



ZENTRUM FÜR ZEITHISTORISCHE
FORSCHUNG POTSDAM



Arbeitskreis für historische
Kommunikationsforschung (AHK)

International Workshop and Founding Conference of the ECREA Section Communication History

User Generated Content Historical perspectives on the participation of audiences in social communication

3-5 June, 2010 in Potsdam/Berlin

ECREA Section Communication History
(European Communication Research and Education Association)
Center for Research on Contemporary History (ZZF), Potsdam/Germany
Historical Section of the German Communication Association (DGPuK)
Working Committee for Historical Communication Research (AHK), Austria

Call for Papers

Submission deadline: January 17, 2010

Within the last years “User Generated Content“ has become the dominating keyword to describe the change of social communication in the World Wide Web. Web 2.0 seems to facilitate the formation of social networks and to enhance political and cultural participation. From a historical perspective the question can be raised whether this change of social communication is rather unique or whether phenomena like “User Generated Content” are a continuity in public communication. Letters to the editor, the publications of social movements and Samizdat literature are only a few and very different examples how the audience tried to participate into public discussions – also in former times.

Especially in times of media change, when new media is integrated into everyday life, the question can be discussed to what extent new media and new opportunities of participation lead to social integration of the audience – or, on the contrary, whether the creation of multiple platforms of articulation primarily leads to a fragmentation of public discourse.

Nowadays accessibility to media – at least to the WWW – is given, but the impact of user generated content on public discourse can be regarded as limited: The public sphere seems to be highly fragmented and usually rather personally than socially relevant content is produced by the users. When mass media like the popular press or TV developed, accessibility was

extremely limited. However, TV provides relevant social content for large parts of society and therefore facilitates processes of social integration.

Summing up, the implementation of new media can have manifold impact on society. It can include or exclude audiences and it can strengthen and weaken public discourse.

The conference aims to analyze and discuss the forms and the relevance of the audience's integration in different times, cultures and political systems. Taking this perspective different types of media can be analyzed referring their potential to enhance traditional forms of participation and to create a platform for new audiences and forms of participation. How did new media affect the formation of new publics and affect traditional publics? Moreover, in a comparative perspective it is intended to take a look not only at long-term developments but also at differences and similarities between cultures, countries and regions: What kind of public discourse was enhanced by the Enlightenment? How did users articulate their interests and connect with each other within social movements like for example the worker's, the women's and the peace movement? What role played "User Generated Content" in different political systems? How is it used to support or to oppose democratic but also totalitarian systems? And finally it can be discussed how "the public" and "the private" was conceptualized or has to be rearranged with regard to the historical development of content produced by audiences?

Please send extended abstracts (500 words) for 15-minute presentations via email to the organizers (Klaus.Arnold@ku-eichstaett.de). Abstracts should be submitted electronically via email in Microsoft Word or PDF attachments and should include a cover sheet containing corresponding author's name, paper title, affiliation, mailing address, phone, fax number and email address etc.

All abstracts are subjected to peer-review.

Deadline for submissions is January 17, 2010.

Authors whose proposals are accepted will be informed by February 22, 2010. If a grant for the conference will be available, possibly travel and accommodation expenses of presenters can be partly refunded.

Organizers:

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