

Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI) Research Seminar

Autumn 2013

Location:

Communication and Media Research Institute
School of Media, Arts and design
University of Westminster
Watford Road, Northwick Park
Middlesex, HA1 3TP
Room A7.03

If you want to attend one or several of the events, please contact Christian Fuchs
christian.fuchs@uti.at (registration deadlines for single events is three days in advance)

Vincent Mosco: To the Cloud: Big Data in a Turbulent World
25 September 2013, 02:00 pm

Ravi Sundaram: Revisiting the Event, Postcolonial Life after New Media
2 October 2013, 02:00pm

Arne Hintz: Generating Media Change: From Advocacy to Policy Hacking
23 October 2013, 02:00pm

Paddy Scannell: Third Generation (G3) Media and Communication Studies
30 October 2013, 02:00 pm

Mirca Madianou: Family Life at a Distance: Polymedia and Ambient Co-Presence among
Filipino Transnational Families.
6 November 2013, 02:00 pm

Ehab Galal: The Sacred and the Secular on Islamic Television
27 November 2013, 02:00 pm

Bob Nicholson: America and the Victorian Press
4 December 2013, 02:00 pm

25 September 2013
Time: 2:00-4:00 pm
Room: A7.3

Title: To the Cloud: Big Data in a Turbulent World

Vincent Mosco
Queen's University

Abstract: This presentation offers an account of the political, economic, social and cultural issues emerging from the growth of cloud computing. It starts by situating cloud computing as a major force in the globalization of informational capitalism and in the advance of a particular way of knowing, what I call digital positivism. It proceeds to examine the origins of cloud computing in the movements that arose in the pre-internet era to create an information utility. The presentation then defines cloud computing, describes its major characteristics, and identifies the leading corporate, and government cloud players. In doing so, it describes the battles for market power among a handful of companies such as Amazon, Apple, Google, Microsoft, Facebook, and Rackspace, the rapid and, for some, worrisome, expansion of the government cloud, the internationalization of cloud computing, and the emergence of bottom-up community cloud projects. Next, it considers how the cloud is being marketed and mythologized through advertising, social media, corporate and government research, industry lobbying, and marketing events. Massive promotion is essential because dark clouds are gathering over the industry including the environmental problems created by data centers; concerns over privacy, security, and surveillance; and labor issues, particularly the impact on IT departments, and more generally on knowledge workers whose jobs are threatened by the cloud. The presentation concludes by offering a technical and a cultural critique of big data, digital positivism, and the cloud's "way of knowing."

Bio: Dr. Vincent Mosco is Professor Emeritus, Queen's University, Canada. He is formerly Canada Research Chair in Communication and Society and Professor of Sociology. Dr. Mosco graduated from Georgetown University (Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa) in 1970 and received the Ph.D. in Sociology from Harvard University in 1975.

Dr. Mosco is the author of numerous books on communication, technology, and society. His most recent include *Marx is Back – The Importance of Marxist Theory and Research for Critical Communication Studies Today*, ed. with Christian Fuchs and published as a special issue of *tripleC–Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society* (<http://www.triple.c.at>) 2012, *Getting the Message: Communications Workers and Global Value Chains* (co-edited with Catherine McKercher and Ursula Huws, Merlin, 2010), *The Political Economy of Communication*, second edition (Sage, 2009), *The Laboring of Communication: Will Knowledge Workers of the World Unite* (co-authored with Catherine McKercher, Lexington Books, 2008), *Knowledge Workers in the Information Society* (co-edited with Catherine McKercher, Lexington Books, 2007), and *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace* (MIT Press, 2004). *The Digital Sublime* won the 2005 Olson Award for outstanding book in the field of rhetoric and cultural studies.

Dr. Mosco is a member of the editorial boards of academic journals in the North America, Europe, Asia, and Latin America. He has held research positions in the U.S. government with the White House Office of Telecommunication Policy, the National Research Council and the

U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment and in Canada with the Federal Department of Communication. Dr. Mosco is a founding member of the Union for Democratic Communication, served as head of the Political Economy section of the International Association for Media and Communication Research, and was a longtime research associate of the Harvard University Program on Information Resources Policy. In addition, he has been a consultant to trade unions and worker organizations in Canada and the United States. In 2004 Dr. Mosco received the Dallas W. Smythe Award for outstanding achievement in communication research.

Dr. Mosco is currently working on an edited collection *Critical Studies in Communication and Society*, ed. with Cao Jin and Leslie Reagan Shade to be published by the Shanghai Translation Publishing House and a book on the political, economic, and cultural significance of cloud computing.

2 October 2013

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm

Room: A7.3, Harrow Campus

Title: Revisiting the Event, Postcolonial Life after New Media

Ravi Sundaram

Senior Fellow, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi.

Abstract: The last two decades have seen the massive proliferation of media infrastructures in India and many postcolonial societies. These include large media industries like those of television and cinema, as well as thousands of informal sites like greymarket bazaars, small video cinemas, and cable networks that are run by local operators. Around 700 million Indians have cellular phones that now also produce text, video, and digital images. After the cellular phone, a growing section of the population is now the source of new media produced, - that in turn links to online social networks, mainstream television (through 'citizen' journalism), and peer-to-peer exchanges of text, music and video. These massive expansions of the older media infrastructures have thrown the old control models of the regime into disarray. In a situation of media porosity, the information 'leak' from the state is widespread: leaked audio surveillance, secret documents. This post-digital leak feeds into the media 'event', and as such calls for a new reflection.

All this takes place in an Indian context where the call for 'transparency' through new technologies cuts across activists, judges, elite managers and liberal modernizers.

Transparency, once associated in urban debates with modernist discussions on surface (glass, steel), has now emerged in public discourse as ethical filter through which new media infrastructure is made visible.

This presentation sets up the secret and the transparent as force fields to excavate a remarkable post digital environment in India.

Bio: Ravi Sundaram is currently a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the University of Westminster's Faculty of Media, Arts and Design. He is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi. In 2000 he founded the Sarai programme along with Monica Narula, Jeebesh Bagchi, Ravi Vasudevan and Shuddhabrata Sengupta. Sundaram has co-edited the Sarai Reader series, *The Public Domain* (2001), *The Cities of Everyday Life* (2002), *Shaping Technologies* (2003), *Crisis Media* (2004), and *Frontiers* (2007). He is the author of *Pirate Modernity: Media Urbanism in Delhi* (Routledge, London 2009). *No Limits: Media Studies from* , (Oxford University Press, Delhi:2013) . Sundaram's current work is on contemporary fear after media modernity.

He has been a visiting Professor at the School of Architecture and Planning, Delhi, and also taught in Princeton University, Johns Hopkins University, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and the University of Oxford.

23 October 2013

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm

Room: A7.3, Harrow Campus

Title: Generating Media Change: From Advocacy to Policy Hacking

Arne Hintz

Lecturer, Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Cardiff University

Abstract: Trends like media ownership concentration, privacy invasions and internet surveillance have increasingly mobilised concerned citizens and civil society groups. Efforts to reform the media and communications environment have ranged from policy campaigns to the practical development of technological alternatives. Moving beyond classic advocacy, some groups have started to write new policy proposals and engage in citizen-based law-making. From Iceland to Germany to Argentina, they have developed and assembled new legal frameworks, and through ‘policy hackathons’ they have analysed and improved policy. Arne Hintz will discuss these forms of ‘policy hacking’ and will explore their implications for media activism, policy change, and democratic engagement.

Bio: Arne Hintz is Lecturer at the School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies at Cardiff University, UK. He has previously worked at McGill University in Montreal and Central European University in Budapest. His research connects communication policy, media activism, citizen media, and technological change. He is Chair of the Community Communication Section, and Vice-Chair of the Global Media Policy Working Group, of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). He has a practical background as journalist, media activist, and communication rights advocate. His publications include the book ‘Civil Society Media and Global Governance’ (Lit, 2009) and the co-edited volume ‘Beyond WikiLeaks: Implications for the Future of Communications, Journalism, and Society’ (Palgrave 2013).

30 October 2013

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm

Room: A7.3, Harrow Campus

Title: Third Generation (G3) Media and Communication Studies

Paddy Scannell

University of Michigan

Abstract: In 2007 I published the first part of a trilogy: *Media and Communication* (Sage UK). The second volume, *Television and the Meaning of "Live"* (Polity, 2014) is due out in November/December this year. *M&C* is an introduction to the history of our academic field of enquiry. In my accounts it had two key generative, generational moments: the establishment of a sociology of mass communication in the USA between the mid thirties and fifties (G1), and the establishment of media/cultural studies in the UK in the seventies and eighties (G2). In part the book serves as a review of the existing literature for its successor. It serves to prepare (and clear) the ground for an introduction to a new approach (what I think of as third generation (G3) media and communication studies) = as outlined in *TML*. In my presentation I will discuss the relationship between the two books and offer reasons and justifications for this new way of engaging with the study of media and communication.

Bio: Paddy Scannell joined the Department of Communication at the University of Michigan as a fully tenured professor in the fall of 2006. He worked for many years at the University of Westminster (London) where he and his colleagues established, in 1975, the first undergraduate degree program in Media Studies in the UK. He is a founding editor of *Media, Culture and Society* which began publication in 1979 and is now issued six times yearly. He is the author of *A Social History of British Broadcasting, 1922-1939* which he wrote with David Cardiff, editor of *Broadcast Talk* and author of *Radio, Television and Modern Life*. He is currently working on a trilogy. The first volume, *Media and Communication*, was published in June 2007. Professor Scannell is now working on the second volume, *Television and the Meaning of 'Live.'* The third volume, *Love and Communication*, is in preparation. His research interests include broadcasting history and historiography, the analysis of talk, the phenomenology of communication and culture and communication in Africa.

6 November 2013

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm

Room: A7.3, Harrow Campus

Title: Family Life at a Distance: Polymedia and Ambient Co-Presence among Filipino Transnational Families.

Mirca Madianou

Goldsmiths College

Abstract: Transnational families are becoming increasingly prevalent in the context of the feminisation of migration partly fuelled by the demand for care and domestic workers in the global North. Many of these new migrants are mothers who leave their children behind. Family separation and the phenomenon of the left-behind children are largely seen as one of the hidden injuries of globalisation: the high social cost the developing nations must pay in return for the remittances which keep their economies afloat. Parallel to these developments is the explosion of new communications technologies over the past 2-3 years. Now a Filipina migrant mother in London can use a plethora of platforms – such as phone calls, text, email, IM, Skype and social networking sites such as facebook – to keep in touch with her children. But what are the contours of this ‘connected family life’ and what role does the new environment of ‘polymedia’ (Madianou and Miller, 2012) play?

In my talk I will report on a long-term ethnography of Filipina migrant mothers in the UK and their children who remain in the Philippines (2007-2010 with a follow-up in 2012-13). By contrasting the perspectives of migrants and their left-behind children I observe that the communicative environment of ‘polymedia’, cannot solve the social problems of relationships or of prolonged separation. However, I will argue that new media have profound consequences for the ways migrants and their families experience and manage long distance relationships. The arrival of smartphones has further accentuated the mediation of these relationships by sustaining new forms of ‘ambient co-presence’ (Madianou, 2014). Moreover, new communication technologies can have further unexpected consequences by contributing to the justification of decisions relating to migration and settlement and therefore to the phenomenon of migration as a whole.

Bio:

Mirca Madianou is Senior Lecturer in Media and Communications at Goldsmiths, University of London. She previously taught at the Universities of Cambridge (2004-2011) and Leicester (2011-13). Between 2007-2011 she was PI on the ESRC project ‘Migration, ICTs and transnational families’. She is the author of *Mediating the Nation: news, audiences and the politics of identity* (2005) and *Migration and New Media: transnational families and polymedia* (with Daniel Miller, 2011) and the co-editor of *Ethics of Media* (with Nick Couldry and Amit Pinchevski, 2013). Her current research examines the social consequences of new media environments in non-Western contexts, focusing specifically on migrant networks and transnational family communication.

27 November 2013

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm

Room: A7.3, Harrow Campus

Title: The Sacred and the Secular on Islamic Television

Ehab Galal

Assistant Professor, Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Abstract: With the appearance of around 50 Arab Islamic satellite-television-channels the number of television preachers presented in different programs and talk shows has increased dramatically. This growing presence of religious talk on TV could be seen as what some have defined as a process of re-sacralization or de-secularization. However, several aspects of the programming may point in opposite directions where preaching is turned into lifestyle guidance being just as secular as sacred in its expression and form. Hence, the main question of my presentation is how Islam on Arab Islamic satellite-channels is mediated through religious lifestyle programming offering the audience not only a position as Muslim, but also a position as consumer and citizen within a modern and secular public sphere.

Bio: Ehab Galal is a full-time Assistant Professor in Media and Society in the Middle East at Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies at University of Copenhagen. He has for the last three years been part of 'the New Islamic Public Sphere Programme'. His research focuses on Arab and Muslim media in the Middle East as well as transnationally. Currently, he is completing a comparative and qualitative research project on audience responses to Arabic Islamic Television including conducting fieldwork and research interviews in Egypt, the UK, Denmark and Saudi Arabian. The project is funded by the Danish Council for Independent Research. Dr. Galal has published several peer-reviewed articles in well-established journals and in edited volumes by well-know publishers. He has since the beginning of 2010 presented about 30 papers at international conferences in Europe, the Middle East and the US.

4 December 2013

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm

Room: A7.3, Harrow Campus

Title: America and the Victorian Press

Bob Nicholson

Lecturer in History, Edge Hill University

Abstract: Widespread popular fascination with America, and an appreciation of American culture, was not introduced by Hollywood cinema during the early decades of the 20th century, but emerged during the late-Victorian period and was driven by the popular press. By the 1880s, newspaper audiences throughout the country were consuming fragments of American life and culture on an almost daily basis. Under the impulses of the so-called ‘new journalism’, representations of America appeared regularly within an eclectic range of journalistic genres, including serialised fiction, news reports, editorials, humour columns, tit-bits, and travelogues. Forms of American popular culture – such as newspaper gags – circulated throughout Britain and enjoyed a sustained presence in bestselling papers. These imported texts also acted as vessels for the importation of other elements of American culture such as the country’s distinctive slang and dialects.

Drawing upon extracts from my doctoral research, this talk explores the role played by the late-Victorian popular press as a ‘contact zone’ between America and the British public. It also comments on the new methodological possibilities offered to historians by the digitisation of nineteenth century newspaper archives. In particular, it outlines how these resources have begun to break down geographic and disciplinary boundaries and encourage the exploration of transnational and intertextual connections.

Bio: Bob Nicholson is a Lecturer in History at Edge Hill University. In 2012 he completed a PhD on transatlantic journalism at the University of Manchester. His work has been published in the *Journal of Victorian Culture*, the *Victorian Periodicals Review*, and *Media History*. He was awarded the inaugural ‘Gale Fellowship in Nineteenth-Century Media’ for his innovative use of digital archives. He blogs at digitalvictorianist.com.