ESF RESEARCH CONFERENCES

Rapporteur Report

Partnership:	**ESF-LiU**
Conference Title:	Paying Attention : Digital Media Cultures and Generational Responsibilities
Dates:	**6-10.09.2010**
Chair:	Dr. Patrick Crogan
Rapporteur:	**Prof. Kosta Gouliamos, PhD**

General Comments
Any general comments you might have concerning the conference, your role, the scientific area covered by this conference, etc.

The conference has identified the strengths and weaknesses of various practices pertinent to the thematic of politics, ethics and aesthetics of the today's attention economy.

The participants have addressed key questions (what architectures of power are at work in the attention economy, how it is building new structures of experience, and what kinds of value does this architecture produce); they have also unearthed and /or disinterred the technological genealogies and academic theories through which "attention" in the digital media came to be constituted and diffused.

Nevertheless, the conference had been carefully prepared in thematic sessions so as to provide a valuable theoretical accounts and creative contributions by artists exploring critical, yet alternative uses of new media technologies.

The question periods have also advanced the discussion significantly by posing recent theoretical issues and methodological developments.

Quality of Scientific Programme, Presentations and Discussion
Comments on the balance and scope of the scientific programme, the scientific quality of the presentations and discussions.

The program was consisted of

- 12 sessions
- 7 key-note speakers and
- No more than 31 participants
- 1 poster session

Such a structure has assured a balanced representation among preeminent educators, artists and experts reflecting the full scope and the scientific problematic addressed in the conference.
The presentations of the conference have had an illustrious scientific output and, in particular, the speakers have extended the determining factors of knowledge pertinent to key spheres of the thematic.

On the other hand, the chairs of the sessions encouraged dialogue among researchers from the fields of Cultural and New Media Studies, Philosophy, Education, Communications, Economics, Internet studies, Human Computer Interface Studies, Art and Design.

Indeed, each session began with a presentation followed by vigorous discussion and debate.

Moreover, most presentations have succeed to reveal how practices - such as pervasive media experimentation or new social media networks - generate detours and/or reinventions causing the diversity and/or multiplicity of cultural discourses to which younger generations are usually associated.

The research papers took also into account the fact that there is an intensive attempt by the 'economies of attention' to commoditize and exploit the digital spheres according to the market goals of the media industries; a phenomenon that affects the formation of a techno-cultural communication with an indeterminate clues to a configuration of biosociality.

In addition, the poster section incorporated the work of 'digital media artists' who have been engaged with the conference's approaches or/and interpretative discourses in an innovative manner.

Informal Networking and Exchange; Atmosphere
Were the schedule and the atmosphere conducive to an easy exchange of information? Was there time and space for an informal discussion? Were younger researchers integrated?

In his opening statement, the Chair/ Convener expressed that he was very pleased to have such a wide range of prominent speakers and participants from Europe and America present at the conference.
He felt that this showed the interest and importance of working at global level to critically discuss issues of digital media within the framework of 'attention economy'.

His statement has enabled people to express their full views and, delicately, to develop apt academic relations.

This type of communication has resulted as well the exceptional chance of

- meeting and learning from each other;
- discussing, clarifying, and codifying the participants` common perspectives or disparate experiences;
- acknowledging the obstacles to study and/or to elucidate the complicity in the (re)production of 'attention';
- questioning dominant or conventional frameworks

Balance of Participants
Was there an appropriate balance between young and senior participants? Was a balance of national groups and researchers from different (sub) fields achieved?

The European Science Foundation requires a pan-European balance of participants for the projects they support.
In view of this, the Conference complied purely with the ESF requirement.

There was a functional balance responding to the scope of the conference but not to the overall ESF strategic objective.

The vast majority of speakers and participants were coming from U.K and/or Anglophone institutions.

Outlook and Future Developments
Will new collaborations emerge from this conference? (How) could the conference outcomes be utilized further? Are there suitable (ESF) programmes or instruments to further the work of the conference?

The Conference's participants aimed to combine their theoretical knowledge and experience to advance – particularly the younger researchers - their own theoretical genealogies, while determining factors actively involved in a spatially extensive and socially heterogeneous media-cultural environment.

The participants expressed their willingness to be engaged in crucial research formations, by utilizing a cultural agenda that will be broadened to encompass the new generation of researchers and artists.

It should be also noted that there was no evidence of experts dominating the dialogue, no agenda for advancing a single point of view. Rather, the participants took full benefit of a remarkable occasion for invigorating mutually respectful synergy and a knowledge-sharing venue.

Follow-up
What immediate and long term follow-up would benefit collaborations and dialogues that may have begun at the   conference?

The chair summarized the discourses of the sessions in a suitable to the ESF Conference manner.

A remarkable output was noticed based on how well scholars, artists and practitioners from different continents and different disciplines had worked together.

As a result, scholars and artists expressed their enthusiasm and zeal for follow-up activities within the ESF domain and programs.

Organisation and Infrastructure
Were venue, catering and accommodation appropriate for this conference? Were participants satisfied with the on-site administration and support?

1. Based on the ESF Research Conferences Scheme, it was expected that Linkoping University would provide (by Rector or Vice Rector) some introductory remarks, offer a city-cultural tour and/or praise the scheme, but unfortunately it didn't happen.

2. It was also expected that the Chairs would provide time period of lectures to allow either for leisure time activities or for interaction, but unfortunately it didn't happen.

3. It was expected as well that the Chairs would provide forum for discussants in the sessions (a common practice in learning societies), but unfortunately it didn't happen.

4. The on-site administration was punctual, efficient, resourceful, and enthusiastic

5. Catering and accommodation were standard.

Summary & Overall Assessment
Was the conference successful; were its aims achieved?

Perhaps the thematic generating the most inquisitive and interest during the conference was the new media technologies and the related apparatuses.

Participants besides had an opportunity to measure many of the provocative and presently-unanswerable questions and issues raised by the pertinent literature.

They have also acknowledged the digital mechanisms through which artistic or social work is executed and they decided for a follow-up that will stimulate and/or motivate the same

high level of dialogue as the sessions of the conference.

Overall, the participants have accomplished to

- classify key thematic for further study and revision,
- promote academic channel of communication that adds value to intellectual pursuits while advancing cultural research,
- integrate young researchers into the digital field,
- assume accountability for those new media landscapes of knowledge,
- cover a wide range of topics, comprehensive and provocative
- make available a wide choice of ideas to those search of the subject

In any case, the intellectuals/artists and scholars of the conference have formed a critical sequence that enables adequately to transform the new media structuration and its 'attention economy' into a more creative, accountable, conscientious and responsive segment of modern (post)communities.

About ESF Research Conferences

The Scheme

This conference is part of the European Science Foundation's (ESF) Research Conferences Scheme. The Scheme aims to promote scientific excellence and frontier level research throughout Europe and the rest of the world. Conferences aim to provide leading scientists and other participants, including young researchers, with a platform to present their work, to discuss the most recent developments in their fields of research and to network.

Conference Format

The core activities should be based on lectures by invited speakers, who are leaders in their respective fields, followed by extensive discussion periods. An informal exchange of ideas, both inside and outside the lecture room, should be encouraged, and the number of sessions in the daily timetable should be limited in order to allow sufficient time for interaction between the participants. Time should be reserved for a 'Forward Look Plenary Discussion' about future developments in the field.

Participants can take all their meals together to encourage further contact and networking, which can be particularly beneficial to younger researchers who may be less outspoken in the formal lecture room setting. In order to gain optimum benefit from the conference, both the speakers and the participants are asked to stay for the whole duration.

Division of Tasks

The Conference Chair is responsible for ensuring the quality of the scientific programme through the selection and invitation of speakers, and through the selection of participants.

The ESF Conferences Unit is responsible for managing all the logistical aspects of the conference organisation, including the provision of an on-site secretariat.

Further information: www.esf.org/conferences