

Conference:
Media use and selectivity –
New approaches to explaining and analysing audiences

Organized by Division “Reception Studies” of the German Communication Association (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft, DGPK)

Date January 26-28, 2006

Location Erfurt, Germany, Conference Center Augustinerkloster

Deadline for extended abstract submissions: September 30, 2005.

Research on media selectivity has a long tradition in the communication field. To name but a few, uses and gratifications, selective exposure and cognitive dissonance seek to explain why the audience turns to certain media offers while neglecting others. The field expands as new media and new communication technologies arise, or new possibilities of selecting and avoiding media content emerge (e.g., digital recording of television content, pay per view systems). The discussion on active and passive audiences somewhat petered out in the 1980ies, but this issue still rests at the core of any theory of media selection, often left implicit and unconnected to media and cultural change.

This conference aims at providing a forum for innovative theoretical and empirical ideas on how people deal with media and why they use certain media offers. Special emphasis will be put on the systematic development of theories and methods, on critical reviews of research history and on meta-analyses of media use studies. Another focal point will be international comparative studies of media use and international comparisons of research traditions.

Scholars are invited to submit proposals addressing one of the following topics:

1. **Research on selectivity and media use:** Which concepts are apt to explain selectivity and media use, particularly with regard to the dynamic process of media use? In which way have traditional approaches been advanced, e.g., motivational, action theoretic or homeostatic approaches? Attention to media content is an issue here as well: What parts of the media message are attended to, and how does this affect selectivity?
2. **Contexts of media use:** What problems arise in the reconstruction of media use in contexts like situational definitions, family or group related communicative styles, habitual uses or individual interests? In which way can domestication of new media be investigated? How can we understand media use with respect to everyday life and cultural conditions?
3. **New types of media use in new media environments:** What new questions arise in changing media environments shaped by digital and mobile media? Parallel use of several media or forced exposure in public space may be instances of this field.
4. **International comparative studies in media use:** What differences and commonalities exist in the audiences of different countries or cultures? Is media use explained differently across international borders – in which way do research traditions diverge?

Submissions to the four fields sketched above may have different foci:

- **conceptual and theoretical contributions** presenting innovative ideas on the explanation of media use, originating from different disciplinary or methodological traditions; transfers, comparisons or combination of theories; heuristics of theory construction.
- **contributions on methods** focussing on problems of collecting data and measuring media use; presentation of new instruments or comparisons of methods.
- **new empirical studies** presenting unpublished results on media use.
- **secondary empirical analyses** of existing commercial and non-commercial data resources on media use (e.g., showing changes in use patterns or possibilities of combinations with primary studies), as well as meta-analyses of studies in a determined research field.

Guidelines for submissions

Scholars are invited to submit proposals for presentations of 20 minutes. The proposals in form of extended abstracts should match the conference theme and outline theoretical and empirical foundations. They should contain a maximum of 1000 words, plus references, tables and a title page indicating the name(s), address, affiliation and a two line biography of the author(s). The author(s) are asked to assign their proposal to one of the four indicated topics of the conference. The abstracts should omit any references to the author(s) as to enable anonymous reviews; names should only appear on the title page.

Proposals are due **September 30, 2005**, and are submitted **via email** to one of the division's heads Volker Gehrau: vgehr@zedat.fu-berlin.de.

All submissions will be reviewed by three reviewers according to five criteria: contribution to the conference theme, plausibility of the theoretical foundation, adequacy of methods employed (only in empirical contributions), clarity of argument, and contribution to the field. Rejection/acceptance notices will be sent to the submitters by the end of October 2005.

For information about the conference site and accommodation visit the division website at http://www.dgpuk.de/fg_rez.

Reception Studies division chairs: Dr. Helena Bilandzic, Erfurt & Dr. Volker Gehrau, Berlin

Conference organization

Prof. Dr. Patrick Roessler, Erfurt, Prof. Dr. Friedrich Krotz, Erfurt & Dr. Helena Bilandzic

For further questions on the conference, please contact

Dr. Helena Bilandzic, Universität Erfurt /Seminar fuer Medien und Kommunikation, Nordhaeuser Str. 63, 99089 Erfurt, Germany, Phone +49 361 / 737-4182, Fax +49 361 / 737-4179, Email helena.bilandzic@uni-erfurt.de