

Call for Papers
COMMUNICATION POLICY AND TECHNOLOGY (CP&T) section

International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)
Academic Conference, July 15-19, 2012, Durban (South-Africa)
South-North Conversations
<http://www.iamcr2012.ukzn.ac.za/>

The **Communication Policy and Technology (CP&T) Section** of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) invites submissions for the **IAMCR 2012 conference** to be held from July 15-19, 2012 at the Howard College Campus of the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) in **Durban (South Africa)**. The deadline for submissions of abstracts and panel proposals is **February 14, 2012**.

The conference will be held under the general theme, 'South-North Conversations'. While the theme points to the asymmetry of and divides in global communication flows, it expresses at the same time a need for Western countries to listen to and learn from experiences from the global South. The theme thus calls for balanced and empowering narratives that do not regard those in 'the South' primarily as victims in need of hand-outs from the more affluent. Rather, the conference wishes to emphasise the communicative empowerment and the positive potential of media and communication technologies in and from the 'Global South'.

The general conference theme is very relevant for the CP&T Section, which is oriented towards policy and practices with respect to (digital) communication technology. The role and meaning of ICT in the global South-North relationship also serves as a metaphor for issues of disempowerment-empowerment on national and local levels. The use of the notion of 'empowerment' is a long-standing tradition especially in the social welfare and radical education literature. When applying it in the analysis of the implications of communication technology, however, it is crucial to take into account Mansell's (2002: 409) assertion that:

[...] the implications of the new media are contradictory. Once connected, there are no grounds for simply assuming that citizens will be empowered to conduct their social lives in meaningful ways. There is, therefore, a growing need to examine whether the deployment of new media is consistent with ensuring that the majority of citizens acquire the necessary capabilities for interpreting and acting upon a social world that is intensively mediated by the new media.¹

Starting from this perspective, we observe a paradox: on the one hand, ICT instruments like social media are proliferating, reinforcing the potential for communicative empowerment; on the other hand, empirical evidence on what empowerment actually consists of is still limited. In addition, the risks and structural constraints associated with this potential for empowerment are often downplayed in techno-optimistic accounts of the impact of technology on society and politics. Understanding both the opportunities and risks involved in the co-evolution of media technologies and society is at the core of the section's remit in the IAMCR 2012 conference.

In addition to our open call for papers, the CP&T section invites paper and panel proposals addressing the **following themes** that are particularly relevant to the section, organised for presentational purposes by a thematic focus on policy, on practices, and on technology:

¹ Mansell, Robin (2002) 'From digital divides to digital entitlements in knowledge societies', in *Current Sociology*, 50 (3), 407-426.

1 - Policy

- Net-neutrality: a first amendment for the Internet?
- Internet censorship and control mechanisms
- Transparency of government, open data and whistleblowing in the post-Wikileaks age
- DPI (Deep Packet Inspection) and Internet governance
- Redefining Internet openness and power relations in the age of 'platformisation'
- Civic/internet liberties in relation to hacktivism and peer-to-peer file sharing
- A new civil society agenda and a new strategy for the next WSIS?
- Social, economic and legal issues related to (new) regulatory initiatives worldwide on privacy and data protection (eg EU)

2 - Practices

- User (dis)empowerment and the disappearance of media for people living 'in' media
- Reconfiguring trust and identity in online/offline communities and user-generated content
- Privacy and the commodification of personal data
- Radical protest, (everyday) resistance and networks
- Social and policy consequences of (behavioural) advertising - targeting, filtering, profiling and sorting
- Mitigation of risks and responsibility in online environments for different audiences
- OccupyWallStreet/ Indignados movement: how communication technologies and policies are used by and affected by those involved?
- Tensions between content producers (including users and 'producers') and content distributors

3 - Technology

- Construction of technology: privacy-by-design versus surveillance-by-design
- Political economy of social media
- Changing policies, value networks and user practices in a digital audio-visual landscape
- Role of mobile technologies and services in global South contexts
- Hegemony and post-hegemony, and Internet technologies and algorithms
- Creativity and control through ambient intelligence, and the Internet-of-Things (RFID)
- Changing nature of digital divides and mass self-communication

Submission information

The CP&T section welcomes proposals for papers bearing on the above or related issues by submitting an **abstract** (300 – maximum 500 words). Abstracts should state the title, the methods or approach used, and briefly introduce the theoretical framework and empirical research on which the paper will be based. The scholarly presentation of accepted submissions can take place in several types of sessions: Paper presentation sessions (i.e. 4-5 presenters each with 12-15 minutes, requiring full paper submitted on time) and High intensity sessions (i.e. 6-8 presenters each with 5-7 minutes). While, IAMCR accepts presentations and papers in English, French and Spanish, it is requested that abstracts and panel proposals, if at all possible, be submitted in English to facilitate the reviewing process.

Proposals for **panels** are also welcome. A proposal should have four to five papers and should provide: (1) a panel title, (2) a framing text and (3) short abstracts for all the papers with paper titles and authors. The framing text (maximum 500 words) should contain the overall idea and goal of the panel, how it responds to the CP&T section CfP. A panel chair and a discussant should also be proposed. The 500 word panel framing text and the individual paper abstracts need to be submitted separately. They will be reviewed and based on this review we will accept, accept with revisions, or decline the panel.

Submission of abstracts, panel proposals and (once accepted) full papers can only be done online through **IAMCR Open Conference System (OCS)** using the link to be found on the official Durban conference website. The OCS system at <<http://iamcr-ocs.org>> will open on 1 December 2011 and close on 14 February 2012. Submissions via e-mail will not be reviewed.

It is expected that, normally, only one abstract will be submitted per person for consideration by the Conference. However, under no circumstances should there be more than three abstracts bearing the name of the same proposer either individually or as part of any group of authors. Please note also that the same abstract or another version with minor variations in title or content must not be submitted to other IAMCR Sections or Working Groups for consideration, after an initial submission. Such submissions will be deemed to be in breach of the conference guidelines and will be automatically rejected by the Open Conference System (OCS), by the Head of the Section or by the Conference Programme Referee. Applicants submitting multiple abstracts for papers risk being removed entirely from the conference programme.

The **deadlines** are:

- **February 14, 2012:** Submission of abstracts via OCS (papers and panel proposals will be assessed by double blind review)
- **March 12, 2012:** Announcement of acceptances and start of conference registration.
- **June 10, 2012:** Full papers due via OCS (around 7,500 words, excluding notes and references). There is no second round of reviewing for acceptance.

If a proposal is accepted, the presenter must also register for conference participation in order to be included in the final conference programme of the Section. A CP&T best paper award will be made to one of the paper presenters, based on the full papers submitted in time.

Additional questions about the CP&T sessions (submission, themes, panels etc.) at the IAMCR 2012 conference can be addressed to Maria Michalis (m.michalis[AT]westminster.ac.uk) and Jo Pierson (jo.pierson[AT]vub.ac.be). For further information on the conference (registration, theme, location, etc.), please contact the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) or consult the Conference Organizers via the website at: <<http://www.iamcr2012.ukzn.ac.za>> or by email at <IAMCR2012@ukzn.ac.za>.

For general information on the CP&T section, you can contact:

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