is right and so will I blowing off the tops of mountains providing for my kids and supplying [sic] energy for the nation.

Hactivist or Parody Websites

In contrast to the conventional, straightforward sites of RAN, 350.org, and iLoveMountains.org, hactivist or parody sites are used by some environmental organizations such as The DeSmog Project and its DeSmogBlog and the National Resources Defense Council (in partnership with Greenpeace and RAN) to critique the messages of their opponents in playful, humorous ways. Chadwick defines hactivism as “politically motivated hacking” that “draws upon the resources of the hacker community and hacker culture” (Chadwick 2006, 129).

One of the best known US hactivist groups is The Yes Men, an activist duo consisting of Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno, who use impersonation and parody to raise awareness about social issues. From their offices in Milwaukee, they create and maintain fake websites similar to ones they intend to spoof, which have successfully led to numerous interviews, conference, and TV talk show invitations. Through distributing the free software “Reamweaver” (the name parodies the website building software

“Dreamweaver”), they have made it easy for persons to parody the websites of corporations (<http://kop.kein.org/DIVE/cd/art/reamweav.html>). The Yes Men and RAN have collaborated on several creative campaigns to parody and derail corporate green washing campaigns and expose the environmental consequences of their corporate policies.

An excellent example of an environmental hactivist site is the website americascoalpower.org, mounted by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), one of the largest and most powerful environmental organization in the U.S. Americascoalpower.org is an example of “culture jamming” – taking a powerful cultural institution – in this case, an association of coal power corporations – and turning its rhetoric against itself, by impersonating the voice and look of the association’s discourse. The NRDC parody site mocks the website of AmericasPower.org, sponsored by the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE), a partnership of the industries involved in producing electricity from coal. ACCCE “combines the assets and missions of the Center for Energy and Economic Development (CEED) and Americans for Balanced Energy Choices (ABEC).” AmericasPower.org says that its goal “is to advance the development and deployment of advanced clean coal technologies that will produce electricity with near-zero emissions.” The following screen shots capture first, AmericasPower.org, and then the parody site, americascoalpower.org. Note how well the NRDC parody site reproduces the style of AmericasPower.org with the subtle irony of the slogan and the visual symbol of the electric heater warming up the planet:

AMERICA'S POWER™ 

Get Involved | Contact Us | Press Room | Search

STAY CONNECTED

The Facts | Issues & Policy | Who We Are | FAQs | News

CHERYL BRANNAN “It’s what I do out here in the morning that makes that light come on.” 

WATCH NOW >

VIEW THE STORIES OF REAL PEOPLE >  SHANE  CHERYL  WENDY  VENITA  OLIVIA  FRED

 CLEAN COAL RESEARCH  POWER HOUSE  YOUR STATE  PERCUSSION  FACILITY TOUR

This site is a project of the Natural Resources Defense Council | [Contact Us](#)

COALPOWER: *Warming America, Warming The Planet*

The Facts | Ask the Experts | News | Who We Are

 Now with more **COAL!** ACCCCCC!

COAL: IT'S A SMALL PRICE TO PAY ...TODAY



TECHNOLOGY CAN TAKE US TO CLEAN

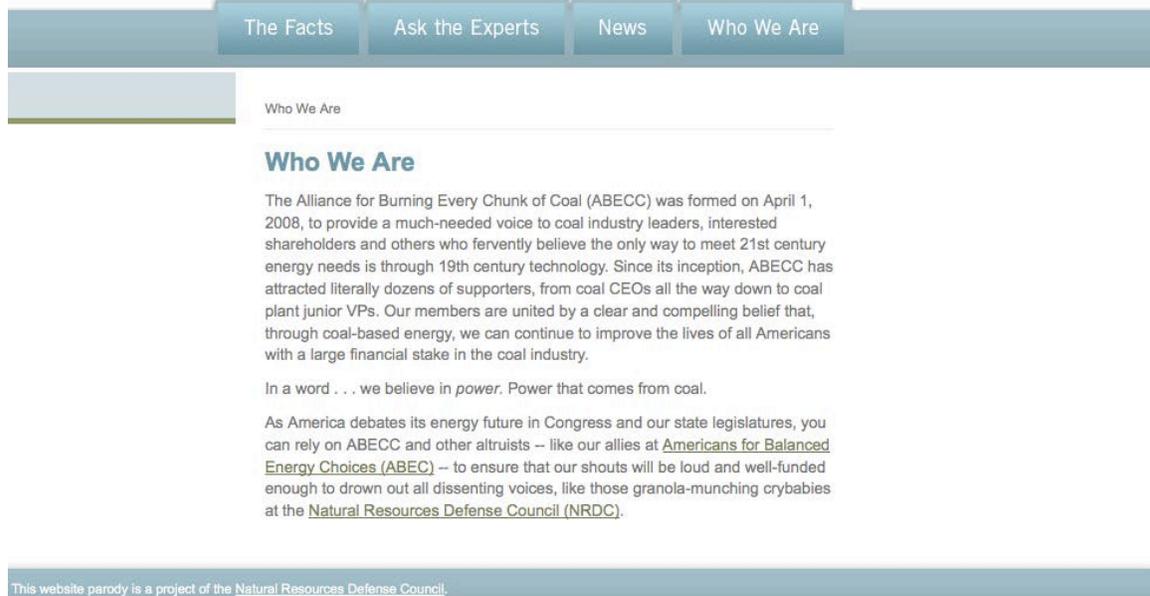
AND 95% OF POWER PLANT SULFUR DIOXIDE EMISSIONS

NEWS | BLOG: DON'T PULL THE PLUG

Parody, hactivist sites create what I call an “alter-ethos” for the organizations who create them. Thus, the NRDC, one of the oldest and largest environmental organizations in the U.S, borrows the playful, creative, and avant-garde ethos of hactivists like the Yes-Men, as it simul-

taneously mocks the ABEC (Americans for Balanced Energy Choices) by renaming it the ABECC, or “The Alliance for Burning Every Chunk of Coal” and reflects on how it thinks anti-environmentalists see the NRDC—as “granola-munching crybabies.”

COALPOWER: *Warming America, Warming The Planet*



The Facts Ask the Experts News Who We Are

Who We Are

Who We Are

The Alliance for Burning Every Chunk of Coal (ABECC) was formed on April 1, 2008, to provide a much-needed voice to coal industry leaders, interested shareholders and others who fervently believe the only way to meet 21st century energy needs is through 19th century technology. Since its inception, ABECC has attracted literally dozens of supporters, from coal CEOs all the way down to coal plant junior VPs. Our members are united by a clear and compelling belief that, through coal-based energy, we can continue to improve the lives of all Americans with a large financial stake in the coal industry.

In a word . . . we believe in *power*. Power that comes from coal.

As America debates its energy future in Congress and our state legislatures, you can rely on ABECC and other altruists -- like our allies at [Americans for Balanced Energy Choices \(ABEC\)](#) -- to ensure that our shouts will be loud and well-funded enough to drown out all dissenting voices, like those granola-munching crybabies at the [Natural Resources Defense Council \(NRDC\)](#).

This website parody is a project of the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#).

This playful and edgy ethos contrasts with the serious ethos of the NRDC's main website, www.nrdc.org, and adds a creative and youthful dimension to the NRDC.

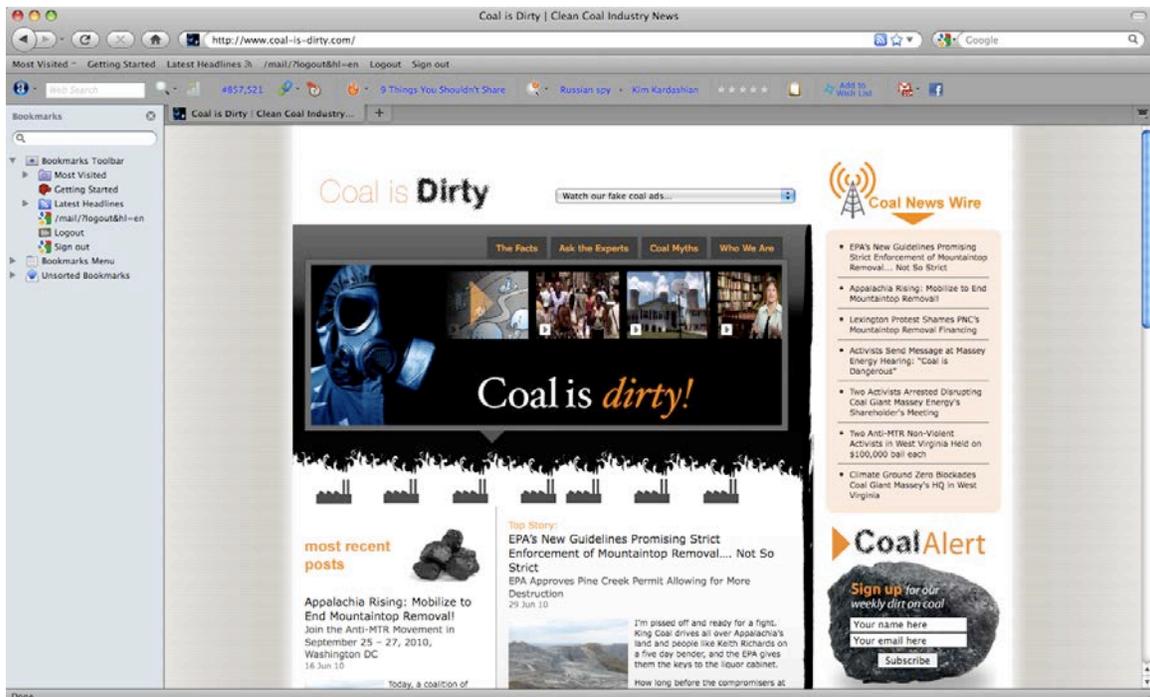
Another parody/hactivist website, Coal-is-Clean.org and its affiliate site, Coal-is-Dirty.org, was created by The DeSmog Project (see the DeSmogBlog.com) in partnership with RAN and Greenpeace, to expose the lies behind the clean coal campaign by the coal power industry and "debunk the myth of clean coal." Led by Jim

Hoggan, founder of James Hoggan & Associates, a leading Canadian public relations firm, the DeSmog Project and DeSmogBlog exist "to clear the PR pollution that is clouding the science on climate change." I discovered Coal-is-Dirty by accident. Dismayed by the oxymoron, "clean coal," I typed in coal is dirty into Google, and to my delight, discovered this site. Rather than mocking a specific website, coal-is-clean.com creates a kind of archetypal fake website full of the kinds of rhetoric and patriotic symbols used by the coal power industry:



But, clicking on any one of the links on this site automatically takes you to the affiliate web-

site, Coal-is-Dirty.com, which exposes the facts about coal.



Coal-Is-Dirty provides an activism kit to encourage people to fight against coal by dispelling the public relations myths about coal in their hometowns.

Conclusion

This comparison of various environmental websites reveals both shared and divergent approaches to convey the organizations' ethos and goals. RAN, 350.org, and iLoveMountains make use of a variety of linked social networks. RAN and 350.org have their own YouTube and Flickr sites as well. RAN has special pages for kids, teachers and youth, and iLoveMountains has

special resources for teachers. iLoveMountains and 350.org make space for viewer comments on their websites.

One useful way of assessing the success of websites is to track their global traffic ranking and reputation (through the number of sites linking in) through the data provided by a leading web analytics firm, Alexa.com. The following chart shows the worldwide traffic rank and the number of sites linking in to each of the websites for July 2010 and May 2012. In worldwide traffic ranking data, the lower the number, the greater the viewership for a site. Note that in 2010, Alexa reported no data for the parody sites.

Websites	Worldwide Traffic Rank	Reputation (Sites Linked In)	Online Since
RAN.org July 2010 May 2012	115,743 101,742	1,968 5,616	December 1994
350.org July 2010 May 2012	90,566 86,268	2,873 6,527	2007
iLoveMountains.org July 2010 May 2012	762,724 1,449,240	371 791	September 2006
Americascoalpower.org May 2012	10,192,672	10	2008
Coal-is-clean.com May 2012	8,170,418	28	2008
Coal-is-dirty.com May 2012	1,573,643	224	2008

In comparing traffic rankings, it is significant that the newest website, 350.org, has the highest worldwide traffic rank and the highest number of sites linked in. Since the site is published in 13 different languages and has offices in numerous countries, it has a greater opportunity of reaching a larger and more diverse audience. The organization's strategy of distributed political action campaigns is a way of not only building a social movement, but simultaneously attracting new viewers to the website. These new viewers can point with pride to the photographs of their demonstrations that they have published on the 350.org website.

In comparison to 350.org and iLoveMountains, RAN's website is less interactive and open. Its image events reinforce its ethos of "environmentalism with teeth" by containing numerous antagonisms to hegemonic institutions and discourse and more pathos. RAN's use of hactivist websites and actions contributes to its aggressive ethos. The image events of 350.org tend to be logos-centered and reinforce the phrase used in its animation about itself: "Because the World needs to know." When I first encountered 350.org and its logos-based mission of explaining the importance of 350 ppm of carbon dioxide to the world, I was skeptical that

it would gain much of an audience. But, its repeated mass public actions involving grassroots communities in displaying their understanding of global warming and its consequences has steadily increased viewership (see its Campaign Recap for 2010 and 2011 under Campaigns & Projects on its website). Its most recent “Connect the Dots” campaign on Climate Impacts Day, May 5, 2012, along with the accompanying Climate.Dots.org platform, where people may submit their stories of how climate change is impacting their communities, continue to capture media attention and new participants. On April 6, 2011, 350.org joined forces with the 1Sky, an environmental education and lobbying platform supported by over 600 environmental organizations, into the New 350.org. While both groups had worked together on campaigns since their inception, the formal merger brought a much stronger domestic campaign to 350.org and a much stronger connection to the international climate movement to 1Sky. The traffic ranking of 350.org has grown considerably, and so has the number of Twitter followers. After its October 24, 2009 International Day of Climate Action campaign, which organized 5,245 events in 181 countries, 350.org had 10,000 Twitter followers (Rowder 2009); by May 2012, it had over 94,600 Twitter followers.

While iLoveMountains.org’s traffic ranking fell over a two-year period, its reputation grew, with over double the sites linking in. The single-issue focus of iLoveMountains.org, as well as its regional focus on Appalachia, may limit its audience reach. Nevertheless, the site creates a kind of knowledge commons and free space for discourse about mountaintop removal mining that is particularly important in coalfield communities, where criticizing coal mining can have negative repercussions. Its use of Google Earth’s satellite imagery coupled with sophisticated framing techniques to create image events, performs a kind of rhetorical jujitsu on the coal mining companies, using images of their own destruction of the environment against them. The site is highly interactive, through its tool to search personal connections to mountain top removal, and it en-

courages social networking through its blogger’s challenge.

The hactivist or parody websites create an “alter ethos” – witty, youthful, sharp, and edgy – for the Rainforest Action Network, Natural Resources Defense Council, and DeSmog.blog. These sites “culture jam” the discourse of their opponents through irony and sarcasm. Significantly, Coal-is-Dirty.com has a much higher traffic ranking than its affiliate, Coal-is-Clean.com (1,573,643 to 8,170,418, respectively), and many more sites linking in (224 compared to 28, respectively). The greater audience for Coal-is-Dirty.com suggests that the counter-narrative to the coal companies “clean coal” campaign has greater currency.

This analysis finds evidence of successful collaboration among environmental organizations, as in the efforts by RAN, Greenpeace, and The DeSmog Project to mount the parody sites, the collaborative effort of organizations that created iLoveMountains.org, and the recent merger of 1Sky with 350.org. More cross-pollination of rhetorical and technological strategies would be beneficial to environmental cyberactivism. RAN could borrow iLoveMountain’s use of Google Earth mapping to show the scope of rainforest deforestation, and 350.org could also use Google Earth to help connect the dots of climate change impacts, mapping receding shorelines, advancing deserts, and areas of drought, flooding, or increased, intense storms.

All of the sites could have space for comments and dialogue following new stories. Expanded audiences for environmental messages could be achieved by copying 350.org’s new media concept of less-is-more, as demonstrated by its effective short animation that is viewable on cell phones and which communicates through icons without language, even to those who can’t read. More studies of the rhetoric of environmental websites will prove useful in developing better communication strategies to mobilize citizen support for addressing environmental problems.

Notes

1. Greenpeace encourages viewers to become a “one minute activist.” One image on its website of a person using a computer has this caption: “Our global community of Greenpeace activists hail from 125 countries and territories. We have a long list of victories to prove that when we speak with one voice, we can change the world. Sign up and you'll get a monthly E-zine and action alerts full of ways you can be a one-minute activist. It's all free” (<https://secured.greenpeace.org/seasia/ph/getinvolved/sign-up/>). Yet this form of cyberactivism, which Mario Diani calls the “Reinforcement perspective of cyberactivism,” reinforces preexisting organizational structures. Diani argues that Greenpeace and other professional protest movements use cyberactivism largely to reinforce its organizational structure of “a core of full-time employees funded by a largely passive membership base.” Diani goes on to argue that “Greenpeace’s activity mainly centers upon attention-grabbing symbolic demonstrations

that are carried out by a relatively small number of dedicated individuals” (Diani 2000, 386-401, from Chadwick, 134). According to Chadwick, Greenpeace uses the Internet to: “communicate with its membership as well as to distribute in-depth material relating to its various campaigns . . . its website does not function as a place for online discussion and deliberation for its membership.” Chadwick argues that “the fostering of a strong identity among its supporters is secondary to the goal of achieving tight integration at the center backed by mass-membership funding” (2006, 134). For another point of view, see the perspective of a Greenpeace cyberactivist who later became a full-time employee of Greenpeace (JulietteH 2010); and Greenpeace’s “Cyberactivism revolutionizes Greenpeace campaigns.”

2. For more on the concept of a knowledge commons, see Puckett, Fine, et al., 2012.

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