

English Abstracts

Oliver Quiring / Wolfgang Schweiger: Interactivity – ten years down the line. An inventory check and a framework for analysis, pp. 5–24

By the end of the 1980s and especially during the 1990s – when politics, the business world and academia were all in a state of multimedia euphoria – ‚interactivity‘ and ‚interactive‘ media were the talk of the day. Yet, already at the beginning of the academic discourse it became clear that comparing the numerous empirical studies in this field was stifled, if not made completely impossible through the nonuniform use of the concept. Therefore it is even more striking that in the German-speaking areas the attempt to establish a comprehensive definition of this concept is so far lacking. That is the starting point for this article. In the first part the focus is on the conceptual origins of ‚interactivity‘ and on distinguishing the concept from other related terms. The second part will then structure and enhance the findings by introducing a new framework for analysis. This framework incorporates three levels of interactive communication (the level of action, the level of situational evaluation and the level of exchange of meaning) and systematically puts the specific characteristics of interactive communication into context.

Keywords: interactivity, interaction, computer mediated communication, communications theory, selectivity, media use

Holger Schramm / Werner Wirth: Media and emotions. An inventory check of a neglected field of research from a media psychological perspective, p. 25–55

Emotions are omnipresent in the media and contribute a great deal to the experience with a media offer. Consequently communication science has been investigating this issue, albeit not very intensely, since its beginnings. In this attempt theories and findings of neighbouring disciplines, especially taken from emotion psychology, were only partly included. The aim of this article is to document relevant theories and central findings from the breadth of this research area as well as pointing out perspectives for future research. To this end the article starts with emotion psychological basics and the issue of measuring emotions. Thereafter approaches and findings regarding emotions during media reception will be examined from the perspective of several relevant concepts e.g. mood- and emotion regulation, emotional involvement, emotional excitation, empathy, suspense, fear and anxiety as well as entertainment. Moreover, approaches and findings from specific emotion evoking media (genres) will be laid out. As emotions are not only important as a direct reception and effect phenomenon but also in their function as indirect factors influencing other media effects, other central fields of research will be discussed, as for example the effects of emotions on memory or knowledge acquisition through media as well as the effect of emotions on the persuasive potential of media.

Keywords: media emotion, media psychology, emotion, feeling, affect, mood, emotional effects, mood management, excitation, anxiety, persuasion, affective television watching, suspense, involvement, entertainment

Veronika Karnowski / Thilo v. Pape / Werner Wirth: Regarding the diffusion of new media: a critical inventory of recent approaches to and considerations of the integrative diffusion and appropriation theory for new media, pp. 56–74

From a communication studies perspective there are good reasons for researching the acquisition process and the social institutionalisation of mobile communication. As a classical field of research diffusion research lends itself to this endeavour. Diffusion research, however – the assertion goes – is itself struggling with theory-immanent problems in describing the process in question. Several authors already criticised diffusion research in relation to new media and drew on supplementary or alternative approaches to answer their research questions. This article offers a cross-disciplinary overview of these approaches, naming the respective advantages and disadvantages. The suggestions resulting from this analysis are then condensed into a profile of requirements for an integrative theory to research social processes of institutionalisation in the field of mobile communication.

Keywords: diffusion, appropriation, uses and gratifications, domestication, innovation, mobile communication

Ulrich Riehm / Bettina-Johanna Krings: Goodbye to 'Internet for all'? The 'blind spot' in the discussion about the digital divide, p. 75–94

Today the vision of the Internet being used by all parts of society within only a few years that was prevalent since the mid-90s can be regarded as having failed. Empirical findings show that for the foreseeable future there will be a relatively stable group of non-users. The article at hand pursues the idea that this observation has implications regarding research on the 'digital divide' as well as on the general claim for an 'Internet for all'. The group of 'offliners' consists not only of people from socially or culturally underprivileged groups but also of parts of society that prefer technical and non-technical alternatives to the Internet. This article lays out related empirical material and proposes a typology of 'offliners'. Within the framework of previous research on the digital divide, non-use is primarily examined in the light of overcoming this gap and not (also) as an expression of alternative strategies of media use. This lack of acceptance of non-use is what we call the 'blind spot' of the discussion, which we attempt to disclose in this article and seek to discuss the consequences of this state of affairs.

Keywords: digital divide, offliner, onliner, Internet use, motives for use

Wolfgang Hoffmann-Riem: Broadcasting as public service. On the past, present and future of public service broadcasting, pp. 95–104

The issue of preserving the public service idea will be addressed, after first of all looking at the controversies that prevailed at the outset of public service broadcasting in retrospect. This issue will also be examined in the light of commercial competition and general trends of commercialisation in both media production and distribution. The article at hand argues for an authorisation of public service broadcasting for online-broadcasting. Moreover, selectivity and control of search engines, the noticeable abandonment of the principle of separating the responsibility for the net and the distributed contents will be discussed. Furthermore, another issue to be examined in this article is the technically facilitated charging of fees even for commercial full programming, made possible through digitalisation (especially via encoding and decoding).

Keywords: public service broadcasting, public service, Norddeutscher Rundfunk, broadcasting history, commercialisation, online-content, search engines, broadcasting financing

Udo Göttlich: Leo Löwenthal: Social theory of mass culture and critical communication research. Löwenthal's media analyses and mass culture critique in the context of American post-war communication research, pp. 105–127

The article at hand presents the essential stages, works and theoretical backgrounds of Leo Löwenthal's work from the time of exile of the early critical theory and the post-war era. The primary focus is on the relationship towards problems and basic ideas of communication science, especially with regard to mass culture. On the one hand, Löwenthal's position allows for differentiating the culture industry problem within the framework of a historically grounded analysis of mass communication and mass culture. On the other hand, it refers to the importance of critical communication science in discussions with competing theoretical traditions and strands of research. In this sense this article is an attempt to update questions and motives of critical communication research that are discussed alongside Löwenthal's works.

Keywords: Löwenthal, mass culture critique, culture industry critique, critical theory, history of communication science, Adorno, Lazarsfeld