UNIL | Université de Lausanne

Centre de linguistique
et des sciences du langage
(CLSL)

WORKSHOP

Online Networked Publics

University of Lausanne (Anthropole, room 5018 & 5093)
5-6 December 2019.

Digital technology and media have restructured publics as *networked publics* (Boyd, 2011). Especially in the web 2.0 – an 'ensemble' of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram etc. – publics are constructed through specific affordances and at the same time designed interactively in each communicative exchange through individual stylistic choices which are, nonetheless, oriented to community norms (Androutsopoulos 2014).

Messages in the web 2.0 manifest such norms of the community and therefore construct the members identities. Indeed, they foster mixed images of the self : ego-driven, but also communally oriented performances (Papacharissi, 2018) staging 'Me-we' identities (Burger, 2019) often contributing to the formation of *affective publics* (Papacharissi, 2015) or *intimate publics* (Cumiskey and Hjorth, 2017).

The annual workshop addresses the construction of *networked publics* from a variety of perspectives. It interrogates the ways in which networked audiences emerge in different social media sharing practices and examines the implications of their formation for identity construction, affect entextualization and circulation, and community-building.

Sharing is, here, understood as the main mode of online participation that incorporates notions of distribution, communication and interpersonal relations and that evokes the declared values of the sharing economy and the internet imaginary, including openness, trust, caring, and reciprocity (John, 2017).

The examination of different ways of constituting, developing and connecting (or disconnecting) networked audiences sheds light into the dynamics of participation, often traversing the online and offline, and raises important questions relating to the resignification of the public sphere and its associated notions of the 'public', the 'social', and the 'commons' (Fuchs 2014).

References

Androutsopoulos, J. (2014). Languaging when contexts collapse: Audience design in social networking. *Discourse, Context & Media* 4-5: 62-73.

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Burger, M. (2019). Introduction : Se mettre en scène dans les sphères publiques en ligne. In Burger, M. (ed.) La communication digitale, vol. 2. *Cahiers de l'ILSL* 59: 3-19.

Cumiskey, K.M. and L. Hjorth (2017). *Haunting Hands. Mobile Media Practices and Loss*. Oxford: O.U.P.

Fuchs, C. (2014). *Social media. A Critical Introduction*. London: Sage.

John, N. (2017). *The Age of Sharing*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

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Invited speakers
Korina Giaxoglou (The Open University, UK).
Barbara De Cock (UCLouvain, Belgium).

Organizer.
Marcel Burger, University of Lausanne.

Program

Thursday *(Anthropole room 5018)*

14 :00   *Welcoming and introduction.*

14 :15-15 :15   ***Participation online as affective positioning:***
                  the case of participation on Youtube cancer vlogs
                  Korina Giaxoglou, *The Open University, UK.*

15 :15-15 :45   *Discussion*

15 :45-16 :15   ***Merry Christmas by Manor***
                  Students' presentation 1: Pauline Dufour & Justine Volluz

16 :15-16 :45   *coffee break*

16 :45-17 :15   ***Facebook's 'Contrôles TL' community***
                  Students' presentation 2: Gabriela Nikolic & Ivana Zecevic

17 :15-17 :45   ***A Facebook scandal: Cambridge Analytica***
                  Students' presentation 3 : Frank Dat Tai Pham & Andrea Amato

Friday *(Anthropole room 5093)*

09 :30   *Welcoming coffee*

10 :00-11 :00   ***Twitter by politicians: how is participation created or suggested ?***
                  Barbara De Cock, *UCLouvain, Belgium.*

11 :00-11 :30   *Discussion*

11 :30-11 :55   ***'Nanarland' as a community***
                  Students' presentation 4: Jessica Chautems & Lucas Taddei

11 :55-12 :15   ***What data for electoral campaigns?***
                  Students' presentation 5: Jacinto Fernandez & Ariane Mérillat

                  End of the workshop

Abstracts.

Korina Giaxoglou, The Open University, UK.

Participation online as affective positioning: the case of participation on YouTube cancer vlogs

In this talk, I start by overviewing existing approaches to participation in the media and social media (e.g. Thornborrow, 2014; van Dijck, 2009) and the ongoing debates around the potential and limits of participatory social media cultures (Fuchs, 2013). I then move on to discuss the case of participation in the comment space of a video-blog (aka vlog) on cancer on the video-sharing platform YouTube. Based on the analysis of an exemplary cancer vlog and drawing on small story heuristics (Georgakopoulou, 2015), I examine the comments of most-viewed videos in relation to aspects of the stories broadcast and the specific types of affective positioning for viewers that they reveal (for instance, positions of supporting, being supported, or inspired by the vlogger).

The analysis provides an empirical lens into the way mourning is mobilized as a resource for motivating and inspiring the formation and maintenance of intimate publics as part of the growing commoditization of the 'wound' and vulnerability of the illness experience. The insights from this analysis point to usefulness of approaching participation online as affective positioning, i.e. as the linguistic and narrative modulation of distance, proximity, or intimacy at different levels (Giaxoglou, forthcoming) and critically assessing the potential and limits of the connectedness of networked audiences around affect, value, and visibility.

Barbara De Cock, UCLouvain, Belgium.

Twitter by politicians: how is participation created or suggested?

Whereas initially the use of Twitter by politicians was thought to open avenues for more direct interaction with citizens, research on different elections has shown that this does not seem to be the case. In this presentation, I will look into how politicians construct their identity online and in how some of their strategies can be linked to online and offline forms of participation (or not).

The corpus on which this paper draws, consists of the tweets and Twitter biographies of current MEPs from Belgium, France, Spain, UK, and we will adopt a corpus-informed linguistics discourse analysis combined with methods from communication sciences. It will seek to answer the following questions concerning identity construction and participants.

(i) Which geographical and political identities does the candidate seek to construct through his/her use of Twitter?
(ii) Which strategies could be considered linked to online and offline participation? How do they tie in with the affordances of Twitter?

Ultimately, the aim is to show some specificities of the use of Twitter by politicians through a critical analysis of the idea that Twitter will reduce the democratic deficit by increasing citizens participations and through a focus on discursive strategies linked to participation.

Contact

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