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Introduction

The present introduction to this collection of studies of today's media outlines the origins of their multidimensionality from the sociological and media-studies perspectives and describes the objectives achieved by the twelve authors. The common focus of the collection is the tension between the lasting elements of the media on the one hand, and their digital macro-transformation in terms of organisation, subjects and genres, as well as – equally important – micro-changes of their digital environment, on the other. This issue of *Adeptus*, then, will appeal to readers who have an interest in media sociology and media studies, digital sociology and Internet studies, as well as the problems of communication, digital exclusion and inclusion in a more interdisciplinary perspective.

The articles published in this issue fall into three subject areas concerning (1) the emergence of digital media forms and genres, (2) multiple paths to digital social inclusion, (3) the network (dis)information society. The collection originated as a series of papers presented at a conference held at the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw in 2015. The academic committee of the conference was composed of Professor Elżbieta Tarkowska, the head of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, and the editors of this issue, Dr Piotr Toczyski and Dr Iwona Zielińska, Assistant Professors at the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences. The three members of the organising committee, Kacper Kożuchowski, Krzysztof Kuran and Anna Walenda, have since graduated in media sociology.

The ten articles published here (eight of which were presented at the conference and two written at a later date) address new dimensions of both the old and new media, with

the changing forms of linguistic-visual content as the first subject area. New media are the vehicle (and to a large extent also a product) of new genres of digital communication. Anna Gumkowska and Maria Czarkowska ("Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest: New Study Perspectives") propose to apply tools developed by literary studies to the investigation of social communication phenomena in the Internet. They consider three spaces of new digital genres and forms of communication (Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest), where anyone who has access to the Internet, motivation and, naturally, skills to publish their content (or is able to access these resources, even on a short-term basis) can make it available to the public. Although new genres emerging in the space of social media are vulnerable to change and, like pyrotechnic shows, short-lived, their record is kept indefinitely.

Rising up to the challenge of digital transformation and new genre forms is not necessarily the obvious direction. In the second article in this section, Małgorzata Gajda--Łaszewska describes the decline in the readership of print newspapers and the attendant risk caused by the emergence of groups of Internet media users who are not exposed to views other than their own. Consequently, despite information surplus, the author predicts growing disparities among audiences as regards their level of awareness of current developments. Such a state of affairs is caused by the intrusion of entertainment content into the space so far reserved for news. The very title of the article ("The Digital Experiment of Daily Newspapers: A Necessity or a Hasty Misstep?") poses the question of the status of the Internetisation of the press.

Kalina Kukiełko-Rogozińska and Krzysztof Tomanek, in turn, discuss the migration of documentary photography, a form formerly associated with the print press, to the Internet. Analysing the blog of a Canadian war photojournalist, their article entitled "Faces of War in the Context of Marshall McLuhan's Media Theory" focuses on the concepts of figure, ground and the probe, which belong to the toolkit of this classic author, who interpreted the media as an extension of our senses. In this way, the three articles presented above explore the common subject of transformation of genres and forms of communication, as well as their migration between different media, the processes stimulated by the need to adjust to the requirements of the digital medium and the expectations of the digital audience.

Digital transformation in itself, however, does not ensure that everyone has equal access to its products and processes. Thus the main idea behind the next section of the present issue of *Adeptus* is the problem of digital exclusion, often evoked as the starting point in reflection on the Internet. The essential division here is that between users and non-users. The following

articles further explore the problem and draw the various shades of this division, asking such important questions as: When do digital differences turn into a digital divide? What may be the course of the trajectory from exclusion to engagement?

In her article "Digital Exclusion: Definitions, Causes, Countermeasures", Wioleta Tomczyńska discusses the categories of digital divide and digital exclusion. Exploring the issue, she observes that the level of access, motivation, skills and intensity of Internet use situate Poland on the periphery in terms of the development of the information society. While semi-periphery is perhaps a better term to describe the present stage of the development of the information society in Poland, it is still worth debating how much the country misses out on digital modernity. Katarzyna Sobczak, in turn, uses the theoretical tools proposed by Jean Baudrillard in her discussion of the concept of exclusion, noting a new level of digital exclusion observed in scientific literature. She titles her article "Facebook as a New Source of Social Exclusion in the Web 2.0 Era", as exclusion from the circles of the well-informed may be caused by Facebook algorithms or by the user's own actions. She does not resolve the question whether it is enough to counteract one's own exclusion through such activity. However, she unequivocally points to the need for engagement as a way both to avoid exclusion and to play the role of a conscious citizen in the digital and analogue sphere. The distinction between different levels of digital exclusion, increasingly distant from the physical aspect of the Internet and closer to the sphere of content, may prove inspiring for further research. It suggests the "soft", psychological and social rather than structural character of disparities between the digital potential and the actual intensity of Internet use.

Basing on another classic concept, that of capital as approached by Pierre Bourdieu, Jędrzej Maliński proposes the idea of anonymous "attention capital", which he creatively associates with the notion of Web 2.0 (a term only ten years in use at the time of the conference, but dating fast, as all items in the lexicon of digital sociology). In his "Attention Capital as a Result of the Emergence of Social Media", the author stresses the role of both people's actions and Facebook algorithms in unequal distribution of this capital and, probably, also in certain forms of exploitation of creators by distributors: owners or managers of the editorial framework. Julia Śliwińska ("The Network Society and New Forms of Engagement") draws on Manuel Castells' theory and combines it with Mieke Bal's ideas on artistic "performance" and "performativity". In this approach, practically verging on the perspective of theatre studies, she observes that new media art is a prelude to social change. In the network society, this artistic engagement precedes, and also coincides with, civic engagement.

A further voice in the discussion on digital inclusion, Tatiana Kanasz addresses the problem of "The Mass Media and the Question of Poverty in Poland". Focusing on old media, she devotes her attention to the Internet only in passing. However, she is convinced that digital media can enable the poor to make their voice heard and, with the assistance of non-governmental organisations, give them an opportunity to oppose their stereotypisation. Can people in a difficult material situation really create their own narratives using blogs, videos and articles? How does this opportunity relate to the level of their digital competence? The perusal of the five articles should provide inspiration not only to researchers of digital exclusion and divisions, as well as digital inclusion, but also theoreticians and practitioners of information skills.

A number of conference papers concerned immersion in the Internet (digital immersion), digital natives, games and the influence of digital communicators. Two papers analysed the communicative process in connection with issues of health: sexual development and genetically modified food. In her article "The Media and Other Agents of Socialisation as Young People's Sources of Knowledge about Sexuality", Maria Woźniak points out that, since social inhibitions prevent open conversations about sex, young people declare that they use the Internet to find information about their developing sexuality. The example of the intersection between sexual issues and the Internet suggests that new digital forms of content presentation may have an influence on the development of a young person's awareness in the areas of life that are essential to his/her well-being. This relationship proves vividly the interpenetration of the virtual and physical reality. The Internet becomes the main source of information about sex, thus building young people's knowledge about the intimate sphere of their own sexuality.

In her analysis entitled "The Influence of Social Media on Science Communication: Strategies of GMO Opponents on Facebook", Iwona Zielińska compares a widely used model of communicating and popularising science both with the way scientists communicate their findings and the pseudoscientific communication of activists, propagators and misinformers in the GMO debate. Her analysis leads her to conclude that it is the former who should learn from the latter. Scientists from academia do not know how, do not want to, or simply do not have the necessary motivation or resources to realise effectively their social mission of providing information to the public. Thus in the world of social media, the social role of scientists turns out to be more difficult to fulfil than that of a motivated activist. This opens many new areas for cooperation between scientists and practitioners of mass communication as well as media scholars, including media sociologists.

The conference topic *New Dimensions of Old Media* met with considerable interest, since the question relates to many areas of today's reality. The conference participants offered various – sometimes conflicting – diagnoses concerning the possible consequences of transferring print content into digital space. One of the analyses concerned books, the other (published in the present issue), the press. As regards the style of presentation, electronic books are perhaps closer to artistic performance mentioned in one of the texts presented above. It is worth considering the change connected with the higher artistic input (in terms of typography and animation) of e-books as a factor which may reverse the current trend in the attitudes of readers, whose interest in traditional print books is declining. The contemporary reader increasingly expects a more multimedia experience, similar to that provided by a computer game rather than a printed book.

While it is possible to offer a comprehensive account of the phenomena discussed above, both the articles in this issue and papers presented at the conference adopted a selective approach to media theory. Marshall McLuhan's (born 1911) theory and the opposing views of Manuel Castells (born 1942) were often consciously bypassed in favour of theoretical distinctions proposed by Jan van Dijk (born 1952), perhaps the new classic of media sociology. Thus the present issue of *Adeptus* aims to provide new case studies and new inspirations, without trying to fit them into one theoretical framework or formulate a coherent theoretical axis *ex post*. As such, this collection does not make it possible to find one dimension which would enable description or assessment of all the new phenomena analysed here. Hence it is important to pay attention to this aspect of the digital transformation of media. Is it easy to develop a coherent set of theoretical tools? Having read the articles collected here one may definitively claim only that a certain multidimensionality of new media is already in place. For the time being, digital transformation entails constant, multiple processes of change, whose successive waves we are observing.

As a whole, what new findings and what contribution to theory does this issue of *Adeptus* bring? The collection is not designed to offer a comprehensive and systematic survey of literature on the subject or a fully developed theoretical framework. The articles deal with selected topics and are not always grounded in empirical research. Stressing their strong points from the point of view of Internet studies, and sometimes offering additional comments, I encourage the readers to draw their own conclusions and to critically develop the authors' ideas. Digital media theory will long be an open subject.

Together with the editorial board of *Adeptus*, we would like to express our thanks to all authors and reviewers, as well as participants in the above-mentioned conference, for

the contribution they have made to the study of forms and directions of media transformation. On behalf of myself and Dr Iwona Zielińska, the co-editor of this issue, I also want to thank the editors of *Adeptus* for their favourable response to our proposal and a quick and efficient management of the editorial and publishing process.

We would also like to take this opportunity to devote our concluding remarks to one more person. The present collection of articles would not have been possible without Professor Elżbieta Tarkowska, who, sadly, passed away in 2016. In her work, Professor Tarkowska focused on sociology of culture, time and poverty, but never limited her interests to those areas. As the creator and advocate of the specialist course in media sociology at the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences of the Maria Grzegorzewska University, she supported the reflection on digital media. Not many people remember that Professor Tarkowska took part in one of the most interesting pioneering projects devoted to the development of fully aware digital society in Poland. She was a member of a group of volunteer translators of Lawrence Lessig's important book *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity*, published in the United States in 2004. Thanks to her commitment, the Polish translation appeared a year later. Professor Tarkowska understood the significance and importance of the development of the Internet. She took a keen interest in research on digital media, as evidenced by her involvement in the conference that led to the publication of the present collection of articles, which no doubt she would have edited with us with great dedication.

Translated by Piotr Styk and Maria Fengler