



Call for Papers

## **Acting on media: pioneer communities, social movements and civil society organizations**

### **Organizer**

Sociology of Media Communication of the German Communication Association (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft); Creative Unit Communicative Figurations, ZeMKI, University of Bremen

### **Conference Team**

Prof. Dr. Andreas Hepp, Dr. Sigrid Kannengießer and Dr. Sebastian Kubitschko

### **Date**

13 and 14 October 2016

### **Venue**

University of Bremen, Germany

In one way or the other the current transformation of society is related to media, which are understood to mean organizations, content and technologies. As a consequence, media themselves are gaining increasing relevance in political debates and for political activity per se. Actors like hacker collectives, alternative media or open source movements do not only use media to organize, collaborate and to mobilize, but explicitly center their activities on media-related questions. Pioneer communities like the Quantified Self or Makers movement have emerged as new kinds of collectivities at the crossroads between social movements and think tanks, in their support of new forms of media practice. At the same time, new initiatives critically deal with media and point to problems caused by current media appropriation. One prominent case is Repair Cafés where people maintain their devices to avoid buying new ones, pointing to the socio-ecological damage the production and disposal of media technologies cause. The number of examples that could be added to this list is constantly growing.

What the actors mentioned have in common is that they tinker around with media, tease them apart, explore and modify them. They thematize how media are dominantly used in society and they often influence the way media are constructed and perceived in public discourse. Overall, by putting media at the center of their involvement, they are *acting on* media. Along with this development, apparently clear distinctions between 'alternative' and 'established' groups, between 'insider' and 'outsider' tactics, between 'traditional' and 'new' forms of media-related engagement become blurred. The core idea of this workshop is to bring together empirical analysis and critical reflections on different forms of *acting on* media.

With this focus in mind, we would like to discuss the following questions:

- Who are the actors (individual, collective, movement-based, etc.) that thematize, problematize and/or politicize contemporary media?
- How do actors act on media? What are their concrete aims and practices? What is their role in our social world?
- Which contradictions can we perceive regarding these actors and media appropriation – either in the initiatives themselves or between them?
- Which relevance and influence have and which constraints do these initiatives face in highly media-saturated societies?
- What kind of influence and effects result from these activities/actions?

We explicitly encourage contributions from actors analyzing in different research areas and disciplines– ranging from communities, organizations, think tanks, movements, and the like – that put media in the center of their activities. Besides presentations of empirical studies, we also ask for theoretical contributions and methodological reflections on how to analyze the research object outlined above.

### **Doctoral students**

We ask PhD students to indicate on their abstracts whether the submission is part of a doctoral project. This status will be taken into account in the review process. During the conference, accepted PhD students will present during the regular conference program. In addition, carefully selected respondents will comment on the doctoral projects and discuss the research with PhD students in a special panel.

### **Submission**

Please send your submission of no more than 500 words (cover with contact details and a separate abstract, prepared for anonymous review) by 30 April 2016 to [sigrid.kannengiesser@uni-bremen.de](mailto:sigrid.kannengiesser@uni-bremen.de). Acceptance and rejection letters will be sent out in early June 2016.

### **Contact**

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