

Call for Papers

Old media persistence. Past continuities in the brand-new digital world

Guest Editors

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Deadline for submission of abstracts: February 15 2022

Deadline for submission of full papers: June 15 2022

Overview and rationale

This Thematic Section aims to better understand the reasons why, despite the popular discourses of disruptive innovation of the digital age, old media persist over time. Specifically, it seeks to elucidate the very current examples of past continuities in the brand-new digital world. In several media sectors, “old” or traditional media, such as landline telephony, television, radio, film, printing, analogue photography and music, have not disappeared – despite voices to the contrary (see, amongst others, Enli & Syvertsen 2016). Depending on social, cultural, and political contexts, these industries and platforms can be preferred spaces of communication and maintain their potential as profitable businesses. Old media also persist in terms of content, political mentality, business, law, regulation, audience and usage. We aim to better understand the reasons why this is the case. Why is the old persisting? The Thematic Section should ideally generate theoretical and empirical debates among media scholars from diverse disciplines in media and culture studies, with specific case studies but also theoretical reflections on this topic. We are aware of the fact that journals, conferences, and books are devoted to “old media” today. But the aim of this Thematic Section is different: It aims to provide a comprehensive and intermedial reflection on: (1) the persistence of the old and past

continuities in the brand-new digital world; (2) the role of innovation that old or traditional media still play in societies today, and (3) the future of old media in media studies research. Mapping the continuities and discontinuities between the contemporary and inherited practices of media constitutes a new mode of inquiry into the historiography of media. Dialectic relationships between old and new media also provide political, methodological and theoretical cues in understanding the contemporary media landscape.

Media and communication studies today especially focus on questions surrounding how digital media and digitization have changed and revolutionized previous media ecologies. Funding opportunities, PhD dissertations, journals and books on digitization and the relevance of digital media are overwhelming. This Thematic Section is an invitation to discuss how studying old media is imperative and still fully relevant to understand our contemporary media landscapes. The integration of old and new or digital media seems to be more effective than disruptive models, and the so-called “old media” are still used and appreciated by media audiences worldwide. The Thematic Section aims to question and challenge classic narratives of contemporary media studies, including but also venturing beyond (a) the linear model of replacement and substitution (digital media replace the old media); (b) the disruptive model in which new and digital media change markets and users’ habits completely, changing previous ecologies; and (c) the clear distinction between old and new media, analogue and digital.

Fields of research in media studies have started to rethink the relevance of the old. For example, media archaeology (Huhtamo & Parikka 2011, Parikka 2012), debates on old and new media (Acland 2007, Balbi 2015, Bolter & Grusin 1999, Natale 2016, Theophanidis & Thibault 2016, and others), and finally the role of maintenance in communication (Balbi & Leggero 2020). Most relevant reflections on the persistence of the old comes from science and technology studies (STS) and history of technology scholarship (Edgerton 2007, Henke & Sims 2020, Vinsel & Russell 2020, Krebs & Weber 2021, and others). This Thematic Section follows the intellectual footsteps of this literature, expanding it to media studies and to other fields, going beyond a mere technological approach.

Papers from different fields of media and communication studies are welcome: from history to anthropology, from cultural studies to political economy, from geography to STS, and others. We invite submissions of theoretical papers as well as papers based on sources and empirical findings and studying specific case studies. Submitted papers have to address one or some of the following research questions:

- Why and how do old media persist in contemporary media ecologies?
- What does persistence mean in media studies?
- What is the relationship between traditional and digital media, and how traditional media are integrated in digital realms?
- How do digital media remediate old media and, vice versa, how do old media change because of digital media?

- Can old media be innovative, and how?
- Will old and traditional media be studied in the future, and how?

Key dates

- Release and spread of the CFP: December 21 2021
- Abstract submission deadline: February 15 2022
- Selection of abstracts done by the Guest Editors: February 16 – March 15 2022
- Authors receive confirmation of selection of papers: March 30 2022
- Full paper submission deadline: June 15 2022
- First round of peer reviews on the papers: June–July 2022
- Reviews back to authors: August 15 – September 1 2022
- Resubmissions deadline: November 1 2022
- Second round of peer reviews on the papers: November and December 2022
- Notification of acceptance no later than January 15 2023
- Submission Final paper: March 30 2023
- Editorial work on the papers (final shape-up): April 2023
- Publication of the Thematic Section is scheduled for November 2023

Submissions Guidelines

SComS welcomes submissions in English, German, French, or Italian. However, English is the preferred language of this Thematic Section. **Abstracts** should be a maximum of **500 words** in length and should explain the main research question(s), scientific literature, methodology, and case studies the authors plan to use.

Please submit your abstract via e-mail to gabriele.balbi@usi.ch.

Manuscripts should be a maximum of **6000 words in length** (including the abstract and all references, tables, figures, footnotes, appendices). In addition, authors may submit supplementary material that will be published as an online supplement. Authors are invited to submit original papers that are not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Articles shall be submitted using the APA reference style, 6th edition. The manuscript itself must be free of any information or references that might reveal the identity of the authors and their institution to allow double-blind peer review. **Manuscripts** should be submitted via the SComS platform: <https://www.hope.uzh.ch/scoms/about/submissions>. We ask authors to carefully prepare submissions according to all rules given in the [SComS Submission Guidelines](#).

The expected publication date of the Thematic Section is November 2023. However, early submissions that successfully pass the review process will also be immediately **published online first**. Contributions that receive

positive reviews but are not accepted for the Thematic Section may be considered for publication in a subsequent SComS issue within the General Section. Papers are published under the Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. Authors retain the copyright and full publishing rights without restrictions.

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