

Introduction: The Fourth International Symposium on Media Innovations

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This special issue of the Journal of Media Innovations is dedicated to the Fourth International Symposium on Media Innovations that took place in Brussels, June 2015. The symposium is organised as a yearly event, alternating between Oslo, Norway (organised by CERMI, University of Oslo) and Brussels, Belgium (organised by imec-SMIT, Vrije Universiteit Brussel). The aim of the symposium is to gather a mixture of academic scholars and media professionals to explore and reflect upon how changing technologies and changing modes of usage and engagement with media bring about innovation and transformation of the media industry.

The media industry involves different sectors, including print, television, publishing, radio, advertising, gaming and social media. These media sectors are all facing specific challenges relating to

every aspect of the ecosystem, from content production and formats over content distribution and delivery, to changing consumption patterns and work practices and the need for new business models. Typical for the media industry is that it is not per se an initiator of technological innovation but is innovating by integrating and transforming technical innovations into new products, services and work practices. ISMI 2015 was opened by Flemish Minister of Culture, Media, Youth and Brussels Sven Gatz, who focused on the challenges today's media sector is facing and the need for innovation to tackle these challenges. He stressed the role of the government in stimulating the media sector to innovate and launch new initiatives, for example by supporting start-up programs. The media sector should be able to maintain quality and pluriformity

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in their offerings, even in today's changing media landscape. The main challenges we see are the consequences of digitisation, globalisation and audience fragmentation.

Digitisation has led to new work practices as well as an *overflow of available content* as it enables more efficient and diffuse content production, archiving and distribution. The conference addressed specific examples in news production and journalism, with attention to technological innovations such as camera drones and process innovations like robot journalism, referring to the use of algorithms to write news stories. Additionally, the importance of social networks for news coverage, and how users share news through these sites was addressed.

At the same time, the media sector has become a *global sector*, with players such as YouTube and

Netflix operating worldwide. This was addressed in two sessions, highlighting the impact of the Internet on media content and the integration of offline media with online media. The overflow of content has also led to more *fragmented audiences*, which poses new challenges in how to reach the audience. This is particularly an issue in advertising. The dispersed audience and trends of individual instead of social media consumption have led the way for *personalisation* of media services. Big data and datafication lead to many new opportunities for the media sector, but at the same time raise questions about privacy. This was also the main focus of keynote speaker Ivan Vandermeersch (Belgian Direct Marketing Association). Industry panel participants Dirk Wauters (KULeuven, former VRT, Siemens, Alcatel and co-author of the book ‘The new TV-viewing’), Ross Biggam (Director General at ACT) and Maxime Lacour (CEO at UniversCiné SA and treasurer at EUROVoD) discussed the future of (commercial) television, the importance of Over-The-Top (OTT) players such as Netflix and the promise of datafication and personalisation for television advertising. As they discussed changing user behavior, it became clear that the traditional broadcasting sector is prepar-

ing or should prepare for a decline in numbers of young viewers. OTT players and on demand services seem to agree more with the lifestyle of these younger target groups. Additionally, Dirk Wauters and Ross Biggam predicted a decline in advertising revenues for commercial broadcasters. Here too, datafication is an interesting opportunity as well as an important challenge. Targeted or personalised advertising provides opportunities to diversify the advertising market and to optimise the advertising process for commercial broadcasters. In order to develop targeted advertising, television markets need to be able to implement systems and processes for data analysis. This means that currently, the commercial television sector is somewhere in between, trying to cater to the traditional linear audience while figuring out how to adapt to the digital and connected media environment and changing user expectations. The panel members agreed that the European legislation towards broadcasting versus online industries and cooperation within the smaller European media markets are important challenges that will influence the innovation within the commercial television industry.

In this special issue, we present four selected papers with very diverse and original perspectives

on media innovation. We feel these papers highlight aspects of media innovation that might be less commonly discussed and provide context and insights on the everyday work in media organisations and how they cope with the different addressed challenges. A first contribution in this special issue focuses on the case of Netflix in Canada. Emilia Zboralska and Charles Davis of Ryerson University in Toronto examine Netflix as a case of transnational over-the-top video distribution and investigate whether it is a business and policy disruptor. Their contribution indicates that there is a clear need to rethink the current policy and regulation, as there is a discrepancy in what is expected of legacy media and new over the top players such as Netflix in relation to cultural sovereignty.

The second contribution in this special issue focuses on the different organisational choices and venturing modes of legacy media. Reinhard Kunz, Joschka Mütterlein and Vanessa Walton of the University of Bayreuth offer unique insights into how large media companies organise their Venture Capital Activities in today’s challenging media landscape. Their research indicates that investments have foremost a strategic motivation and are particularly directed to the fields of content pro-

duction and distribution as well as complementary business models.

Our third article focuses on innovations within companies and more particular on changing dynamics of creative work. Sari Virta of the University of Tampere and Jönköping International Business School and Nando Malmelin of Aalto University offer a micro perspective as they investigate the different tensions among team members at different levels (individual, development team and organisational levels) in a creative media innovation project.

Our final contribution of this special issue is situated within the journalism sector. Carl-Gustav Lindén of the University of Helsinki considers the future of journalistic work in a digital era. As algorithms allow for computational production of articles, he focuses on how journalists, managers and programmers feel about this evolution and what the possible influence might be on the work practices of journalists. An important reflection is on the ethical, moral and operational consequences that come with software-generated news.

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