



ICT&S Doctoral Students Meeting, University of Salzburg June 20-21, 2008



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Ben Anderson, Chimera: Technology and Social Change Research Centre, University of Essex, United Kingdom

Gunilla Bradley, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden

Niels Ole Finneman, Center for Internet Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark

László Karvalics, Department of Library and Information Science, Szeged University;
Information Society Research Institute, Budapest; Hungary

Leah Lievrouw, Department of Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles,
United States

Brian D. Loader, Social Informatics Research Unit, University of York, United Kingdom

Alice Robbin, Rob Kling Center for Social Informatics, Indiana University, Bloomington,
United States

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1. ABOUT THE ICT&S DOCTORAL MEETING

The ICT&S Center is a research focus at the University of Salzburg that deals with the interrelations between Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and society. The meeting will give young international scholars in the newly emerging transdisciplinary research field of social implications of ICT research the opportunity to present the research that underlies their doctoral theses and to discuss these issues with international experts and students. Participation of further students is welcome. The gathering also is an opportunity for making contacts and networking. It will be part of an international ICT&S networking meeting that will be attended by scholars who are recognized as experts in the research field.

For further details on the event see also: <http://icts-and-society.net/phd/> (announcement, discussion forum).

For pre-event networking and discussion, there is also a Facebook group named "ICT&S Network" (Internet & Technology – General):
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=27786521640>

2. LOCATIONS

Bus information

The buses in Salzburg go every 10 minutes from Monday until Saturday and every 20 minutes on Sundays. A single ticket costs € 1,80 and a 24-hours-ticket € 3,40. For details on the bus schedule look at: <http://www.salzburg-ag.at/Fahrplan.301.0.html>



How to find the Hotel Via Roma

Hotel Via Roma

Nonntalerhauptstraße 47

5020 Salzburg, Austria

Phone: +43(0)662824984

Web: http://www.hotelviaroma.com/en/co_aboutus.asp

Salzburg Airport → Hotel Via Roma

By bus

The bus station is located directly in front of the airport terminal.

Take bus no. 2 (direction: Obergnigl) to "Mirabellplatz", change to bus no. 5 (direction: Birkenriedlung) to "Wäschergasse". The Hotel Via Roma is located vis-à-vis of the bus stop "Wäschergasse".



The first bus departs from the airport at 05:35 from Monday until Friday and at 05:56 on Saturdays.

The last bus departs from the airport at 23:16 from Monday until Thursday and at 00:30 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

The last bus no. 5 departs from the bus stop "Wäschergasse" at 19:58.

For further details on the bus schedule look at: <http://www.salzburg-ag.at/Fahrplan.301.0.html>

By taxi

A taxi stand can be found directly in front of the airport terminal.

Railway station → Hotel Via Roma

By bus

The bus station is located directly in front of the railway station. Take bus no. 5 (direction: Birkenriedlung) to "Wäschergasse". The Hotel Via Roma is located vis-à-vis of the bus stop "Wäschergasse".



The first bus departs from the railway station at 05:55 from Monday until Saturday and at 09:25 on Sundays.

The last bus departs from the railway station at 20:15.

The first bus departs from the bus stop "Wäschergasse" to the railway station at 05:38 from Monday until Friday, at 05:55 on Saturdays and at 09:06 on Sundays.

The last bus departs from the bus stop "Wäschergasse" to the railway station at 19:58.

For further details on the bus schedule look at: <http://www.salzburg-ag.at/Fahrplan.301.0.html>

By taxi

A taxi stand can be found directly in front of the train station. The taxi ride costs approx. € 10.

How to find the Youth & Familyguesthouse (YFG) Salzburg

Youth & Familyguesthouse Salzburg

Josef-Preis-Allee 18

5020 Salzburg, Austria

Phone: +43 (0)662 842670

Web: <http://www.jfgh.at/salzburg-e.php>

Email: salzburg@jfgh.at

Salzburg Airport → YFG

By bus

The bus station is located directly in front of the airport terminal.

Take bus no. 2 (direction: Obergnigl) to "Mirabellplatz", change to bus no. 5 (direction: Birkensiedlung) to "Justizgebäude". After a short walk (see plan below) you arrive at the YFG.



The first bus departs from the airport at 05:35 from Monday until Friday and at 05:56 on Saturdays.

The last bus departs from the airport at 23:16 from Monday until Thursday and at 00:30 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

The last bus departs from the bus stop "Justizgebäude" at 20:01.

For further details on the bus schedule look at: <http://www.salzburg-ag.at/Fahrplan.301.0.html>

By taxi

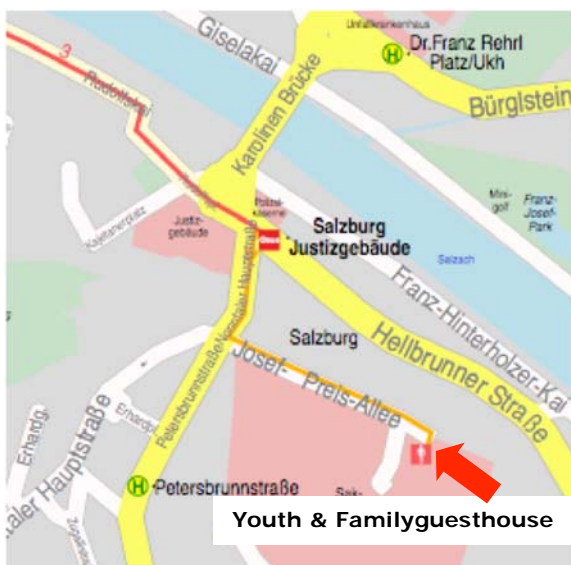
A taxi stand can be found directly in front of the airport terminal.

Railway station → YFG

By bus

The bus station is located directly in front of the railway station.

Take bus no. 5 (direction: Birkensiedlung) until "Justizgebäude". After a short walk (see plan below) you arrive at the YFG.



The first bus departs from the railway station at 05:55 from Monday to Saturday and at 09:25 on Sundays.

The last bus departs from the railway station at 20:15.

The first bus departs from the bus stop "Justizgebäude" to the railway station at 05:41 from Monday until Friday, at 06:01 on Saturdays and at 09:08 on Sundays.

The last bus departs from the bus stop "Justizgebäude" to the railway station at 20:01.

For further details on the bus schedule look at:

<http://www.salzburg-ag.at/Fahrplan.301.0.html>

By taxi

A taxi stand can be found directly in front of the railway station.



How to find the ICT&S Center

ICT&S Center

Sigmund Haffner Gasse 18

5020 Salzburg

Web: <http://icts.sbg.ac.at>

Hotel Via Roma → ICT&S Center

By bus

The bus stop “Wäschergasse” is located directly in front of the Hotel Via Roma. Take bus no. 5 (direction: Hauptbahnhof) to “Theatergasse”. After a short walk (see plan below) you arrive at the ICT&S Center:



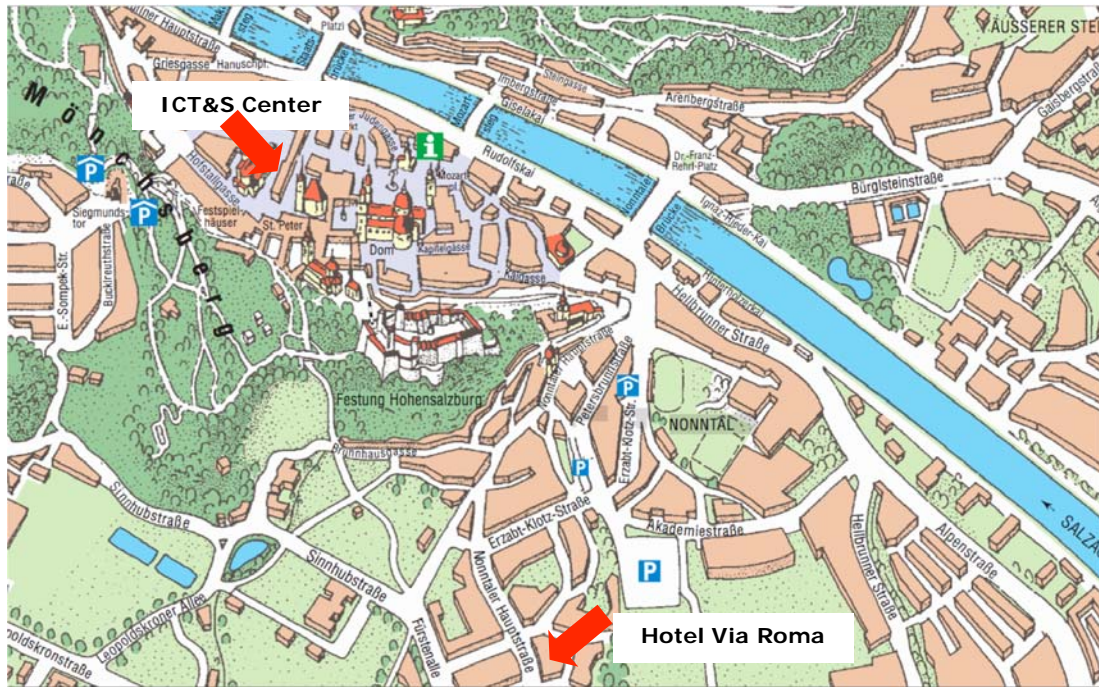
To go back to the Hotel Via Roma take bus no. 5, bus stop “Rathaus” (direction Birkenriedlung) to “Wäschergasse”. The last bus departs at 22:58 from Monday until Thursday and at 00:45 on Fridays and Saturdays.

For further details on the bus schedule look at: <http://www.salzburg-ag.at/Fahrplan.301.0.html>



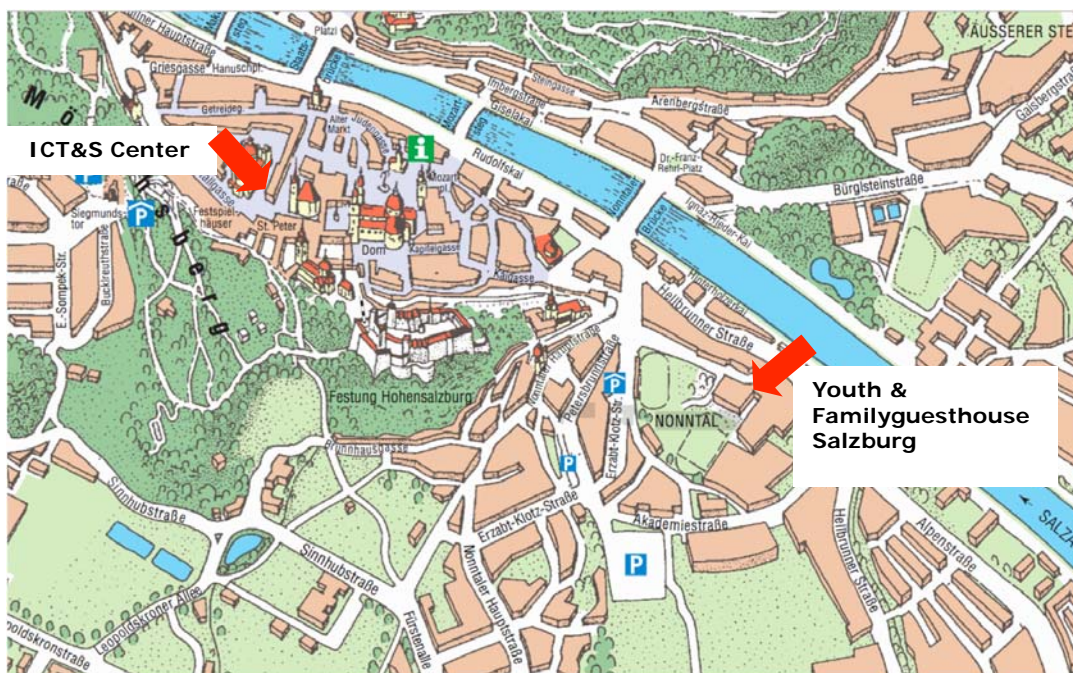
On foot

The ICT&S Center is within walking distance from the Hotel Via Roma. (approx. 20 minutes). See also http://www.salzburg.info/plan/plan_sbgzentrum.pdf



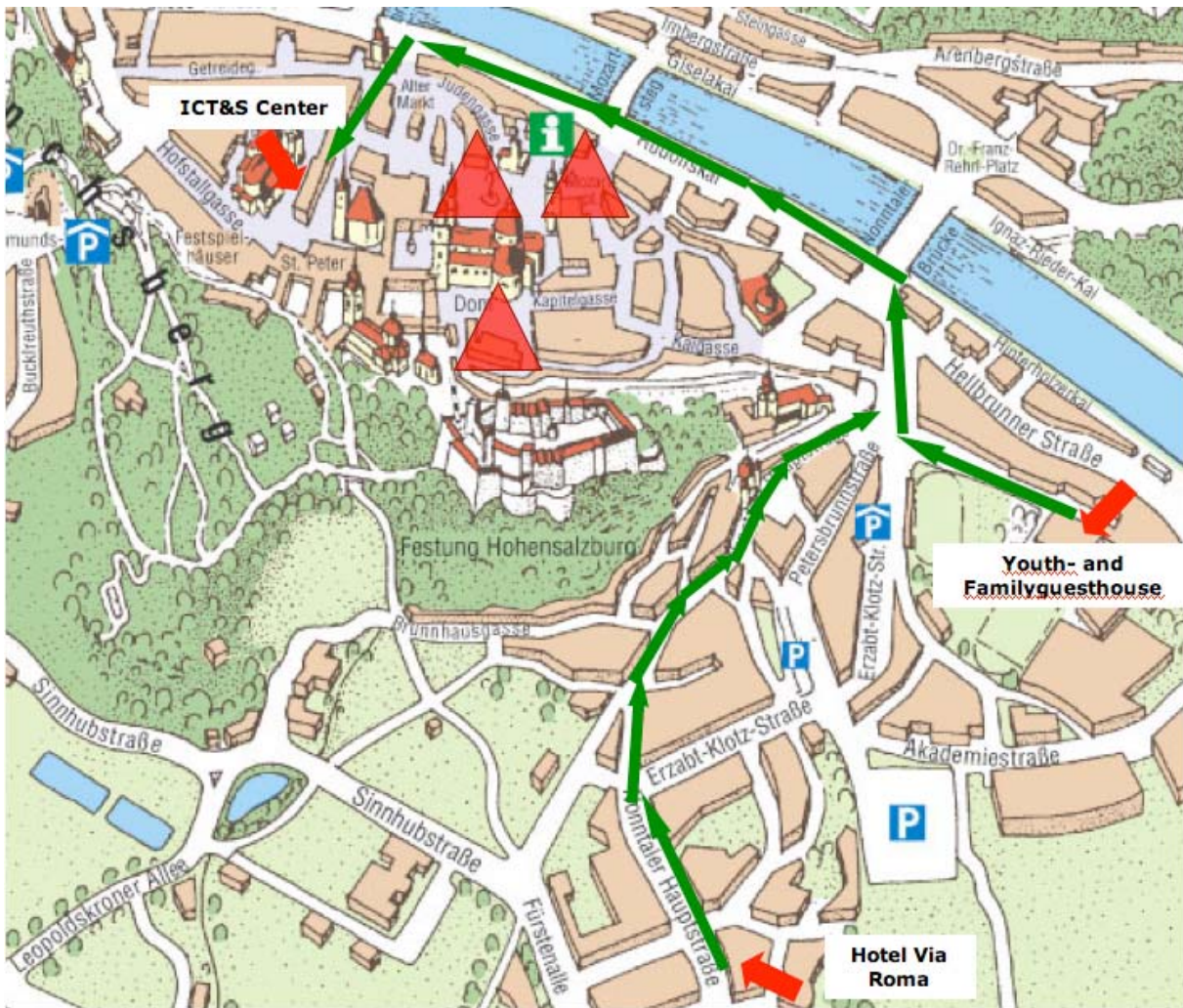
Youth & Familyguesthouse (YFG) → ICT&S Center



The ICT&S Center is within walking distance from the YFG (approx. 10 minutes).





Please take into account that while the meeting takes place, the European soccer championship takes place in Salzburg. Therefore some of the public places on the way to the ICT&S Center are not accessible because they are fan zones and you need to make a detour in order to reach the ICT&S Center. Take a look at the following [map](#).



-  Fan-area: daily from 14.00 until 22.00
-  How to reach the ICT&S Center without crossing the fan-area



3. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS (in alphabetical order)

Student Participants

Name	Affiliation	City, Country
Muhammad M. Abdul-Mageed	Department of Linguistics, Indiana University	Bloomington, USA
Amal Benaissa	Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics (LSE)	London, UK
Robert Bichler	ICT&S Center, University of Salzburg	Salzburg, Austria
Daniela de Carvalho Matielo	Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3), Open University Barcelona	Barcelona, Spain
Mihály Csótó	UNESCO Information Society Research Institute (ITTK)	Budapest, Hungary
Marie Denward	Department of Media and Communication Sciences, Malmö University	Malmö, Sweden
Indrek Ibrus	Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics (LSE)	London, United Kingdom
Randall B. Kemp	Center for Information and Society, University of Washington	Washington, USA
Bence Kollány	UNESCO Information Society Research Institute (ITTK)	Budapest, Hungary
Frederik Lasage	Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics (LSE)	London, UK
Stine Lomborg	Department for Information and Media Studies, University of Aarhus	Aarhus, Denmark
Alice Mattoni	Department of Political and Social Sciences, European University Institute	Florence, Italy
Imre Mátyus	Department of Library and Information Science, Szeged University	Szeged, Hungary
Szilárd Molnár	UNESCO Information Society Research Institute (ITTK)	Budapest, Hungary
Pedro Neto	Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon	Lisbon, Portugal
Anni Oja	Institute of Estonian	Tallinn, Estonia



	Language and Culture, Tallinn University	
Alberto Pepe	Graduate School of Information Studies, University of California	Los Angeles, USA
Andraž Petrovčič	Department of Informatics and Methodology, University of Ljubljana	Ljubljana, Slovenia
Celina Raffl	ICT&S Center, University of Salzburg	Salzburg, Austria
Ioanis Xenakis	University of the Aegean	Syros, Greece

Further students are welcome as participants. Please register per email to christian.fuchs@sbg.ac.at.

Professors acting as respondents

Name	Affiliation	City, Country
Ben Anderson	Technology and Social Change Research Centre, University of Essex	Colchester, UK
Gunilla Bradley	Royal Institute of Technology	Stockholm, Sweden
Niels Ole Finneman	Center for Internet Studies, Aarhus University	Aarhus, Denmark
László Karvalics	Department of Library and Information Science, Szeged University; Information Society Research Institute	Szeged, Hungary Budapest, Hungary
Leah Lievrouw	Department of Information Studies, University of California	Los Angeles, USA
Brian D. Loader	Social Informatics Research Unit, University of York	York, UK
Alice Robbin	Rob Kling Center for Social Informatics, Indiana University	Bloomington, USA

Organization

eTheory Research Unit
ICT&S Center



Contact:
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Salzburg, Austria
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Web: <http://fuchs.icts.sbg.ac.at/>



4. TIME SCHEDULE

The talks are organized in four panels. In each panel, professors and one student will act as respondents who will read the papers in advance and comment and engage in discussion with the presenters in the discussion sections.

We have allocated 30 minutes per talk: Each will consist of 15 minutes time for presentation, followed by a 15 minutes discussion and response section. Each panel will close with a general discussion on the presented topics.

Thursday, June 19 - starting 18 :00:

ICT&S Summer Chill Out Party and Barbecue:

On Thursday, June 19, the annual ICT&S Center's Summer Chill Out Party and Barbecue takes place in our courtyard. Those who are already in town on Thursday evening are heartily invited to joins us and party with us. The party is sponsored by the ICT&S Center.

Friday, June 20

ICT&S Center, Sigmund Haffner Gasse 18, Ground Floor, Big College

14.00-16.00: Panel 1 Social and Digital Divides

In this panel social causes and theoretical categories of digital divides, corresponding empirical research results, and practical policy measures and guidelines will be discussed.

Respondent:

Leah Lievrouw, Department of Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

Student Respondent:

Stine Lomborg, Institute of Information and Media Studies, University of Aarhus, Denmark

Symmetry in Community Informatics Projects: a Review of Digital Divide Concepts

Daniela de Carvalho Matielo
 Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
 Internet Interdisciplinary Institute
 Barcelona, Spain

The Dawn of the Information Age in Least Developed Countries (LDCs): Lessons Learned from Four Case Studies Conducted in Yemen, Malawi, Guatemala, and Lao People's Republic

Robert M. Bichler
 University of Salzburg
 ICT&S Center
 Salzburg, Austria

The Rise of Low Cost Internet Providers in Attempting to Advance Social



Inclusion of Disadvantaged Groups in Hungary

Bence Kollányi

Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME)

UNESCO Information Society Research Institute (ITTK)

Budapest, Hungary

General Discussion

16.00- 16:30: **Break and Refreshments**

16:30 – 19:00: **Panel 2 eCulture**

In this session, we will focus on how culture is lived and transformed online. Topics will include social ties, personal blogging, identity formation, and language in cyberspace.

Respondents:

Alice Robbin, Rob Kling Center for Social Informatics, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA

Gunilla Bradley, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden

Student Respondent:

Alice Mattoni, European University Institute, Florence, Italy

Social Cohesiveness of Network and Mobile Sociality – Exploring the Personal Networks and Social Participation of ICT Users

Andraž Petrovčič

University of Ljubljana

Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Informatics and Methodology, Centre for Methodology and Informatics

Ljubljana, Slovenia

Navigating the Blogosphere: Towards a Typology of Personal Weblogs

Stine Lomborg,

University of Aarhus

Institute of Information and Media Studies

Aarhus, Denmark

Symbolic Creativity as an Act of Identity Representation on the Internet

Imre Mátyus,

University of Szeged

Department of Communication and Media Studies

Szeged, Hungary

Linguistic Perspectives on the Research of ICTs: Corpus Research of rate.ee

Anni Oja

Tallinn University

Institute of Estonian Language and Culture

Tallinn, Estonia



General Discussion

20:00: **Dinner and Informal Get-Together**

Joint event of the ICT&S PhD meeting and the ICT&S network meeting); Restaurant Stieglkeller, Festungsgasse 10. In this case participants have to cover costs for eating and drinking themselves.



Saturday, June 21

ICT&S Center, Sigmund Haffner Gasse 18, Ground Floor, Big College

9:00-11:00: **Panel 3: ePolitics**

In this session, we will discuss political aspects of the Internet. The focus will be on changing patterns of political activism and political news reporting.

Respondents:

Brian D. Loader, Social Informatics Research Unit, University of York, UK
Niels Ole Finneman, Center for Internet Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark

Student Respondent:

Celina Raffl, ICT&S Center, University of Salzburg, Austria

ICTs in National and Transnational Mobilizations.

Alice Mattoni
European University Institute
Department of Political and Social Sciences
Florence, Italy

Internet-driven Changes in Environmental NGO Action

Pedro Pereira Neto
University of Lisbon
Institute of Social Sciences
Lisbon, Portugal

Online News Sites and Journalism 2.0: Reader Comments on Al Jazeera Arabic

Muhammad M. Abdul-Mageed
Indiana University
Department of Linguistics
Bloomington, USA

General Discussion

11:00- 11:20: **Break and Refreshments**

11.20- 13:45: **Panel 4: eInnovation and eInclusion**

In this session, we will discuss ICT-related innovations in science, economy, and leisure and their contexts on the one hand and if and how new technologies can be used as social innovations to include people on the other hand.

Respondents:

Ben Anderson, Chimera: Technology and Social Change Research Centre, University of Essex, UK
László Karvalics, Department of Library and Information Science, Szeged University,



Hungary

Student Respondent:

Daniela de Carvalho Matielo, Internet Interdisciplinary Institute, Open University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain

Mining Structural Communities of Practice in “Little Science” Research

Alberto Pepe
University of California
Graduate School of Information Studies
Los Angeles, USA

Genealogy Swap for the Mobile Web? The Dynamics of Creating T-Mobile’s Web’n’Walk

Indrek Ibrus,
London School of Economics
Department of Media and Communications
London, UK

Public Participatory GIS in Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction

Randall B. Kemp
University of Washington
Information School
Washington, D.C., USA

Broadcasting Culture Meets Role-Playing Culture

Marie Denward
Malmö University
School of Arts and Communication (K3)
Malmö, Sweden

General Discussion

13:45: **Lunch**

14:30: **Salzburg Excursion: St. Wolfgang and Schafberg**

Bus departure at bus terminal Paris Lodron-Straße to Sankt Gilgen, boat trip on Wolfgangsee to Sankt Wolfgang, from where we will walk up 30 minutes to Schafberg and Jausenstation Aschinger, where we will have dinner.

20:00 Return to Salzburg from St. Wolfgang

Approx. 21:00 Arrival in Salzburg

You are kindly invited by the ICT&S Center to join this excursion, participation is free. Please register either per email to Elke (elke.holzmann@sbg.ac.at) or by enlisting on Friday, June 20.



5. ABSTRACTS (in alphabetical order of presenters' last names)

Online News Sites and Journalism 2.0: Reader Comments on Al Jazeera Arabic

Muhammad M. Abdul-Mageed

Department of Linguistics, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA

Email: mumageed@yahoo.com

Abstract:

Journalism 2.0 refers to the use of new technologies in collaborative news making and news analysis by lay persons with (minimal) web publishing skills, much as Web 2.0 refers to the use of similar technologies to foster user-generated content and user-to-user interaction (Briggs, 2007). The version number in the term contrasts journalism 2.0 with traditional journalism, where news collection, reporting, dissemination, and analysis were controlled by institutions. Journalism 2.0 fosters freer, more decentralized, and more convergent journalistic practices and represents a second step toward more user-focused services. As part of this trend, online news sites strive to maintain a high degree of *interactivity* with their audiences by, e.g., facilitating site navigation, providing discussion forums, polls, and customizing to audiences' various surfing behaviors (Deuze, 2003).

One form of interactivity that some news sites employ is allowing readers to comment on published news reports. Such commenting represents a case of convergence between traditional media and new media, as well as a novel variety of asynchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC). However, little research exists about the phenomenon of reader commenting on news sites. Specifically, the themes, frequency, and regional coverage of readers' comments—and in general, their activity levels and distribution—are unexplored areas. Studying reader comments has the potential to increase knowledge of convergent media and CMC, as well as shed light on the interactivity strategies adopted by influential news producers.

The goal of the current study is to investigate interactivity as embodied in readers' comments on top stories on the Arabic news site of Al Jazeera, the controversial Middle East-based, bilingual network. Most research on Al Jazeera to date has focused on the TV channel, rather than the news sites. In an attempt to bridge this gap, Abdul-Mageed and Herring (to appear) analyzed both the Arabic and English language versions of Al Jazeera's news sites in terms of their layouts, structural features, regional and thematic coverage, and the ideological perspective reflected in the headlines of news reports. The present study focuses on interactivity on the site, and thus constitutes a second step in analyzing Al Jazeera's online presence. An underlying assumption of this study is that any attempt to get a grasp on Al Jazeera as an institution and a media organization should take comments, as a manifestation of journalism 2.0, into account.

The current study thus aims to answer the following primary research question: "To what extent is Al Jazeera Arabic's news site interactive?" More specifically, the study asks: "What factors (e.g., story themes, regional coverage, position on the page, day of the week) determine the frequency of reader commenting?"

To address these questions, all top stories from the news site and all comments on those stories were collected every other day for six consecutive weeks. The 189 top stories that were collected were manually coded for thematic as well as regional coverage using content analysis coding schemes adapted from previous literature (van Dijk, 1988), in the case of thematic coverage, and from Abdul-Mageed and Herring (to appear), in the



case of regional coverage. The 5,219 comments posted to the top stories were also analyzed to determine which topics and regions attract higher commenting rates. Also investigated were the rates of commenting per day of the week and the relationship between a story's position on the news site and commenting rates.

References:

- Abdul-Mageed, M. M., and Herring, S. C. (2008). Arabic and English news coverage on aljazeera.net. In: F. Sudweeks, H. Hrachovec, and C. Ess (Eds.), *Proceedings of Cultural Attitudes Towards Technology and Communication 2008 (CATaC'08)*, Nimes, France, June 24-27. Preprint: <http://ella.slis.indiana.edu/~herring/catac08.aljazeera.pdf>
- Briggs, M. (2007). *Journalism 2.0: How to Survive and Thrive*. University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism and the Knight Citizen News Network. http://www.jlab.org/Journalism_20.pdf
- Deuze, M. (2003). The Web and its journalisms: Considering the consequences of different types of news media online. *New Media & Society* 5(2), 203–20.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1988) *News Analysis: Case Studies of International and National News in the Press*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Dissertation:

Journalism 2.0: Interactivity, Discourse, and Globalism on Al Jazeera.net

Supervisor:

Prof. Susan C. Herring

Short Bio:

Muhammad M. Abdul-Mageed is a Ph.D. student in Indiana University, Bloomington, USA, with a major in linguistics and a minor in information science. His interests include (convergent media) computer-mediated communication (CM)CMC, online communities, social network sites, social bookmarking sites, online news sites, and critical and corpus linguistics. His recent work focused on Al Jazeera networks' Arabic and English news sites, YouTube, Wikipedia, and the Association of Internet Researcher's (AoIR) discussion list. He is also specifically interested in new media and web 2.0 phenomena.

**The Dawn of the Information Age in Least Developed Countries (LDCs):
Lessons Learned from Four Case Studies Conducted in Yemen, Guatemala,
Malawi, and Lao People's Republic**

Robert M. Bichler

ICT&S Center, University of Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria

Email: robert.bichler@sbg.ac.at

Abstract:

The emerging information age is characterised by the ubiquitous availability of information and communication technologies. While in highly developed countries, due to heavy investments in the telecommunication infrastructure, the public and scientific discussion more and more focuses on the so-called digital divide 2.0, i.e. the lack of ICT skills, for developing countries both, the access to and the use of ICTs until remain a huge challenge.

The goal of my dissertation thesis is to highlight these challenges, as well as the opportunities that occur for LDCs on their way towards an information society. The study



examines ICTs in four geographic and cultural diverse regions, including the countries Yemen, Guatemala, Malawi and Lao PDR, on the macro and on the micro level. The research on the macro level is guided by the central research question: Are ICTs in LDCs used to foster societal development or are they reinforcing imperialistic patterns of Western hegemony?

On the micro level, the project aims to investigate the users' demographics, their habits of ICT use, as well as the barriers and opportunities for the citizens emerging from the upcoming information age. The findings from the macro and the micro level will be correlated on the basis of five dimensions of society (ecological, political, cultural, economical and technological) in order to assess the state of the art and to formulate strategies for a sustainable implementation of ICTs in LDCs.

Dissertation:

Information and Communication Technologies for Least Developed Countries (ICTs4LDCs)

Supervisor:

Prof. Wolfgang Hofkirchner

Short Bio:

Robert M. Bichler graduated from the University of Salzburg in Communication Studies and joined the eTheory (Internet & Society) unit of the ICT&S Center in December 2004. From 2002 - 2004 Robert worked as a teaching assistant at the Institute for Communication Science, University of Salzburg. Robert's research is focused on the sustainable use of Information and Communication Technologies, especially in least developed countries.

**Symmetry in Community Informatics Projects:
A Review of Digital Divide Concepts**

Daniela de Carvalho Matielo

Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3), Open University of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain
Email: dde_carvalho@uoc.edu; dacamat@gmail.com

Abstract:

Through reviewing a selection of recent reports regarding Community Informatics (CI) projects in Spain, the present paper aims to contribute to a better understanding about the meaning of new terms that have emerged in the recent re-conceptualization surrounding the issue of the digital divide, such as *appropriation of the technology* and *autonomy*, among others; and to propose an actor-network theory (ANT) approach in order to deepen our understanding regarding the daily practices of these projects through identifying and exploring the aforementioned concepts, which are currently trapped in "black boxes" or "input and output" format.

Extended Abstract

As extensively studied and demonstrated by several authors, the new information and communication technologies (ICT) are increasingly pervasive in the whole society, as they are key elements of the rising Network Society (Castells 1996 and others). The use and access to the Internet is completely changing the way individuals relate to each other and to the world at large, as it allows a complete reconfiguration of access (Dutton 2004). Thus, to be unable to use or access ICTs, for different reasons, will progressively



imply a complete exclusion of essential social, economical and political activities which are being transformed by these new technologies.

This issue has been described as *the digital divide*, a term coined and spread at the end of the 90s to refer to the abyss between those that had and those that did not have access to computers and the Internet (Hargittai 2002). Nowadays, the digital divide is perceived and studied from a more complex point of view than it was when first identified: the focus is not only on the physical access to technologies that, but also on the abilities, uses and contexts to use it (Warschauer 2003).

The importance of community development and cultural and social aspects of ICTs has also been brought to attention, as an essential element to promote digital inclusion (Keeble and Loader 2004). The development of the Community Informatics (CI) policies and academic field, which seeks to provide a multidisciplinary research platform to undertake rigorous and critical analysis on the topic, also reflects this movement towards a more complex understanding of the relationship between technology and digital inclusion (Ibid).

The recent re-conceptualization of the issue of the digital divide can also be noticed in the maturation of several initiatives, as they have reshaped their goals and strategies to incorporate a less deterministic view of the role of ICTs. A new list of key concepts has emerged with this movement, such as *appropriation of the technology* and *autonomy*, which are recurring words in the discourses surrounding the theme.

Through reviewing a selection of recent reports regarding CI projects in Spain, the present paper aims to contribute to a better understanding about the meaning of these new terms and to propose an actor-network theory (ANT) approach to deepen our comprehension about the daily practices of these projects through identifying and exploring the aforementioned concepts, which are currently trapped in the "input and output" format, which can be thought of - using a ANT's concept - "black boxes".

According to our review, it is by helping to open these black boxes that ANT can prove itself a profitable path to explore the issue, as its understanding about the interaction between humans and non-human might allow for new insights about the dynamics of the digital divide.

References:

- Castells, M. (1996). *The rise of the network society*. Malden, Mass. ; Oxford: Blackwell.
- DiMaggio, P., Hargittai, E., Celeste, C., & Shafer, S. (2004). From unequal access to differentiated use: A literature review and agenda for research on digital inequality. *Social Inequality*.
- Dutton, W. (2004). *Social transformation in an information society: Rethinking access to you and the world*. UNESCO.
- Hargittai, E. (2002). Second-level digital divide: Differences in people's online skills. *First Monday*, (4)
- Keeble, L., & Loader, B. (2001). *Community informatics : Shaping computer-mediated social relations*. London ; New York: Routledge.
- Warschauer, M. (2003). *Technology and social inclusion : Rethinking the digital divide*. Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT Press.

Dissertation:

Los telecentros, las comunidades y los usuarios como actores-red: un estudio sobre la construcción de Internet por sus actores (Telecentres, communities and users as actor-networks: a study about the construction of Internet by its actors)



Supervisor:
Jordi Planella

Short Bio:
Daniela de Carvalho Matielo is a PhD candidate at the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3) of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain, a researcher in the ATIC Research Group on Social Action and ICTs, and a collaborator at the Laboratory for Digital Inclusion and Community Learning at the School of the Future of the University of São Paulo, in Brazil.

Broadcast Culture Meets Role-Playing Culture

Marie Denward

Interactive Institute, School of Arts and Communication (K3), Malmö University, Malmö, Sweden
Email: marie.denward@tii.se

Abstract:

I started my PhD studies late fall 2006 with the interest in and intention to study cross media production in the changing media landscape where young people both more actively use different media as (a natural) part of their everyday lives and also at a greater degree are invited by media companies to interact and participate in media entertainment productions.

In January 2007 I was offered to follow the birth of the multiplatform media production *Sanningen om Marika* and to evaluate participant experiences from a pervasive games perspective. Since it corresponded with my research interest it soon grew to become the focus for my dissertation.

The *Sanningen om Marika* is a rare example of a production that combines traditional broadcast culture with the participative culture fostered primarily within the live action role-playing community in the Nordic countries. The Swedish public service media company Swedish Television (SVT) collaborated during 2006 and 2007 with The Company P, a competent actor in the field of pervasive games, to produce this alternate reality multiplatform media production. The media production or game - it drew primarily on the experiences from alternate reality games – consisted of both a TV drama series followed by a 15 minutes faked TV debate and a pervasive game. The target group for the production was young adults and one of the aims with *Sanningen om Marika* was to involve the audience in new ways using broadcasted television and radio, the Internet, mobile applications. It used a strong 'fictional reality' aesthetics; a fictional universe that blurred fiction and reality. The result was a spectacular and controversial production offering online and live action role-playing experiences in parallel with traditional TV drama.

Between March and November 2007 I studied the realisation, and runtime, of the production. The different methods I used to study the production have resulted in a very rich and broad data material. Ethnographical participatory observations were continuously made at the production companies as well as in online real-time chats, forums and at live action role-playing events. Qualitative in-depth interviews were carried out with production staff members during the design and production process as well as with targeted participants post-game. An online post-game survey resulted in answers from about 350 respondents. Also participants' diaries (off game) and a big amount of meeting minutes, designs documents and media coverage have been gathered



and are about to be studied and analysed. Not to mention the web sites created for the game that consist of a large amount of blogs, forum posts, chat logs, video films and photos (www.conspirare.se and www.svt.se/marika).

The early and very preliminary results were presented at a wrap-up meeting with SVT in December and now I am in the process of writing a first report on the study, as part of the IPerG project¹, where part of the participants' experiences will be analysed. A paper - focusing on the differences between the production cultures of the two companies, and how it affected the experience they produced together - will be coming out in April 2008. The production is novel and rare and gives rich opportunities to develop many relevant research perspectives. I have not yet decided the exact focus of my dissertation, but I am clear about not to focus on the description/definition and analysis of the production as such. I am more interested in both the appearance of the phenomena and the production process; the co-creation by producers and audience. The fact that the changed media landscape challenges public service broadcast companies to search for new ways to attract audiences and make more 'interactive' media concepts, which invites participation, could be discussed. In this case examining the cooperation between the two companies and the meeting between two immensely different production cultures. But a research perspective could also be taken from an audience point of view, to study the reception, and to discuss the notion of consumption-production. I have not yet had time to analyze the data of participants' experiences where notions such as participant culture, producer versus consumer and 'circulation' would be of relevance.

I hope to be able to tie these different aspects of participation in the production process together to include both the co-operation between the companies as well as the co creation with the audience. In the forthcoming paper I would like to focus on this connection. This will have to be developed in my work with the data material in the months to come. Of course I also hope to get new insights and constructive critique at the doctoral seminars in Salzburg in June that will help me to develop my work.

Dissertation:

The Truth About Marika - A Public Service Pervasive Game

Supervisors:

Prof. Bo Reimer

Prof. Annika Waern

Short Bio:

Marie Denward (B.Soc.Sc. & M.A.) is a Ph D Student in Media & Communication Studies at Malmö University, Sweden. She researches within the game research group at the Interactive Institute in Stockholm. Her interests lie in the area of participatory culture and young people's participation in media design and media production. Her dissertation work focuses the pervasive game *Sanningen om Marika*. She has worked with the Interactive Institute since 2001, where she started up research activities for the institute in South Eastern Sweden.

Her working experience includes building engineering and fifteen years of teaching and lecturing in the educational field in Sweden and abroad.

¹ Integrated Project on Pervasive Gaming. www.pervasive-gaming.org



Genealogy Swap for the Mobile Web? The Dynamics of Creating T-Mobile's Web'n'Walk

Indrek Ibrus

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Abstract:

The paper will rely on the research conducted in 2006 and 2007 among the stakeholders of the (e)merging industry of the mobile web. Among my interviewees were people from such European and Northern American institutions such as Microsoft, Nokia, Opera, dotMobi, BBC, Volantis, Buongiorno, Sybase, Axel Springer, Deutsche Welle, ProSiebenSat1 and W3C among others. But the core site of my study was Deutsche Telekom's mobile hand, the T-Mobile International, as a globally spread company. The dozen interviews I conducted with the T-Mobile's employees focused on the dynamic why and how the company decided to launch the Web'n'Walk – the first flat fee and open mobile web approach in Western markets. Using discourse analyses as a method the paper will analyse, firstly, the inherent dynamic in the company of how the service was designed at the time of its development. Secondly, what was the impact of the general environment (the dynamics of the markets and of society in general) of how it was observed by T-Mobile to the design of the service. And thirdly, what was the role of Web'n'Walk to trigger change in that environment – did it have an effect as a path-breaker for the rest of the industry and in what ways? The latter question also refers to the fact that the paper will not only be based on the interviews with T-Mobile's employees, but also on the interviews with the rest of the industry representatives. Lastly, when analyzing the dynamics between the T-Mobile and its environment the paper will specifically ask about the power relations between the industry players of very different kinds that had a bearing on the development of the Web'n'Walk and on the further developments.

In theoretical terms the presentation will rely, firstly, on the paired use of two different, but complementary theories of social and cultural evolution: the social systems theory of Niklas Luhmann and the cultural semiotics of Yuri Lotman. Foucault's theories of power will be the basis the discussion of the power-dynamics in the industry. Its third theoretic pillar will be Schumpeterian innovation studies, especially in the form of the works of Chris Freeman and many of his colleagues.

Dissertation:

Evolutionary dynamics of new media forms: The case of early open mobile web

Supervisors:

Prof. Robin Mansell

Prof. Sonia Livingstone

Short Bio:

Indrek Ibrus defended his second master's degree (MPhil) in 2003 at the media and communications department of the University of Oslo, Norway with a thesis on hypermedia rhetorics. His first master's-level degree comes from the University of Tartu, Estonia where he majored in journalism and communication and minored in semiotics as well as in new information technologies (completed at the University of Helsinki). He started his PhD studies at London School of Economics in 2004 and hopes to complete



his studies within a year. His PhD research seeks answers to what are the social and cultural dynamics that are behind the emergence, further development and conventionalization of innovative new media forms. He is looking at the interrelations between the different social agents of different 'social subsystems' that are involved in designing these new media technologies and forms, how they are in dialogue and how through their dialogues they are establishing new normative meta-discourses for various new media forms. His case study is mobile Internet, a fairly nascent technological platform and hence his aim is to tell the stories of some of the early forms that are developed for this platform. He aims to ask who were the agents that designed these, what were their motives and how through their dialogues a normative basis for the new form was negotiated and established.

Public Participatory GIS in Community based Disaster Risk Reduction

Randall B. Kemp

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Abstract:

Natural hazards, such as earthquakes and floods, result in disasters for several reasons. One of the important factors is reducing risk before an incident arises. Such efforts are commonly termed disaster risk reduction (DRR). DRR is the process and engagement of a local community to explore factors of risk and implement methods, practices, and even cultural change which will reduce the probability that a natural hazard will result in a severe disaster.

In this paper I explore the applicability of public participatory GIS (PPGIS) technologies into DRR efforts. Geographic information systems (GIS) function as an electronic spatial data storage, mapping, and analysis tool comprised of software, hardware, and data inputs. GIS can produce simple maps as well as complicated analysis based on several data sources (or layers). Like standard participatory research methods, PPGIS incorporates end users, research subjects, and researchers into a collaborative environment where GIS are structured under the guidance of both the expert and the novice. One intended result are GIS appropriate to the needs and uses of a given community, with specific attention to the cultural underpinnings of that community. Introducing PPGIS tools into community-based DRR is not a neutral effort. The information and communication technologies (ICT) embedded in GIS can both aid the DRR efforts as well as impact the community in unintended ways. ICTs may be common in communities engaged in DRR efforts so the introduction of PPGIS may have minimal impact. What are the societal ramifications, however, of PPGIS methods in DRR efforts when ICTs are a relatively new aspect of a given community? What are the communication methods pertinent to PPGIS in the DRR context? How does the ICT literature address PPGIS methods? The paper addresses these and other influences of ICT on societies prone to natural hazards.

Dissertation:

Information organization in chaotic environments using public participatory GIS in community-based disaster risk reduction settings

Supervisors:

Prof. David M. Levy



Prof. Sanjeev Khagram

Short Bio:

Currently Randall B. Kemp is in his fourth year of the PhD (candidacy stage) at the University of Washington's Information School. He has begun preparatory work on the dissertation with literature reviews and project coordination with potential field contacts. Prior to commencing the PhD, he completed a Masters in Information and Library Studies from the University of Michigan and a Masters in Christian Studies from Denver Seminary. His research interests lie at the intersection of geographic information, information organization, and humanitarian action. Geographic information is a key resource in responding to natural disasters or working on international human rights issues. Organizing this geographic information with sound information science theories and principles can lead to greater geographic information use, analysis, and sharing. He is researching the use of ontologies, the use of codes for georeferencing, and classification schemes. He has co-authored published articles on GIS in humanitarian relief, lessons learned in humanitarian action, and the philosophy of privacy. He has been a research assistant with Marc Lindenberg Center for Humanitarian Action, International Development and Global Citizenship as well as the Interdisciplinary Program in Humanitarian Relief, both at the University of Washington.

The Rise of Low Cost Internet Providers in Attempting to Advance Social Inclusion of Disadvantaged Groups in Hungary

Bence Kollányi

UNESCO Information Society Research Institute (ITTK), Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME), Hungary
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Abstract

In my paper I present a case study on a rural WiFi project. The WiFi Village offers wireless Internet access and second hand computers in the most disadvantaged villages of Hungary with the collaboration of governmental, civil and business partners. The aim of the program is to improve the chances of Romany youth with the help of the diffusion of technology. The paper shows the social background of the programme's target group and outlines the role of ICTs in rural development.

Dissertation:

Measuring the Information Society – The Human Aspects of Competitiveness and Development

Supervisor:

Prof. Laszlo Z. Karvalics

Short Bio:

sociologist, researcher at BME-UNESCO Information Society Research Institute (ITTK). He started his sociology Ph.D. two years ago at Budapest Corvinus University. Currently, his main interests are: measuring the information society, e-inclusion of rural and disadvantaged groups, and location-based services.



Navigating the Blogosphere: Towards a Typology of Personal Weblogs

Stine Lomborg

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Abstract:

The paper offers a definition of weblogs that is sensible to the complexity of the blogosphere and reviews ways of categorising weblogs into sub-categories based on central communicative and social characteristics. Based on the general discussions about categorization of weblogs, the paper develops a working definition of the personal weblog and a typological framework that enables a qualified selection of empirical cases for a comparative study of different types of personal weblogs.

Dissertation:

Cognition, Communication, and Sociality: A Socio-Cognitive Perspective on New Media

Supervisor:

Prof. Niels Ole Finneman

Short Bio:

Stine Lomborg is a PhD student at the Institute of Information and Media Studies at University of Aarhus in Denmark. Her educational background is in Media Studies, Psychology, and Sociology and she has studied at the universities of Aarhus and Copenhagen in Denmark and the University of Washington in the US. Her PhD project is an enquiry into the uses of online social media within a reception theoretical framework. She studies how users engage in online social interaction with peers and in particular she looks into socio-cognitive processes of sense making connected to the uses of weblogs, chat and social networking sites. The project primarily uses qualitative methodologies and draws on theoretical perspectives such as cognitive sociology, social representations theory and discursive psychology. The main aim of her project is to rethink socio-cognitive reception-theory in relation to new media and to develop analytical strategies for empirical research on socio-cognitive processes in various types of online communication. Her research process is best described as iterative (hermeneutical) moves between theory and empirical cases. She applies the theoretical framework to different types of online interpersonal communication and uses the empirical data to refine and nuance the theoretical argument and shape analytical strategies for socio-cognitive research. The paper that she is going to present is a steppingstone in the process of designing an empirical case study on personal weblogs.

ICTs in National and Transnational Mobilizations

Alice Mattoni

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Abstract:

The paper deals with the use of ICTs in protest contexts. In particular, the Euro Mayday Parade (EMP) against precarity, which is both national and transnational, will be used as a case study to understand the role of ICTs in social movements' activities in a comparative way and using fresh empirical data. First, the paper provides an analytical description of the channels of communication used and created by activists during both the national and transnational stage of the EMP. Second, it argues that ICTs contribute to create disperse micro-publics of activists, potential allies and bystanders who participate to an intermittent discussion about precarity. This discussion, together with the EMP organization, develops through channel of communication in which different media continuously recombine, giving back multi-layered spaces of interaction in which the on-line and off-line worlds often overlap. Third, the paper ends with a critical conclusion about the risk of magnification of the ICTs role in protest campaigns, both national and transnational, reflecting on the creation of a European space of mediation and communication in the context of the EMP.

Dissertation:

Multiple media practices in Italian social movements against precarity.

Supervisor:

Prof. Donatella della Porta

Short Bio:

Alice Mattoni is a PhD candidate at the European University Institute in Florence. She took a degree in media studies and she worked in local televisions as a journalist and broadcasting responsible. Nowadays she is finishing her dissertation about media practices in contemporary Italian social movements that struggles against labour insecurity. Her research interests are media practices, ICTs, social movements, collective identities and public discourse construction.

Symbolic Creativity as an Act of Identity Representation on the Internet

Imre Mátyus

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Abstract

In his 1990 work "Common Culture", Paul Willis points out that the process of symbolic creativity plays a crucial role in the lives of young people. In these cases, material and cultural commodities serve as starting points for a new process. This process is aimed at creating new meanings, new elements of identity. The practices of transformation, re-contextualization and customization of goods seem to form a permanent phenomenon in the course of (post/late) modern identity projects. Symbolic creativity as a key component in shaping and representing identity subsists in the ideas of Lessig or Manovich when they are using the term 'remix culture' as description of current trends in popular culture. My presentation will focus on and will discuss examples of mash-ups, remixes, image distortions and collages from the Hungarian blogosphere to illustrate the concept of Internet use as a symbolic act of expressing elements of personal and/or communal/collective identities.



Dissertation:

Identity Representation on the Internet

Supervisors:

Prof. Zsolt Szijártó

Prof. László Karvalics

Short Bio:

2005 - Cultural Studies PhD Program, University of Pécs (Hungary) (recently passive)

2000 - 2005 Department of Communication and Media Studies, University of Szeged (H)
– MA in Communication and Media Studies

Field of research: Internet studies

Currently working as administrator and assistant lecturer at the Department of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Szeged

Internet-driven Changes in Environmental NGO Action

Pedro Pereira Neto

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Abstract:

Modern societies stand in our times in the face of two parallel processes: on one hand, the decline in the Gemeinschaft's geographical significance; on the other hand, the setting of communicative ties between citizens geographically distant from one another (Webster, 2001: 9). In an age where events taking place in different continents influence the lives of populations however distant they may live (Tarrow, 1996: 53), Information and Communication Technologies, considered both as a technological resource and as a social technology, play an important role in the shaping of existing social relations and in the creation of new modes of interaction and social organization (Ciberfaces, 2000).

However, traditional approaches of political action - such as party membership, unionism vigour, and elections - frequently misstate just how politically active citizens are by underrating changes occurred in the realm of political mediation (Norris, 2001: 2; Epstein, 1991: 230). The changes in the organizational and action repertoires go hand in hand with the specificities of each NGO's cultural interpretative devices, which are influenced by technological change (Zald, 1996: 266-270). On the other hand, frames are also subject to internal debate, a process in which ICTs also play a role (Webster, 2001: 7). The very idea that the political system can be influenced by civil society is, actually, behind ICT use in such organizations (Castells, 1997; Norris, 2001: 10).

This paper deepens earlier work I have conducted, with a main focus on clarifying and understanding the ways in which NGOs as citizenship practices have their structure and action repertoires changed by the use of ICTs. Among the main questions underlying this intention are:

- a) How are ICTs seen by activists within NGOs, and what variables are there behind such representation of ICTs?
- b) How are ICTs integrated by NGOs, and how are the latter's practices changed by such integration?
- c) How have the national legal framework and the shape of the Portuguese political system shaped this integration?



Dissertation:

Internet-driven Changes in the Portuguese Political System: Environmental NGO-Interest Representation and Agenda-Setting

Supervisors:

Prof. Pedro Magalhaes

Prof. Filipe Carreira da Silva

Short Bio:

Phd student in Political Sociology, ICS-UL (Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Universidade de Lisboa). Master's degree in Communication, Culture and Information Technologies, ISCTE (Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa), 2006

Graduated in Sociology, 2003

Member of the following research consortia and networks: COST A14 (Governance and Democracy in the Information Age), COST A20 (The impact of the Internet on the mass media in Europe), WIP (World Internet Project)

Researcher at OberCom (Observatório da Comunicação), CIES-ISCTE (Centro de Investigação e Estudos de Sociologia- Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa), CIMDE-IPL (Centro de Investigação Média e Democracia-Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa)

Research focus on ICTs and collective action, has also worked in the field of mainstream- and new media.

Linguistic Perspectives on the Research of ICTs: The Example of rate.ee Corpus Research

Anni Oja

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Abstract:

This study describes the linguist's view on online communication, based on a long-term case study: a corpus analysis of Estonian online communication. Rate.ee is one of the top online communication portals in Estonia, having more than 300 000 users (the total population in Estonia is around 1.3 million). The author created a language corpus of public communication in rate.ee (since 2002, including publicly available user data). The author conducted data analysis by combining NLP (Natural Language Processing) tools, sociolinguistic theories, and statistical methods. Recent results show that such analysis on capacious language material gives information not only about the language structure, but also gives information on the language users, their groups and community processes. For example: in one study the Estonian-Russian contradiction was observed. In Estonia there is a historical conflict between local Estonian and Russian communities, which includes the debate if local Russians should learn Estonian or not. The author analyzed Estonian-Russian conversations in rate.ee to see if there exists a pressure in choosing the language of communication. The study showed that the "struggle for language" did not appear in corpus, conversation participants tried to find the best way for transmitting the message and chose a language based on understandability, not on political principles, as is frequently the case real-life conversations.



Dissertation:

The Analysis of Estonian Internet Communication and its Language (an analysis based on rate.ee)

Supervisors:

Prof. Martin Ehala

Prof. Mare Koit

Short Bio:

Anni Oja is presently a PhD student (1st year) in Tallinn University, Estonia. She holds a BA in computer linguistics (Tartu University, 2007) and her primary interest is the language of computer-mediated written communication. She has been active in issues of ICT and youth, giving lectures about privacy, Internet security and non-anonymity and organizing educational ICT projects for youngsters.

Mining Structural Communities of Practice in "Little Science" Research

Alberto Pepe

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Abstract:

This paper will address a specific aspect of my dissertation research. My dissertation addresses how scientific and engineering knowledge becomes useful data, and the processes by which data become useful for computational purposes. I am interested in both the cognitive and socio-cultural processes that yield the production of scientific knowledge. My research employs social, bibliographic and scientific usage data gathered from a variety of heterogeneous, yet interconnected interdisciplinary laboratories. The work presented in this paper will introduce the sociological and methodological foundations of my dissertation work. In particular, I will focus on the data practices and the dense socio-technical interactions of a specific research center: the Center for Embedded Networked Sensing (CENS), a National Science Foundation Science and Technology Center involved in theoretical and applied work in the field of wireless communication networks and sensor technologies.

CENS is a typical "little science" research center. Unlike "Big science" collaborations, such as those typically found in many high energy physics and observational astronomy applications, CENS research does not require continuous use of massive amounts of human and computational resources. Every CENS researcher is familiar with the overall goals and the theoretical underpinnings of most research conducted within the research lab. Yet, similarly to big science endeavors, CENS research relies heavily on ICTs: the social and cultural processes that drive knowledge production and dissemination are "embedded" within the technical systems used by the research community.

This paper will specifically report on ongoing work directed at the study of the emergence and development of collaborative *structural communities* within CENS. Structural communities are cliquish groups that are made salient by the underlying structure of the network analyzed. In this case, a number of indicators of collaboration will be analyzed: coauthorship, data sharing patterns, and student-advisor relationships. In order to account for the richer information ecology that drives CENS collaboration, I will compare structural communities to *socioacademic communities*: the social, academic and demographic groupings of the members constituting the research center under study.



The work presented here builds on two different methodologies. First, a quantitative analysis of the network comprising CENS researchers will be performed. This will be aimed at uncovering structural communities of coauthors, data sharing partners, and other recorded collaboration patterns. The quantitative part of the work will be conducted mostly by content analysis of available bibliographic data, server logs and previously collected interview data. The second part of the work will employ ethnographic methods to gather social, academic, and demographic data from individuals in the research center. Such data will be used to construct the socioacademic community.

A comparative analysis of the two emerging communities will be performed. This investigation will aim to assess (a) the reliability of co-authorship and data sharing as indicators of collaboration, (b) the influence of social and academic characteristics such as affiliation, job ranking, social and physical proximity on the process of collaboration, and (c) the impact of institutional and social changes on the volume and nature of collaboration over time.

Dissertation:

From Knowledge to Data: Pre-Computational Thinking in Science (tentative)

Supervisors:

Prof. Christine L. Borgman

Short Bio:

Alberto Pepe is a doctoral student at the Graduate School of Information of the University of California, Los Angeles. He currently works as a research assistant in the statistics and data practices group of the Center for Embedded Networked Sensing. His research interests revolve around scholarly, scientific and social data. In particular, he currently studies scientific data practices in highly collaborative interdisciplinary research environments via network theory and statistical mechanics. Prior to starting his PhD, he developed digital library software and promoted open access among particle physicists at CERN, Switzerland. He also worked in the scientific visualization department of CINECA, the Italian Scientific Consortium, based at the University of Bologna. He holds a M.Sc. in Computer Science and a B.Sc. in Astrophysics, both from University College London, UK.

Social Cohesiveness of Network and Mobile Sociality – Exploring the Personal Networks and Social Participation of ICT Users

Andraž Petrovčič

Department of Informatics and Methodology, Centre for Methodology and Informatics, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to explore how the uses of information and communication technology are underpinning the changing forms of sociality and how these technologically mediated forms of social connectivity are transforming the organizational foundations of contemporary communities as well as of those social processes that create the normative framework for social cohesion. The paper contends that in the conditions of late modernity where the more intimate, private and personal, yet fluid and transient nature of social ties is accentuated by reflexive uses of communication technologies, network and mobile sociality have emerged that differently support the commitment of strong and the evanescence of weak ties, having ramifications for the types and



cohesiveness of community forms that are increasingly structured as personal networks. Based on a nationwide representative survey, this paper provides an empirical insight into these social forms by examining the structural characteristics and cohesiveness of personal networks according to diverse communication technology usage patterns. The results show that communication technology usage patterns have no bearing on the structural composition of personal networks and social participation, yet they do have an impact on the level of offline socializing as well as the network size and communication processes within personal networks, suggesting the growing importance of “fine-tuning” social interactions and personal relationships in a way that combines various (un)mediated modes of communication.

Dissertation:

New Social Ties: Contemporary Connections in a Networked Society

Supervisors:

Prof. Vasja Vehovar

Prof. Leopoldina Fortunati

Short Bio:

Andraz Petrovcic is a Ph.D. candidate at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana and currently holds the position of young researcher at the Centre for Methodology and Informatics at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana. His research interests span from technologically mediated interpersonal communication processes to internet-related social phenomena. His current work focuses on the role of mobile phones and internet-based communication services in mediating social ties and interpersonal relationships as well as on sociological and communication aspects of social agency in online communities. In 2005 he received the best student research award of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana for his study of deliberative communication processes in Slovenian web forums. Since 2006 he has been a member of COST action 298 on Participation in Broadband Society, where he has participated in the activities of the working group on “Humans as E-actors”.