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Call for Participation – Workshop
Re-thinking education in the digital age.
Meaningful perspectives for future
citizenship
27.-29.04.2023 (Zoom/Universität Hamburg)

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Die Konferenz findet vom 27. April bis 29. April 2023 online via Zoom statt. Forschende aller Fachrichtungen sind eingeladen, ihre Vorschläge bis 15.12.2022 einzureichen.

The conference will take place online via Zoom from April 27 to April 29 2023. We invite researchers from all disciplines, to send their proposal till 15.12.2022.

1. The point of departure

So-called 'new media' and digitization – ranging from social media to ubiquitous computing and artificial intelligence, from big data to virtual environments and a hybridization of all spheres of life – do not only challenge our individual sovereignty, they call into question almost all dimensions of our society. At the same time, however, they offer opportunities and chances: they bear the promise to think through complex entanglement, to create new epistemic ecologies, to participate in the negotiating how we cope with the challenges of the present and how we envision our collective in the future; they promise living diversity in action and to empower those who otherwise might have no voice – or in short: they offer venues to face vital challenges of the 21st century such as ecological crisis, discourses of sustainability, diversity and openness, and they might help us to transformatively learn from our past.

Prerequisite, however, is that we develop the competences – as individuals as well as society – to act in an increasingly deeply mediatized, digital or rather hybrid world, to actively participate in it and – above all – to shape it.

2. Digital ecologies of knowledge – state of the arts

Given the numerous current crises and disruptions, it is no surprise that discourses around 'the digitalized citizen' and in its consequence concepts of 'new media literacies' that have been around us for the last decade are regaining momentum. Yet, it

seems that there are still various gaps between aspirations and potentials, institutional contexts, theoretical approaches and transformative research – i. e. research that goes beyond the analytical description of a status quo and moves to the field of engaged knowledge creation, teaching and implementation. In this regard, both research in this field and programs to enhance '(new) media literacy' repeat the misconception of the foundation of traditional literacies: they are all too often shortened to the ability to read and write data; they are stuck in conceptualizations which are deficit-orientated and prioritize skill attainment; and they are addressing rather the individual than civic society (including its diversity). This, however, aggravates cynicism towards engagement with media (Mihailidis 2009) and deepens the gap "between concern and capacity to act" which Boyte (2014) describes, between being aware of current issues and imagining ways of meaningful engagement, expression and (self-)empowerment.

3. Outline and goal of the workshop

This transdisciplinary workshop tries to envision alternatives to under-complex approaches in this entanglement, starting from the premises that we need to think of 'new literacies' for the 21st century in a much more comprehensive way: as complex competences for a more and more complex world. In this regard, we pursue the train of thought that Mihailidis sketches when stating that such competences are to be conceived of as „Civic

Media literacies [that] embrace critical consciousness as a practice of building in people the possibility of response in the lived world" (Mihailidis 2018, 162) and to "reframe media literacy interventions towards civic intentionality: a set of design considerations for media literacy initiatives that are based on the value systems of agency, caring, persistence, critical consciousness, and emancipation" (Mihailidis 2018: 154). We seek to further think through digital media through (not exclusively) Mills, social, critical, multimodal, spatial, material and sensory lenses (cf. Mills 2016).

Hence, approaching emerging new (media) environments as interdependent creative, discursive, social, political and epistemic ecologies and practices, we invite participants to think with us through pressing issues alongside four possible research aspects on new literacies:

- learning through engagement, political education
- digital societies, sustainability and eco-literacy
- citizenship, participation and empowerment
- complex epistemic ecologies and knowledge environments

Key questions of discussion might be (among others):

- How can innovative educational offerings be created in, with and through digital media to enable people to shape their own (media) environments and to develop skills beyond merely technological ICT literacies?
- How can one promote creative and, above all, social and emotional competencies with regard to digital media in order to enable people with diverse biographical backgrounds to (re-)gain sovereignty?

- How can we co-creatively design sustainable environments to generate knowledge, to think through complex issues and to negotiate divergent positions?
- How can co-creative and participatory offerings be employed to foster pluri-perspective thinking, polyphony and – in particular – collaboration instead of individual click-working and slacktivism without any meaningful impact?
- Overarching all these strands of thought: What does it entail – also institutional and organizationally – if one moves from notions of media education and an all too narrow understanding of digital literacy to a more comprehensive approach of what living in an age of socio-technological, political and cultural transformation means?

This workshop is meant as a first, preparatory exchange, set up as a moderated conversation, comprising short key impulses in the plenary followed by focused discussions in breakout rooms. We are striving to open a space to incubate further plans for further cooperation and application for national as well as international research funding.

4. Proposals and contributions

The conference will take place online via Zoom from April 27 to April 29 2023.

We invite researchers from all disciplines engaged in finding solutions to the challenges outlined above to send their proposal till 15.12.2022, note of acceptance till 31.01.2023.

More information can be found on the website:

<https://rethinking-education.avinus.org/submission/>

As we aim at opening spaces for exchange, there are no strict requirements for individual contributions (up to 20 minutes presentation + 10 minutes of discussion). Innovative formats are welcome.

5. Proposals should include:

- outline of presentation (approx. 2000 characters)
- short CV
- selected list of reference
- format of presentation

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at the following e-mail address:

rethinking@medienkulturforschung.de

6. Team:

PD Dr. Thomas Klein (consultant and lecturer for education for sustainable development and media literacy, Berlin)

Prof. Dr. Petra Missomelius (department of media studies, Universität Innsbruck)

Prof. Dr. Thomas Weber (department of media studies, Universität Hamburg)

PD Dr. Anna Wiehl (department of media studies, Universität Bayreuth)