

### Authors:

Prof. Cláudia Álvares, Lusofona University, Portugal

Prof. Gustavo Cardoso, Instituto Superior das Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, Portugal

Prof. Ola Erstad, University of Oslo, Norway

Prof. Peter Golding, Northumbria University, United Kingdom

Dr. Nicholas Jankowski, Humanities Group, KNAW, Netherlands

Prof. Colin Sparks, Westminster University, United Kingdom

Prof. Slavko Splichal, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Prof. Charis Xinaris, European University – Cyprus, Cyprus

With the support of ESF Humanities and Social Sciences Unit (HUSS)

This text is based on the proposal submitted to the ESF in September 2008 by Prof. Kirsten Drotner (University of Southern Denmark) and Prof. Slavko Splichal (University of Ljubljana).

---

### Executive summary

1. Background
2. Rationale
3. Objectives
4. Thematic Focus & Breadth
5. Methodological Approach of the Forward Look
6. Intended Outcomes
7. Participants & Stakeholders
8. Time Horizon
9. Timeline, Governance and ESF support
10. Budget for Activities

Annex 1 – List of participants at the Forward Look re-Scoping Workshop, ESF Strasbourg, 20  
– 21 June 2011

Annex 2 – Governance structure of the Forward Look

## Executive summary

### Background

- **Societal trends** - Media impinge upon almost all aspects of contemporary life, and they are constitutive of key financial, social and cultural processes. To study media is therefore an important pathway for understanding fundamental processes in society and in understanding the human condition. As is only too evident, media have undergone profound changes in the past two decades which can – as is done in this FL - be characterized in terms of *digitization*, *globalization* and *commodification*. Given the central role of media in our daily lives, the important, general question presents itself as to these “new” media – and the implications of technological changes for “old” media - affect our lives.
- **Policy trends** - Most policies focus on *ICT literacy* (computer literacy, information literacy) defined as a transparent tool for virtual collaboration, information processing and learning in the work place or in education (e-learning). *Media literacy* is a broader term than just ICT literacy, embracing the shaping, sharing, (critical) evaluation and use of print as well as audiovisual and digital media. On national as well as European levels, divides remain between definitions of ICT literacy versus media literacy. All policy documents agree that more systematic and trans-border research is needed in order to facilitate effective policy-making but views as to the appropriate aims and outcomes of such research differ amongst public and private stakeholders.
- **Scientific trends** - Media studies have developed at most European universities, but in rather disparate ways – from sub-sections within a mother discipline to independent, interdisciplinary departments both in commercial as well as academic traditions. Even though media studies have developed strong international research societies, examples of European research collaboration are still few.

### Rationale

It is clear that the field of media studies, broadly conceived, will become more and more important in the coming years. It is therefore equally important that we - scientists, policy makers and citizens – make sure that we do the things that need to be done. However, this will require choices – and these are not trivial. To set these priorities in a responsible manner, it is important to not only take into account the institutional and organizational diversity of the relevant academic disciplines and traditions, but also to acknowledge the diverging needs of a wide variety of stakeholders.

A Forward Look is needed to identify such a common, European research agenda and to specify the institutional frameworks that would help advance the organizational cohesion of European media research. In view of the rapidity of the developments and the scale of their impact on the lives of many, such Forward Look should take place rather sooner than later.

### Objectives

- The first objective of this Forward Look is to define a set of key research questions that, given the challenges posed, need to be addressed in the next 5 to 10 years.
- Closely linked is the second objective: to propose a new research agenda, in the form of a set of concrete recommendations for actions, and in discussion with relevant science-policy organisations, practitioners, technological developers and other stakeholders from across Europe. Ingredients for such an agenda include:

- the systematic development of sustained, interdisciplinary approaches (both conceptual and methodological) to the aforementioned questions
- the strengthening of international scholarly interaction and response-mode collaboration between humanities and social science scholars
- forging a theory-driven knowledge transfer and systematic ties between the academy and commercial and policy stakeholders across key sectors in Europe
- Following from the previous point, the final objective is to raise awareness at the science-policy level of the importance of taking up those new essential questions and policy challenges.

### **Thematic Focus and Breadth of the Forward look**

Four different avenues or themes were identified as deserving an in-depth “look forward”:

- *Political engagement in an age of mediatization: enablers and constraints for democratic developments*
- *Creative economy or creative culture? Shaping and sharing of media content as a specifically economic or as a wider social resource*
- *Digital divides and their relation to class, gender, generation, ethnicity and region*
- *Identity-formation: from Facebook networks to institutional forms of cultural heritage.*

### **Methodological approach of the Forward Look**

Each of the four themes listed above will be taken up in a dedicated thematic workshop in which the research questions within the themes will be further reframed and refined. Following the thematic workshops, a synthesis workshop will be held in order to take stock and facilitate the preparation of the final report. The outcome of the synthesis workshop will be an advanced draft of the final report. This version will be discussed with a larger representation of academics and stakeholders in a final conference (40-50 participants).

### **Intended outcomes**

The main output of the FL will be the final report proposing a new research agenda for the scientific community and raising awareness at the science policy level. It will include an executive summary of the outcomes of the project. This final report and executive summary will be widely disseminated within the research community at scholarly events as well as within science policy circles.

### **Participants & Stakeholders**

Ideally, each thematic workshop will gather as chair and co-chair participants of the re-scoping workshop and will involve other leading experts according to the thematic focus of the workshop. In addition, two further considerations will help to inform the invitation and selection of participants:

- The science policy addressees of the research topic, such as, in principle, ESF Member Organisations, the European Commission (DG-Research and Innovation, DG Information Society and Media), the European Research Council, policy makers and regulatory bodies in the fields of education, culture and research & development, NGOs with a focus on education, democracy and civil rights, as well as the most important international research societies.

- The need for “heterogeneous discussants” at the workshops to broaden the representation of standpoints. By having such participants, we aim to embrace the perspectives of a wide variety of actors from all relevant disciplines in the Social Sciences and the Humanities as well as from the relevant natural sciences. Also experts from the side of commercial development will be addressed as well as the public, or third sector.

### **Time horizon**

While taking stock of experience over the last two decades, the Forward Look will consider the research questions for the next **five to ten years**.

### **Timeline**

The Forward Look is expected to run for 18 months (October 2011 – March 2013) with an additional 3 months’ dissemination phase until the end of June 2013.

## **1. Background**

Media impinge upon almost all aspects of contemporary life, and they are constitutive of key financial, social and cultural processes. To study media is therefore an important pathway into understanding fundamental processes in society and in understanding the human condition. As is only too evident, media have undergone profound changes in the past two decades. Given the central role of media in our daily lives, the important, general question presents itself as to how these “new” media affect our lives.

### **1.1. Societal trends: media literacies in a mediatized society**

The societal developments alluded to above may be characterized in terms of *digitization*, *globalization* and *commodification*. *Digitization* - of numbers, text, sound, live and still images, etc. - shapes a shared technological platform for telecommunication, media (such as newspapers, radio and television) and information and communication technologies (ICTs). It offers new multimodal forms of expression and exchange whose production, analysis and modes of action reach beyond familiar forms of numerical and textual interpretation. *Media globalization* is facilitated by satellites in the sky and cables under the sea and it offers instant and immediate communication and networked interaction with distant others through e.g. the internet and mobile devices to a degree unknown in previous ages. Key drivers of digitization and media globalization are commercial enterprises, and hence most media products and processes of use are shaped by familiar fault lines in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, age and region.

Taken together, the new technological, economic and socio-cultural developments of media, telecommunications and ICTs are constitutive of a thorough *mediatization* of society (Schultz 2004) in the sense that complex ensembles of media processes impact on all dimensions of social life.

In an attempt to handle these complex processes, a number of stakeholders focus on the ways in which media and ICTs are catalysts of future competence formation: who should learn what under which conditions and with what outcomes? *Media literacy*, *digital literacy* and *ICT literacy* are some of the terms adopted to denote new sets of key competences.

## **1.2. Policy trends: ICT literacy versus media literacy**

With the possible exception of Norway, no European country embraces the advancement of media literacies in the wide sense that spans media and ICTs and integrates modes of reception as well as production. In national as well as trans-European terms, there are currently two trends in literacy policies related to media technologies, one focusing on ICTs and one focusing more broadly on media (new and old).

The most explicit policies focus on *ICT literacy* (computer literacy, information literacy) defined as a transparent tool for virtual collaboration, information processing and learning in the work place or in education (e-learning). Thus, OECD defines that the three key competences in knowledge-based economies are: 1) interactive use of tools, 2) interaction in heterogeneous groups and 3) autonomous action (OECD 2005). Use of ICTs are clearly central to developing the first two of these competences.

*Media literacy* is a broader and much more complex concept than just ICT literacy, as it structures a wider variety of dimensions concerning the relationship between people and technologies, such as shaping, sharing (critical) evaluation and use of print as well as audiovisual and digital media. Within the EU, the concept has been advanced by a number of initiatives and is key to policies on life-long learning. Among the most important is the Audio Visual Media Services Directive from 2007 giving member states two years to implement its requirements (European Parliament 2007, see also European Parliament 2006) and a Communication by the European Commission (2007) specifying member organisations' action plans following the recommendations made by the Commission's Media Literacy Expert Group (established in 2006). The regulatory framework for media literacy has accelerated in the last years, with numerous policies falling within the scope of a wide spectrum of activity, including the 2009 EC recommendations on media literacy (European Commission 2009) and the European Parliament resolution on media literacy in a digital world (European Parliament 2009). With i2010 - the EU policy framework for the information society and media - coming to a close in 2009, media literacy is again an important issue in the successor initiative, the Digital Agenda, as illustrated by the 2010 Ministerial Declaration (European Commission (2010)). At the national level, media literacy is, for example, one of the three current strategic objectives of Ofcom, the Independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries (<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/media-literacy/>).

On national as well as European levels, divides remain between definitions of ICT literacy versus media literacy. All policy documents agree that more systematic and trans-border research is needed in order to facilitate effective policy-making but views as to the appropriate aims and outcomes of such research differ amongst public and private stakeholders.

## **1.3. Scientific trends - in substantial, institutional, organizational and collaborative terms**

Disciplines that study media include commercial as well as academic traditions. Within the academy, media studies embrace an equally wide array of foci: from film history to the political economy of media institutions, from linguistics to law. Media studies have evolved out of the social sciences and humanities, respectively, and it draws on traditional disciplines such as sociology, economy, law and psychology in addition to history, linguistics, philosophy and visual and literary studies. Moreover, the recent technological developments have spurred interdisciplinary interaction with computer science and information science.

*In institutional terms*, media studies have developed at most European universities, but in rather disparate ways – from sub-sections within a mother discipline to independent, interdisciplinary departments. Moreover, traditions vary in terms of the inclusion of media production as part of university degrees.

*In organizational terms*, media studies have developed strong international research societies such as the ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association), ICA (International Communication Association) and IAMCR (International Association of Media and Communication Research). Regional societies include LUSOCOM (Portuguese/Brazil/Portuguese-speaking African countries/Galicia Communication Association), IBERCOM (Latin American Communication Association), AI-EC (Asociación Ibérica de Estudios de Comunicación – Iberian Communication Association) and NORDICOM (Nordic Association of Media and Communication Research). Moreover, a well-developed network of peer-review journals and book series exist, many of them with solid European representation on editorial and review boards.

*In terms of European research collaboration*, examples are still few. COST has funded a limited number of actions involving media and ICTs such as Action 20: “The Impact of the Internet on Mass Media in Europe”, Action 30: “East of West: Setting a New Central and Eastern European Media Research Agenda”, Action IS0906: “Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies”. This last Action has, in fact, addressed aspects of media literacy (Livingstone, 2011). Likewise, ESF funded an a la carte programme “Changing Media, Changing Europe”, 2000-04, involving upward of 90 scholars in four thematic strands.

## **2. Rationale**

As has been outlined above, the combined developments of digitization, globalisation and commodification and the resulting mediatization of society impact on virtually all spheres of human life and dimensions of culture. Against the background of these recent and rapidly accelerating developments, new research questions emerge that are not only directly relevant to society but also point towards new directions for research.

It is clear that the field of media studies, broadly conceived, will become more and more important in the coming years. It is therefore equally important that scholars, policy makers and citizens endeavour to address these issues. However, this will require choices – and these are not trivial. To set these priorities in a responsible manner, it is important to not only take into account the aforementioned institutional and organizational diversity of academic disciplines and traditions, but also to acknowledge the diverging needs of a wide variety of stakeholders.

A Forward Look is needed to identify such a common, European research agenda and to specify the institutional frameworks that would help advance the organizational cohesion of European media research. In view of the rapidness of the developments and the scale of their impact on the lives of many, such Forward Look should take place rather sooner than later.

### ***2.1. Challenges - in substantial, institutional, organizational and collaborative terms***

In what follows we outline some of the larger existing or emerging challenges facing media studies. Starting from the observation above that the trends can be described in substantial, institutional, organizational and collaborative terms, it seems important to reflect on the four corresponding groups of challenges.

#### ***Substantial***

In terms of substance, the empirical trends call for a systematic development of sustained, interdisciplinary studies that cross boundaries of mass media and ICT studies and adopt approaches

that map the entire media ensemble across dimensions of space and time. This development has been highlighted as a key driver of scientific advancement in the field by a foresight study conducted under the auspices of the Netherlands Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences, a study that also recommended media literacy as one of three prioritized research areas for the future (Dijck et al. 2007: 61).

With regards to substance it is particular important to mention the substantive gaps that exist between approaches focusing on representation and action, respectively. The former tend to have a humanities background and study textual forms of expression and transformation, thus often including an historical perspective. The latter tend to have a social science background and study current contexts of use and their economic and institutional enablers and constraints.

### *Institutional*

Another type of knowledge gap is equally evident and needs to be addressed in the Forward Look: the structural gap between research- and policy-oriented approaches. The research-oriented approaches tend to advance conceptual and empirical studies on, for example, intellectual property rights, digital citizenship and audience practices with little regard for the competences needed in order to partake in these processes. The policy-oriented approaches are evident in much educational policy-making and in commercial priorities based on the perceived future of the knowledge society in general and creative industries in particular. These approaches tend to focus on concrete problem-solving with little attention being paid to the wider cultural processes of meaning-making involved in digital cultural heritage and mediated popular culture.

The best way to consider such issues as the above two gaps is to bring together scholars and institutional stakeholders from divergent traditions and backgrounds that share insights and interests in issues of media literacy.

### *Organizational*

In terms of organization, media studies need to strengthen international studies and response-mode collaboration between humanities and social science scholars in order to enhance conceptual and methodological innovation appropriate to a digital environment. Moreover, theory-driven knowledge transfer and systematic ties need to be forged between the academy and stakeholders in policy and industry in order to explore the implications of media for the development of knowledge societies.

In more concrete terms, the Forward Look must acknowledge and address the intellectual legacy of European media scholarship. Here, researchers have a strong tradition of conceptual and empirical studies of “old” media such as print and audio-visual media, and in addressing key topics related to these media, such as citizenship, public-service broadcasting, film history, and children’s media uses. Conversely, European scholarship has fallen behind recent developments in countries such as the USA and Australia with regard to internet and computer focusing on production, textual articulations and uses.

A key challenge, therefore, is to address the recent and future interlacings of new and old media in view of divergent European forms of organization, training and use. Important questions would be: to what extent can the models used to understand old media - e.g., media effects theory, uses and gratification theory – be applied to so-called “new” media? Can such theories be reworked to understand current developments?

### *Collaborative*

In terms of collaboration, funding models need to be developed that further systematic research collaboration. Knowledge transfer and outreach schemes must be integrated into future strategies, as should research infrastructures.

\*\*\*

Note that it is not the aim of the Forward Look to address all these challenges in a systematic way. Indeed, many of these issues could probably justify a Forward Look in their own right. Yet together they provide the landscape in which this Forward Look proposal is embedded.

### **3. Objectives**

The first objective of this Forward Look is to define a set of key research questions that, given the challenges posed, need to be addressed in the next 5 to 10 years.

Closely linked is the second objective: to propose a new research agenda in discussion with relevant science-policy organisations, practitioners, technological developers and other stakeholders from across Europe. Ingredients for such an agenda include:

- the systematic development of sustained, interdisciplinary approaches (both conceptual and methodological) to the aforementioned questions
- the strengthening of international scholarly interaction and response-mode collaboration between humanities and social science scholars
- forging a theory-driven knowledge transfer and systematic ties between the academy and commercial and policy stakeholders across key sectors in Europe

The Forward Look aims to develop such an agenda in the form of a set of concrete recommendations for actions.

Following from the previous point, the third and final objective is to raise awareness at the science-policy level of the importance of taking up those new essential questions and policy challenges and to propose an implementation roadmap for recommendations of the Forward Look.

### **4. Thematic Focus and Breadth of the Forward look**

Issues related to media literacy illuminate some of the fundamental problematics that media studies have tackled over the years but refracted through the lens of mediatization and its underlying currents of digitization, globalisation and commodification. These issues have to do with political engagement and citizenship across boundaries of time and space; with social divides that are also digital divides within and between countries and regions; with ownership and property rights to cultural products and processes; and with inter-cultural interaction and identity formation in personal as well as collective terms.

The FL takes media literacy as its specific theme since it allows familiar questions to find unfamiliar answers with respect to new sets of circumstances.



In view of the empirical media trends, the FL defines media broadly to include print, audio-visual and digital technologies that are widely adopted and used in many parts of the world – from books and newspapers to television, film and radio on to the internet, the personal computer, digital games and mobile devices.

Four different themes were identified in the original proposal as deserving an in-depth “look forward”. In the following, each of the themes is introduced by examples of relevant questions and then contextualised through a set of sub-themes. In this sense, each of the four blocks already constitutes the basis for the different thematic workshops that will be held in the framework of this Forward Look (see section 5). The purpose of the workshops will be precisely to reflect on and refine the research questions and the way they are framed.

### ***Theme 1 – Political engagement in an age of mediatization: enablers and constraints for democratic developments***

- How can digital media contribute to democratic citizenship?
- Do digital media provide indiscriminately for freedom of expression of individuals and groups with divergent views?
- What is the range of political information available to citizens? Do citizens really get the kind of contents they want and need?
- How can media consumers become media participants?
- In what ways is media literacy important for political engagement among young citizens?
- To what extent can/do minority groups actively use digital media for political engagement?
- How “vulnerable” are digitalised media—compared to the “traditional media”—to commercialisation and commodification?
- What are the challenges to media and communication ethics in the digital era?
- What kind of media policy is needed to foster democratic potentials of the digitalised media?
- How can new media contribute to “opening up” the traditional public sphere to issues that are not associated with formal politics?
- To what extent can a link be drawn between online participation and concrete changes in public policy?
- How can democracy online be fomented without imposing restrictions on freedom of speech (due to dissemination of content inimical to democratic ideals)?
- Can the increasing segmentation that prevails online be used to combat current democratic deficits in formal politics?
- In what ways does a mediated society impact on the (re)formulation of the condition of knowledge in relation to access to technological advancement and innovation, production, dissemination and consumption of information?

If the cultural industry contributed to the demise of the public sphere through commoditisation, hence distancing the common citizen from decision-making processes (Habermas, 2006: 414, 424), so-called “new media” are often hailed as paving the way for a redefinition of this “contaminated” public sphere. The internet has effectively brought about a new form of publicness—mediated and dialogical at the same time—supplementary to the mediated publicness constructed by traditional mass media. With a variety of new forms of “personalised” mass mediated communication, the internet offers new opportunities for participatory communication. Moreover, it has helped to develop a deterritorialised (transnational) communication space not bound to particular territory. This development may eventually lead to the formation of non-territorial units with long-term membership, which would replace the territorial units of nation-states as the (only) legitimate source of citizenship.

With the internet, an entirely new kind of social communication was brought about: “mass self-communication”, which is a form of mass communication in terms of its users as audiences (now becoming even global) and at the same time a negation of the traditional mass communication in terms of possibilities offered to individual users as content producers. With the introduction of freely downloadable applications for self-publishing and the new interactive social networks it has created, the internet substantially increased the feasibility of citizens’ participation in public discourse. However, although this may lead to an increased sentiment of empowerment on the part of the common citizen, online participation rarely manages to bring about effective alterations in the realm of public policy.

The capacity of the new media to cater to a less State-centred view of citizenship and to combat the democratic deficit in the realm of formal politics implies that one distinguishes the concept of public space from that of public sphere: as public space, the internet boosts discussion, while as public sphere, it strengthens democracy (Papacharissi, 2002: 11). Despite making available a great amount of information, not all of the information accessible online is characterised by democratic values. In other words, the right to freedom of expression that the internet encapsulates so well neither ensures the rationality of the discussions taking place online nor the promotion of the democratic ideal of equality. To some degree, the internet enables civil society actors, particularly in the realm of “alternative politics” (e.g. women, religious actors, environmentalists, labour, peace activists, gay and lesbian activists, humanitarians) to act on a larger scale and to become more visible both nationally and transnationally. Yet how effective their actions are because of that—in terms of impact on public opinion and decision-makers—is another question. “Participation” in the internet takes place, often anonymously, in the private sphere of home or office, which may give users a feeling of personal security, but “feeling at home is not a substitute for public space” (Calhoun); it may rather increase the visibility of hate speech and other kinds of communication that violate the rights of citizens. The development of digital media could even follow the old media on the way from being the organ of the public to becoming a tool of suppressing public dissent. A relative absence of legal regulation of the digital media may be interpreted as the suppression of censorship which used to be a constant danger inhibiting the formation of public spheres. However, legal and political regulations have been largely replaced by actions of prominent commercial hardware and software companies, search engines on the web, and social networking websites, which design, control, and actually own large sections of the internet’s architecture. Their “achievements” resemble more transnational “old media” empires than the democratizing narrative characteristic of the early internet development.

The internet’s ubiquitous penetration into all levels of society has substantially increased the amount of horizontal, interpersonal (emails, chat rooms) and vertical/hierarchical group communication (fans, followers, friends, and supporters in Twitter, Facebook, and similar social networking and blogging sites) at all levels from small groups to society-level and worldwide networks. While there is no doubt that new types of engagement are made possible by new communication technologies and established communication, it is much more questionable whether they may stimulate and revive political participation and civic engagement, and the development of a genuine public. The birth of alternative, more individualized forms of communication spread across the internet reminds us of great expectations that sprang up with the emancipation of the press from censorship and with the advent of radio. However, a greater individualisation in computer-mediated communication does not automatically provide a greater personal autonomy. It can also worsen the conditions of the most vulnerable social classes not able to enter the newly established

interactive virtuality or to resist the pressures of commercialisation. The decentredness of the internet prevents it from monopolization typical of the “old media,” but it also stimulates fragmented particularities of loosely structured and fragile groups rising in the internet environment.

“Cyber citizenship” has not solved the problems of democratic political representation and (even less) participation. In terms of C.W. Mills’ classic differentiation between the mass and the public, the technology of computer mediated communication could be argued to reinvigorate “communities of publics’ characterized by discussion as the ascendant means of communication,” in contrast to the traditional mass media which only “enlarge and animate discussion, linking one primary public with the discussions of another.” These “communities of publics’ that result from the prevalence of specialised interest groups online are similar to counter-publics, founded on “shared oppositional identity” (McLaughlin, 1993: 610). A large number of web “communities” formed both locally (nationally) and globally, which are based on common interests and often imply a certain level of solidarity among participants, do not significantly enhance democracy because they are often narrowly defined as traditional public factions (e.g., in terms of racial, gender, age, ideological, or religious identities and interests), and they rarely transcend group particularities. The discursive practice of online counter-publics, visible in social media, is thus akin to that of “weak publics” (Fraser, 1990: 75), based on the expression of opinions without encompassing forms of decision-making. This logic, which perpetuates a separation between civil society and the State, harbours a suspicion towards the political public sphere where decisions are taken due to presupposing that public opinion should be kept autonomous from institutional authority so as to be able to critically monitor the latter.

Whereas the development of the traditional (press and broadcast) mass media primarily extended one-way communication and the possibilities of hegemonic visibility (i.e., of one being made visible by producers of media contents), the internet is largely based on the production and distribution of user generated content. Nevertheless, the interactive potential of internet technology not only enables individuals and groups to become more socially visible at their own will and facilitates interaction among different cultures, but also makes—as a kind of disciplinary technology—others’ behaviour overt and widely visible against their will. For example, new technologies are used to track internet communications in real time, monitor content, and decide which messages or applications will get through the fastest.

## ***Theme 2 – Creative economy or creative culture? Shaping and sharing of media content as a specifically economic or as a wider social resource***

- As a departing question should we use the theme of “creative economy or creative culture” as an exclusive or inclusive disjunction, or should we think of both dimensions as synergetic to one another?
- In a context where accessibility to contents becomes a key point, what are the new roles that participant audiences play in the multiplicity of media landscapes in terms of production and distribution?
- How to manage a sustained media distribution system when we witness a paradigm shift on sharing practices of media content? Can audiences, through networking and participation, add value to the development of creative cultures and lead to iterative innovation and creative processes through “costumer” feedback in a first degree or even via hacking/modding?
- To what extent can creativity have fewer constraints to arise in more deinstitutionalized, decentralized or flexible mindsets and daily practices that are found in consumer’s piracy cultures? How can we capitalize from crowd sourcing found among contemporary fandom practices where, sometimes, amateur contents have a superior coefficient of creativity?
- At an academic level for understanding this moving landscape and its aftermaths, what new theories, key concepts and methodological issues are being shaped in order to capture how participant audiences and creators engage in selecting, filtering, editing and producing?

Creativity has been present in political and institutional agendas since the advent of a new knowledge economy. Immersed in an ever-growing networked digital era, creativity becomes a key point, since media industries' sustainability relies, more than ever, on this competitive edge.

The crucial pertinence of this aspect rises in a fast moving and evolving media and culture landscape. Among many new and emerging social trends we witness a radical shift not only in terms of media production, where the "amateur" user has new valences and novel forms of empowerment, but also towards new decentralized distribution channels built by users. Media users are increasingly part of the equation.

Collaborative production and creativity in relation to new ways of distributing digital content are causing profound changes in the production of culture and mediated experiences on a daily basis.

The ways in which we consume media have become increasingly more complex, hybrid and fragmented. Much of the traditional media industry dominance has been deflated in the new context of networked communication. For instance, file-sharing networks are now an essential part of the media industry where users become distributors and generators of added value. In this sense, the boundary between producers, distributors and consumers of media goods is increasingly mixed, fuelled by creativity and flourished through the social networking of individuals. This context has created a fertile environment for incubation of innovative ideas and creativity.

### ***Theme 3 – Digital divides and their relation to social and cultural structure***

- How and in what ways are structural inequalities associated with demographic and economic variables - such as occupation, income, education, age, gender, ethnicity and so on - not merely coincidental with "digital divides" but both cause and effect of them?
- The dynamics of digital divides – are they diminishing or widening, and what factors seem to lead to these changes?
- To what extent is there evidence, or might there be, to assess the relative role of the market and of regulation in affecting the shape of digital divides within societies?
- Does comparative analysis between societies or regions demonstrate how and in what ways intervention might moderate the development and impact of digital divides?
- Is the digital divide a matter simply of consumption or does it also affect employment and distribution of goods and services?
- Does the evidence for digital divide(s) suggest this is a transitional phenomenon which is specific to current cohorts or is it more deeply embedded and related to life-stage and other variables?

The emergence and growing use of digital platforms, most especially the internet, as vehicles for the distribution and consumption of materials previously only available in more traditional media, raises important opportunities for cultural consumption. It also prompts questions about the extent to which varying access to communication technologies, both software and hardware, is creating inequities in cultural opportunity. Traditionally labelled the "digital divide" much debate about this problem has attempted to go beyond simple models of ownership and availability, or to suggest it is transitory, but the inequitable patterns created by the growth of digital technologies suggest that the persistence of "digital divides" remains stubborn. This theme would seek to identify the existing research and knowledge in this area and also outline questions and concerns that remain to be addressed.

#### **Theme 4 – Identity-formation: from social networks to institutional forms of cultural heritage.**

- What are the implications for the formation of trans-national identities (such as the EU)?
- Has change in cultural consumption led to new forms of identity (e.g., decline of European consciousness, rise of sub-national identities)?
- Is engagement with new ICTs itself a definer of identity in that it creates a distinction between “those who do” and “those who don’t”?
- New media seem to be fostering less essence-based identities (e.g., more fluid, due to user being able to assume new identities online); how does this translate into public policy?
- Social fragmentation and media fragmentation: how do these relate to identity formation?
- What does *de-territorialization* mean with regard to identity formation?
- In what ways is identity formation affected by the transformation of global media flows?
- How can social media be used constructively to provide intercultural dialogue?
- What is the relation between aspects of individual and collective identity in social media environments?
- How do conventional features of an active environment (e.g., immediacy, personal identity, ritual social events) limit or enhance identity formation and expression?
- What is the role of language and/or translation in the formation of identity in “new” media environments?
- Has the use of “new media” given rise to the creation of “new” hybrid linguistic systems or “languages” which further contribute to the creation of hybrid identities?
- Mediated identities: is sameness a prerequisite or a result of mediatization?
- Which identities are being excluded from, or marginalised, and to what extent is visibility the real stake?
- Do all bodies “matter”? How can the performative aspects that play into the formation and visibility of bodies/identities relate to the situation where some bodies (e.g., social, cultural, gendered, abled/disabled, young/aging) matter while others do not?

Identity formation can be broadly described as the development of characteristics and attributes which define individuals or entities to others and to themselves as well as the means to becoming recognised. It has been the subject of various discourses, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. While identity formation in relation to the media, both “old” and “new”, has often been the topic of media-related research, the issue of identity remains stubbornly relevant to the way persons self-identify or are alternatively identified with respect to their individuality or their affiliation with a group in the process and experience of (self)identification in a media-saturated world. Marshal McLuhan famously said that “We become what we behold. We shape our tools and then our tools shape us.” This is particularly true of identity formation in the digital era: the development of consciousness (e.g., individual, social, national, racial, gender) is both mediated and mediated in such a way that any identity (or identification) we develop is directly linked to the experience of our development through “old” and “new” media.

However, identity is a term that incorporates both the parasite and the host: the term incorporates two seemingly opposite (and opposing) meanings in the same body. Identity both implies affiliation with *another* and uniqueness, that is, a difference from the *other*. It suggests belonging, as in being part of a community, as well as making oneself distinct; it signifies both sameness and difference. In addition to identity’s self-effacing definition, the term and its function are based on a set of qualities and characteristics which define an individual/entity and allow recognition and knowledge. In light of these comments, the topic of identity formation incorporates a number of contradictions that can

be explored through an interdisciplinary approach. Relevant questions and topics of investigation within the context of this workshop include, but are not limited to, those outlined in the above text box.

## **5. Methodological approach of the Forward Look**

Each of the four themes outlined above will be taken up in a dedicated “thematic workshop”, in which the research questions within the themes will be further reframed and refined.

These thematic workshops will each involve 15-20 participants and will be planned taking geographical balance into account – in terms of both the location of the meeting and the institutional affiliation of participants. Scenario assessments may be part of the methodology used at the meetings. For each workshop, a discussion paper will be produced in advance by the chair and co-chair to structure the discussions at the meeting. Each workshop will result in a tentative chapter for the final report which should follow a common structure agreed on by the chairs of all the thematic workshops.

Once the draft papers resulting from the four thematic workshops are ready, a synthesis workshop will be held in order to take stock and facilitate the preparation of the final report. This workshop will involve the chairs of the various workshops and of the Forward Look, together with a small representation of engaged participants from the earlier workshops. A preliminary draft of the final report will be circulated by the chair of the Forward Look before the workshop. The outcome of the synthesis workshop will be an advanced draft of the final report. This version will be discussed with a larger representation of academics and stakeholders in a final conference (40-50 participants). The substance of the final conference will be a controlled discussion to fine-tune the final report, which may nonetheless include specific references to key challenges when appropriate. Both the synthesis workshop and the final conference may receive, if needed, support from a professional facilitator (consultant).

The production of the final report will be the responsibility of the chair of the Forward Look, together with the chairs of the four thematic workshops. In this, they may be supported by a science writer.

## **6. Intended outcomes**

The main output of the Forward Look will be the final report defining a set of key research questions that need to be addressed in the next 5 to 10 years and proposing, in discussion with relevant stakeholders from across Europe, recommendations for actions towards a new research agenda in substantive and organizational terms. It will include an executive summary of the outcomes of the project. This final report and executive summary will be widely disseminated within the research community at scholarly events, such as the conferences of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) and the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), as well as within science policy circles, through close contact with relevant international organisations such as the European Commission (DG-RESEARCH, DG-INFOS), the

European Research Council (ERC) and the ESF Member Organisations. In this latter respect, a launch event will be organised as part of the dissemination strategy.

Nonetheless, outreach and dissemination of ideas will already start during the running of the Forward Look, on the occasion of the final conference. Sessions at notably large scientific events taking place in 2012 may be considered as opportunities to present the work in progress. Furthermore, the thematic papers and relevant multimedia materials of the workshops will be available on a dedicated website.

In addition, at the start of the Forward Look a preparatory report will be produced that will provide a context for the thematic workshops. This report will address the issue of “what is meant by media literacy” and will conclude with an operational definition to be used in all subsequent Forward Look activities. This report will also list the most important commercial and policy papers that have recently appeared at a European level and in key countries and regions and in which media literacy has been a high-profile issue.

Finally, and in addition to the aforementioned tentative chapters for the final report, the thematic workshops may also lead to science-policy essays in scientific journals, hereby directly targeting one of the key stakeholders, i.e., the scholarly community.

## **7. Participants & Stakeholders**

Ideally, each thematic workshop will gather as chair and co-chair participants of the re-scoping workshop and will also involve other leading experts according to the thematic focus of the workshop. These include, but are not limited to, the following research areas:

- media literacy research and related approaches (e.g. visual literacy, ICT literacy, digital literacy, multimodal literacy)
- mediated citizenship and e-democracy
- property rights and content ownership
- competence formation in relation to creative cultures

In addition, two further considerations will help to inform the invitation and selection of participants:

- The science policy addressees of the research topic, such as, ESF Member Organisations, the European Commission (DG-Research and Innovation, DG Information Society and Media), the European Research Council, policy makers and regulatory bodies in the fields of education, culture and research & development, NGOs with a focus on education, democracy and civil rights, as well as the most important international research societies like the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA), the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), the International Communication Association (ICA) or the Nordic Association of Media and Communication Research (NORDICOM).
- The need for “heterogeneous discussants” at the workshops to broaden the representation of standpoints. By having such participants, we aim to embrace the perspectives of a wide variety of actors from all relevant disciplines in the Social Sciences and the Humanities as

well as from the relevant natural sciences (computer science, information sciences). Also experts from the side of commercial development will be addressed - in particular from audio-visual industries, games industries, ICT content developers and commercial and public developers of learning resources – as well as the public, or third sector.

## 8. Time horizon

While taking stock of experience over the last two decades, the Forward Look will consider the research questions for the next **five to ten years**.

## 9. Timeline, governance and ESF support

The Forward Look is expected to run for 18 months (October 2011 – March 2013) with an additional 3 months allotted for the dissemination phase, until the end of June 2013.

### *Expected timeline*

<i>First MC meeting / First SC meeting</i>	<i>Preparatory Report</i>	<i>Thematic workshops</i>	<i>Synthesis workshop</i>	<i>Final Conference</i>	<i>Final report (text agreed on)</i>	<i>Approval of report &amp; printing</i>	<i>Dissemination final report</i>
<i>November/ December 2011</i>	<i>January 2012</i>		<i>October 2012</i>	<i>December 2012</i>	<i>January 2013</i>	<i>March 2013</i>	<i>April-June 2013</i>

### *Governance*

Following current ESF practice, the Forward Look will be governed by a Quality Reference Group of 5 to 10 members including chairs or representatives of the ESF Standing Committees with a direct stake in the FL (i.e., the Standing Committee for the Humanities and the Standing Committee for the Social Sciences) and a member of the ESF management. Involvement of other international organisations such as the European Commission (DG-Research and Innovation and DG Information Society and Media), the European Research Council and major professional association(s) will be sought. The task of the Quality Reference Group will be to define and monitor quality assurance mechanisms in accordance with the ESF Forward Look procedures. The main responsibility for the approval of the final report lies with the two relevant ESF Standing Committees.

A Scientific Committee will also be appointed. This committee will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the Forward Look project. In practical terms this includes responsibility for the



thematic content of the work packages, the running of workshops and the production of papers issuing from these workshops based on a common template. The Scientific Committee will also be in charge of the preparation of the final report, including the synthesis workshop. As regards the composition of the Scientific Committee, the group of leading scholars who took part in the re-scoping workshop (see Annex 1) will be considered first.

Both the Quality Reference Group and the Scientific Committee will agree on the governance structure of the Forward Look (see Annex 2).

#### *ESF Office Supporting Staff*

During its running time, the Forward Look is expected to require 40% of a Science Officer's capacity and 30% of an Administrator's capacity.

### **10. Budget for activities**

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Est. N°</b>	<b>Est. Cost € (indiv)</b>	<b>Est. Cost € (total)</b>
	<b>Management Committee meetings</b> Meetings with up to 8 participants	2	5 500	11 000
	<b>Scientific Committee Meetings</b> Meetings to be planned alongside workshops and conferences except the kick-off meeting. Up to 10 participants per meeting	4	1 000	4 000
	<b>Scientific Committee Meetings</b> Kick-off meeting	1	6 000	6 000
	<b>Thematic Workshops</b> 15-20 participants	4	15 000	60 000
	<b>Synthesis Workshop</b> 10-12 participants	1	9 500	9 500
	<b>Final Conference</b> 40-50 participants	1	44 500	44 500
	<b>Preparatory Paper</b>	1	2 500	2 500
	<b>Overview Papers from Thematic Workshops</b> 1 paper per workshop	4	2 500	10 000
	<b>Final Report: Preparation</b> Authors honoraria and editorial assistance	1	7 500	7 500
	<b>Final Report: Publication</b> Proof reading, design and printing	1	5 000	5 000
	<b>Launch and dissemination of the final report</b> Including launch event (60-70 participants)	1	50 000	50 000
	<b>Outsourced studies and support</b> Including facilitators for workshops, commissioned studies, outreach strategy			30 000

<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>240 000</b>
--------------------	----------------

\*The Forward Look project will cover costs according to ESF guidelines for travel and publications.

## References

Dijck, José van et al. (2007) *Samenspel in samenhang: onderwijs en onderzoek in communicatie, media en informatie*. [Interrelation and integration: education and research in communication, media and information] Amsterdam: De Koninklijke Nederlandse Adademie van Wetenschappen.

Fraser, Nancy (1990) "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy". *Social Text* 25/26:56-80.

European Commission (2007) *A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment: COM(2007) 833 final*. Retrieved from [ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media\\_literacy/docs/com/en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/docs/com/en.pdf)

European Commission (2008) *Communication on Media Literacy from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee*. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/programme/overview/consultations/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/programme/overview/consultations/index_en.htm)

European Commission (2009) *Commission recommendation on media literacy in the digital environment for a more competitive audiovisual and content industry and an inclusive knowledge society*. Retrieved from [ec.europa.eu/culture/media/literacy/docs/recom/c\\_2009\\_6464\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/literacy/docs/recom/c_2009_6464_en.pdf)

European Commission (2010) *Granada Ministerial Declaration on the European Digital Agenda*. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/eeurope/i2010/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm)

European Parliament and Commission (2006) *Action programme in the field of lifelong learning: Decision No 1720/2006/EC*. Retrieved from [eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:327:0045:0068:EN:PDF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:327:0045:0068:EN:PDF)

European Parliament (2007) *Amended TVWF Directive: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council Amending Council Directive 89/552/EEC*. Retrieved from [ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/docs/reg/modernisation/proposal\\_2005/avmsd\\_cons\\_may07\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/docs/reg/modernisation/proposal_2005/avmsd_cons_may07_en.pdf)

European Parliament (2009) *Media Literacy in a digital world* European Parliament Resolution. Retrieved from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?language=EN&reference=A6-0461/2008>

Habermas, Jurgen (2006) "Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy Still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research". *Communication Theory* 16(4):411-426.

Livingstone, Sonia (ed) (2011) "Media literacy: Ambitions, policies and measures". Report COST Action ISO906: Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies. Retrieved from <http://www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/node/222>

McLaughlin , Lisa (1993) "Feminism, the public sphere, media and democracy". *Media, Culture & Society* Vol. 15: 599-620.

OECD (2005). *Definition and selection of key competencies: Executive summary*. Retrieved from [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/61/35070367.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/47/61/35070367.pdf)

Ofcom (2011). *Children's media literacy in the Nations: summary report*. Retrieved from [http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/media-literacy-pubs/?utm\\_source=update%252Bemail&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=media-lit-nations](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/media-literacy-pubs/?utm_source=update%252Bemail&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=media-lit-nations)

Papacharissi, Zizi (2002) "The Virtual Sphere. The Internet as a Public Sphere". *New Media & Society* 4(1): 9-27.

Schulz, W. (2004). Reconsidering mediatization as an analytical concept. *European Journal of Communication*,19(1), 87-101.

## **Annex 1 – List of participants at the Forward Look re-Scoping Workshop, ESF Strasbourg, 20 – 21 June 2011**

### **Writing group Forward Look proposal:**

Prof. Slavko Splichal, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (main proposer)

Prof. Cláudia Álvares, Lusofona University, Portugal

Prof. Gustavo Cardoso, Instituto Superior das Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, Portugal

Prof. Ola Erstad, University of Oslo, Norway

Prof. Peter Golding, Northumbria University, United Kingdom

Dr. Nicholas Jankowski, Humanities Group, KNAW, Netherlands

Prof. Colin Sparks, Westminster University, United Kingdom

Prof. Charis Xinaris, European University – Cyprus, Cyprus

### **Representatives ESF Standing Committees**

Prof. Rūta Marcinkevičienė, Vytautas Magnus University (Standing Committee for the Humanities)

### **Consultancy**

Dr. Simone Kimpeler, Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI

### **ESF**

Dr. Carole Moquin-Patthey (Head of Corporate Science Strategy Development Unit)

Dr. Shira Tabachnikof (Head of Communications Unit)

Dr. Nina Kancewicz-Hoffman (Head of Humanities and Social Sciences Unit)

Dr. Rifka Weehuizen (Acting Senior Science Officer, Humanities and Social Sciences Unit)

Dr. Eva Hoogland (Senior Science Officer, Humanities and Social Sciences Unit)

## **Annex 2 – Governance structure of the Forward Look**

### **Outline**

The Forward Look “Media studies: new media and new literacies” is managed by the ESF Project Management Team based at the ESF’s Humanities and Social Sciences Unit. The main responsibility for the approval of the final report lies with the two ESF Standing Committees with a direct stake in the FL, i.e., the Standing Committee for the Social Sciences (SCSS) and the Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH). The quality assurance is monitored by the Quality Reference Group, composed of representatives of the two Standing Committees and other stakeholders. The FL Scientific Committee is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of all FL activities.

### **Quality Reference Group (QRG)**

The Quality Reference Group monitors the Forward Look activities including the production of the final report. It defines and monitors quality assurance mechanisms in accordance with the ESF Forward Look procedures and is responsible for the dissemination process. In particular, the Quality Reference Group will

- approve the detailed work plan as prepared by the Scientific Committee (see below)
- provide input to the foreword of the final report
- validate the final report following external peer-review
- be responsible for the outreach strategy

The Quality Reference Group will meet twice: at the start and end of the Forward Look. In addition, it is aimed that each FL activity will be attended by at least one member of the Quality Reference Group. In particular, the participation of a QRG representative at the synthesis workshop and final conference will be important.

The QRG will be appointed upon invitation from its Chair, Dr. Marc Heppner, Director of Science and Strategy Development, ESF. Representation of the following organisations will be sought:

- ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)
- ESF Standing Committee for the Social Sciences (SCSS)
- European Commission (DG-Research and Innovation)
- European Commission (DG Information Society and Media)
- European Research Council (ERC)
- Professional association(s) (e.g., European Communication Research and Education Association, ECREA; International Association of Media and Communication Research, IAMCR)
- COST (DC ISCH) as an observer

### **Scientific Committee (SC)**

The FL Scientific Committee, with support of the ESF Project Management Team, is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of all FL activities as outlined in the FL proposal. In particular, the Scientific Committee will:

- prepare and maintain a detailed work plan – including a timeline, budget and deliverables, as well as a list of participants to the various FL activities

- appoint a chair and a co-chair for each of the FL activities
- agree on the template for the overview papers from the thematic workshops
- supervise the thematic activities, through the appointed chairs and co-chairs
- organize the synthesis workshop and final conference
- be responsible for the preparation of the final report
- contribute to the outreach during and after the project

The Chair of the Scientific Committee will be appointed upon invitation from the Chair of the QRG. The Chair of the Scientific Committee will propose the overall composition of the SC which will be approved by the QRG.

The Chair of the Scientific Committee will be invited to the QRG meetings as an observer.

### **ESF Project Management Team**

The ESF Project Management Team, based at the ESF's Humanities and Social Sciences Unit, will provide direct support to the FL with 40% of a Science Officer's capacity and 30% of an Administrator's capacity. The Project Management Team - composed of the Head of Unit, Senior Science Officer and Administrator - is responsible for the operation of the project, including

- the administrative and scientific secretariat to the QRG and SC
- administrative support to all FL activities
- the peer-review process of the final report
- the communication with the relevant ESF Standing Committees and ESF Management