

merzWissenschaft | MEDIEN + ERZIEHUNG

CALL FOR PAPERS 2024

# MEDIA, MEDIA CONCEPTS AND PUBLIC AUDIENCES IN THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY UPDATE

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The mediatization and digitalization of the everyday world means a loss of boundaries in media behavior. This makes it theoretically and practically impossible to apply a classical concept of media in researching and discussing delineated segments of life time segments (television time, radio time, internet/PC time) in media-educational terms. Media, relationships conveyed by media and those not conveyed by media converge, online and offline actions can frequently no longer be differentiated, as illustrated by coinages such as the German terms “Bildhandeln” (“image action”) or “Informationshandeln” (“information action”). At the same time the concept of media is essential in the formulation, conceptualization and application of central concepts of the discipline – for example in determining the relationship between media literacy concepts and concepts of digital literacy – entailing implications for objectives and methods of (media-) educational practice.

Here an interdisciplinary realignment can help with perception of different aspects of the concept of media: (1) Robust theoretical references and mental paradigms can aid in regarding media in their communicative and connecting structures, as a central component of public life, as symbolic phenomena, as technical media in the broadest sense (including cultural technologies) and in terms of their abilities to overcome time and space (cf. Winkler 2008). In this context digital networking dissolves and re-forms the delineations between personalized, collective and mass-media audiences. Nonetheless, media are very demanding symbolic systems that generate and work with codes. The tendency for media to become invisible in their use and thus excluded from critical observations thus becomes relevant (cf. *ibid.*). Reflection here should include the fact that these dimensions address different theoretical models and thought models (semiotics, technical and anthropological perspectives, psychoanalysis, structural-theoretical discourse, etc.) which, depending on the medial phenomenon in question, have to be applied, expanded or adapted in widely varied and flexible ways in order to accommodate the character of the respective media. Felix Stalder’s discussion of a culture of digitality (2016) opens new perspectives for the connection of media, digitalization, the individual, society, and culture with several dimensions: the principle of algorithms, referentiality and communality. These are only some of the possible perspectives on media and their theoretical consideration.

However, the concept of media is challenged by (2) concrete current phenomena of the digital transformation. What interactions for example with AI-based applications and other phenomena of the digital transformation are to be understood as medial behavior? Which concept of media is being referred to here? Media and the concept of media are becoming increasingly more complex. The mediatization of everyday life entails the use of digital media in many educational fields, while at the same time media education is also focusing on other educational fields. What does this mean for media education as a discipline? What is the lasting value of specialized media-educational institutions, where is the added value in joint concepts?

Challenges impact not only the relationship between media and subjects, but also the relationship between media and society. In media education there is a traditionally high reliance on a concept of media whose societal relevance is based among other things on the creation of public appearance in a democratically structured society.

In the context outlined and in the interest of positioning media and concept of media for (media-) educational practice we welcome papers addressing for example the following questions:

- Do “media” perform a different societal function as intermediaries today? How has this function changed?
- Current media generate new audiences – as well as driving individualization. What is significant here?
- Media are digital, but not all digital systems are media. Where is the delineation?
- What is the relationship of the individual and society with regard to these newer media developments, technologies and audiences, and how do “media” equally address the individual and society?
- How are media and digital audiences understood in pedagogical contexts? On the level of content, as informational systems, as technical artifacts, as medial or social structures and spaces, as economic or even para-state structures?
- How can media and digital audiences be successfully observed in their diverse inter-relationships between the individual, society and the environment? How can media and digital audiences be thought of as environments or extensions of the individual, society and nature?

Robust further development of media education requires an adequate concept of media. The planned edition addresses the question of which concepts of media, media behavior (in its innovative dynamics and manifestations) and digital audiences are currently being discussed in media education and its adjacent disciplines, and calls for the (further) development of a concept of media which facilitates the generation of societally relevant findings, identifies need for action and transfers findings appropriate to the perspectives of the subjects to (media-) educational practice.

In discussing the question of an adequate concept of media, media education seeks dialog with its adjacent disciplines, primarily with Communication Sciences and Media Studies, but also with Sociology, Political Science and Philosophy, Legal Science as well as information education and other technological sciences.

We look forward to receiving theoretical and empirical papers which can provide insights into the requirements and touchpoints of a currently adequate concept of media and associated key questions and which discuss the concept of media as well as providing direction for (media) educational practice.

Abstracts with a maximum length of 6,000 characters (including blank spaces) can be submitted to the merz-editorial team (merz@jff.de) **until January 8, 2024**. Submissions should follow the merzWissenschaft layout specifications, available at <https://www.merz-zeitschrift.de/manuskriptrichtlinien/>. The length of the articles should not exceed a maximum of approximately 35,000 characters (including blank spaces). Please feel free to contact Susanne Eggert, Fon: +49.89.68989.130, E-Mail: susanne.eggert@jff.de

## DEADLINES AT A GLANCE

- 8 January 2024: Submission of abstracts to merz@jff.de
- 29 January 2024: Decision on acceptance/rejection of abstracts
- 15 May 2024: Submission of articles
- May/June 2024: Assessment phase (double-blind peer review)
- June/July 2024: Revision phase (multi-phase when appropriate)
- End of November 2024: merzWissenschaft 2024 published