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TAB

New media and culture

Summary



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SUMMARY

At the suggestion of the Committee on Culture and Media, the Office of Technology Assessment (TAB) at the German Bundestag was commissioned in July 2001 by the competent Committee for Education, Research and Technology Assessment to carry out a study on the subject »New media and culture«. The goal as stated was to show »current and future impacts of the development of new media on the concept of culture, cultural policy, the cultural industry and cultural activities« and to formulate well-founded statements on changes and processes of change.

To allow for the breadth and complexity of the study, TAB adopted a two-stage concept for the project. This provides for a first phase (preliminary study) to explore the theoretical and conceptual basis, investigate trends in media use, analyse media markets and – for selected cultural areas – describe the changes and impacts resulting from the use of new media. In addition, proposals will be developed for the issues to be studied in depth in the second phase of the project. The subject of the second project phase (main study) will then be the issues for in-depth study to be selected by the MPs following completion of the preliminary study; in contrast to the preliminary study the focus in this phase will be on developing options for action and structural management for political decision-makers.

The present report gives an overview of the results of the preliminary study. At the time of completion of the preliminary study no decision had been taken on whether the project should be continued or, if so, what the key content should be.

The core of the report comprises sections IV, V and VI, which rely essentially on the results of the »basic studies« carried out by external experts on the following topics:

- > Transformation in understanding and concepts of culture (Christopher Coenen, Berlin)
- > New Media and media markets (Booz-Allen & Hamilton, Düsseldorf)
- > New forms of production, transfer and reception in selected cultural fields (Prognos AG, Basle)

This central part of the report is flanked on one side by reflections on the concept of media (which also investigates the question of what is »new« about the



New Media) and current trends in media use (sections II, III) and on the other side by a review of the process to date for identifying and selecting issues for continuing the project in the second phase (section VII).

A project dealing in a nuanced fashion with media and media use, culture and concepts and theories of culture cannot use a single, unambiguous concept of culture or media. Concepts are neither true nor false, but rather more or less suitable for the purpose for which they are constructed and used, and this purpose in the present project is to identify interactions between the New Media and culture. The report (and the project) is not concerned with favouring a specific concept of media and culture, but rather with analysing the multiple layers present in the discourse. This again involves a range of scientific perspectives, since there is no homogeneous media science. The basic analysis of cultural concepts accordingly has more of a cultural scientific and sociological focus, while the basic analysis of the media markets has more of an economic focus and the basic analysis of selected cultural areas has more of a communication theory focus.

THE CONCEPT OF MEDIA AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE »NEW MEDIA«

The goal of considerations on the definition of media is to develop an understanding of the media which is adequate for the project's needs, to classify the variety of technical media concepts and identify conceptual one-sidedness such as the regarding media merely as neutral channels where the technical and systemic features are irrelevant and all that matters is the processes of user acquisition (which Rammert characterises as »a communications-theory bottleneck«).

One difference in orientation which is pervasive in the media discourse is regarding media either primarily as technical systems on the one hand or as socio-cultural practices on the other hand. For the purposes of the present project, however, it is important to see both the technical and socio-cultural sides of the media. This is because the interactions constitute the problems for study. It is still necessary to distinguish between two levels: at the first level there are interactions which can be directly identified and described as the reality of the New Media, e.g. as media use, while the second level involves »secondary« effects in the sense of cultural phenomena which are subsumed in the interactions at the first level, so that they are not directly evident (e.g. a different attitude to space as a result of using a cell phone).

In the present context media are understood as the socio-technical and cultural practices of distributing and storing information which are used to shape communication and interaction and so help determine collective perception and experience in the everyday world. »New Media« are media based technically on digitalisation, miniaturisation, data compression, networking and convergence. The New Media are expected to transform the modes of communication in a way which departs from the established familiar forms of interpersonal communication, either direct or via media.

DEVELOPMENTS IN MEDIA USE

The description of overarching trends in media use sets the context for the central section of the report. The presentation is strongly oriented towards empirical research, where the selected areas are the development of users and use on the Internet, the description of »media user types« representing specific lifestyles, and changes in readership and reading behaviour.

To place these three fields in a broader framework, we use the findings of the unique series of international surveys of mass communication, continued in 2000 (although with a modified approach) and a development model which runs to 2010. Where current media development (the mass communication surveys started in 1964) can be described as »the more, the more« – in other words, newly-emerging media did not edge out existing ones – there has been a shift in trend since 1993/94 with the New Media (PCs with multimedia capability, Internet, mobile radio). »Competition through supplementation is increasingly turning into predatory competition for increasingly scarce time budgets« (Schrape, 2001). The question of media competition or coexistence is accordingly central to the prospects for the coming years. Undoubtedly, this will involve complex restructurings rather than simple substitution.

This is also clear from the analysis of media use types, which have different levels of Internet use, display different patterns of reception of cultural content, and are receptive to differing degrees to shifts in media use patterns. Increased online use is (as shown by the survey data) at the expense of TV viewing, and also of newspaper reading. This decline is not reflected in measured average TV viewing time, but this need not be a contradiction. In future we can in any case expect greater individualisation and differentiation in media use patterns, the »average user« will ultimately become a construct remote from reality.



Changes in readership and reading behaviour are studied on the basis of the latest results of the »Stiftung Lesen« foundation, which published its report on these in 2001. There were some dramatic changes in reading strategies (increase in selective readers) and reading motivation, which has become particularly threatened in recent years. This threatens to erode a cultural technique which is the basis not only for reading books and newspapers but also for using the New Media.

CHANGES IN UNDERSTANDING AND CONCEPTS OF CULTURE – INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE NEW MEDIA AND CULTURE

Trends in scientific concepts of culture

To determine relevant interactions between the changes in cultural concepts and the development of the New Media, it is also necessary to look at historical processes of change in the understanding of culture. Using the example of the history of concepts of culture in the social sciences (specifically, sociology and ethnology), trends in the understanding of culture can be identified which are still relevant to the debates about the New Media.

The outstanding characteristics of recent processes of transformation in concepts of culture in the social sciences include an almost general expansion of the concept of culture, a renewed interest in the culture of the individual, groups and humanity as a whole (in comparison e.g. with nation and people) and finally the increase in the importance for the understanding of culture of new (or what are perceived as new) cultural communities, groups and contexts.

Recently the history of concepts of culture in social sciences is frequently being regarded and criticised as a success story for the »container« concepts of culture. In these concepts, cultures are considered to be closed units and are generally assigned to national societies. The success story of these concepts of culture is based to a high degree on the influence of ethnology. This was based on an understanding of culture inspired by Herder as a way of investigating the lifestyles, everyday practices, ideas and social relationships of »primitive peoples« as a culture. Among other things, this had the effect of reducing the importance of philosophical concepts of culture aligned with the individual and humanity as a whole.

In the course of overcoming colonialism and in the context of growing interest in cultural differences within »civilised« societies, ethnological concepts of culture

came to occupy a central position for the understanding of culture by the social sciences generally (and also for everyday understanding of »culture«). These concepts of culture were more descriptive than normative in nature and relatively broad, and still have central importance for national and international discussions on cultural policy. However, in the last few years they have come under increasing criticism from a position which sees cultures in principle as open, with individuals always having a number of cultural identities. This makes cross-border movements, interculturalism and hybridisation more important for cultural theory; media development, transnational cultural relationships, intercultural exchange and migration become even more important topics for research.

Cultural development, New Media and media culture

In the recent debates about the interactions between cultural and media development, the media is mostly given outstanding and still growing cultural significance. There is disagreement *inter alia* about whether cultural development is tending to blend with media development (or already has blended with it) and whether cultural theory should accordingly be primarily (or even exclusively) pursued in terms of media cultural theory. In the context of this project, particular importance is likely to attach to theoretical approaches which take account of the outstanding significance of the media for culture while at the same time avoiding subsuming cultural evolution entirely in media development. At this point it is useful to refer to two approaches of this kind (S.J. Schmidt, M. Castells) which illustrate the forms of modelling which would be required in the second phase of the project.

For Schmidt, the current status of the concept of culture in science and politics is not a fashionable phenomenon, but rather »evidence of a significant social development«, a »development from the domination of things to a domination of knowledge« (Schmidt 200b, pp. 32 et seq.), which in turn is decisively influenced by the development of information and communications technologies. He accordingly favours a concept of culture »which is based on programmes for socially relevant production and interpretation of phenomena, rather than phenomena themselves« (Schmidt 200b, pp. 33 et seq.). For him, culture is the programme for thematisation, evaluation and normative assessment of fundamental social dichotomies. By contrast, Castells' approach attempts to extrapolate developments already present in the mass media (*inter alia* the diversification and globalisation of content and the cultural segmentation of the public) and combine these with developments emerging in the New Media and the Internet, specifically in the form of networks of computerised communication which will



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be decisive as »a new symbolic environment« (which he calls »the culture of real virtuality«).

In addition to such media culture theories, many other contributions to the debate can be adduced if it is necessary to investigate the interactions between more recent developments in the media and the change in concepts of culture. The debates over these interactions show on the one hand that the development of the New Media has aroused (often vague-seeming) fears and hopes, while euphoria over technology and pessimism over culture are relatively evenly divided between the political and social trends. Conversely, there is also the tendency in these debates to pursue older scientific arguments and view the development of the New Media in the context of specific media-historical, social-theoretical or philosophical considerations.

The wealth of contributions to the debate can accordingly be organised in terms of the specific media history approaches and normative orientations. Two overarching hypotheses can be identified which characterise a number of contributions, a continuity hypothesis and a discontinuity hypothesis. Under the first, current changes appear as a continuation of processes of media and cultural development inherent in earlier phases; under the second, these appear as a break with these processes. Three sub-variants can be distinguished in both hypotheses. Under the continuity hypotheses, current cultural impacts of present media development can be seen either as the continuation of a trend present throughout media history (C1), or as the continuation of a modern trend (C2) or finally as a continuation of a trend which first emerged with wireless media (C3). Under the discontinuity hypotheses, three sub-variants can also be distinguished. Here, current media developments are seen either as a break with traditions of »western« culture reaching far back into history, or as a break with traditions of the modern age as shaped by printing and science, or finally as a break with the more recent traditions of the mass media system.

The sub-variants of both hypotheses can be combined in each case with contrary conclusions, yielding further possible subdivisions in terms of the discussions of this issue. However, this only identifies the extremes, although this should make possible at least a rough classification. We shall now do this for C1-C3. For example, sub-variant C1 can be combined either with the idea of a process of emancipation from original communities and »nature« or with concern about man's continuous alienation from these. With regard to sub-variant C2 there are the opposed favourable assessments of modernisation processes and warnings of a loss of the sense of community and a moral crisis. Finally, sub-variant C3 can



be combined with either hopes of a revival of the individual and strengthened cultural exchange or the unpleasant picture of a standardised global culture.

Cultural globalisation and the New Media

In dealing with the interactions between the change in concepts of culture and recent media development, the mutually impacting trends of individualisation and cultural globalisation become issues leading to further depths. Both issues are extremely important for the current debate on media development.

The sociological theory of individualisation must be distinguished from the concept of »individualisation« or »personalisation« which frequently appears in discussions on media services with a customised nature. It also seems advisable to distinguish between sociological theories of individualisation as such. Besides socio-structural individualisation promoted inter alia by decoupling class membership and consumption, processes like isolation/privatisation and autonomisation – in other words, competent coping with media-based growth in cultural options for choice and action – should be noted (A. Honneth). In this context the question also arises of the cultural significance of new forms of community formation (e.g. »youth cultures« or »virtual communities«) to the individual. Further, in the context of cultural globalisation processes, the social environment of the individual apparently expands and changes through the possibilities of transnational networking.

Promoted inter alia by processes of economic globalisation, there has been increasing discussion recently of processes of cultural globalisation. Both economic and cultural globalisation are highly controversial issues in political and scientific debate. There is, however, unanimous agreement that the New Media, and particularly the Internet, are of central importance. Important lines in the debate are concerned with which concepts of culture to use in order to adequately capture developments, how global and local factors are acting, whether we are looking more at a standardised global culture or an increase in cultural diversity and cultural exchange, and how »transnational states« (not strongly tied to territorial limits) might look. In the discussion on cultural globalisation, the individual becomes again the focus of interest for culture theory. Here we also see a trend towards »liquefaction« and »deterritorialisation« of the concept of culture. Culture is no longer regarded as a precisely defined unit or »container«.

The current crisis in traditional concepts of culture is apparently closely connected with the recent development in the media, as the New Media change the cultural significance of physical proximity and separation. Connected individuals –



according to a widespread view – grow through interactive and communicative actions beyond the limits of local communities and national societies, and are able to participate in transnational cultural exchanges and make themselves felt as an individual, a member of a group or of an international movement.

MEDIA MARKETS IN TRANSFORMATION

For a project investigating the impacts which are involved (or will possibly be involved) with the development and use of the New Media, a detailed analysis of the development of media markets is absolutely necessary. The report by Booz-Allen & Hamilton, on which this part of the report is based, falls into two main sections – general characterisation of the media markets and more detailed issues. In the first main section the basic data and industry features of the individual markets are brought together: this can be done using three key characteristics, namely »content«, »channels of communication« and »terminals«. This demonstrates the economic power and dynamism of a market, the industry structure and impending (or current) innovations which should be seen as the basis for further social and cultural developments.

The second main section consists of the in-depth issues (in the music business, for example, developments in connection with MP3), where in each case a partial market is treated as a case study (besides MP3 these are online book retailing, e-books and audio books; interactive digital TV; web radio; online games and web-enabled game consoles; Internet use and marketing; mobile radio and UMTS cell phones; and a special study on e-government).

The present report largely adopts the rough characterisation of the media markets, as the market and industry data have information in their own right which cannot be enhanced by classification or abstraction. By contrast, only two in-depth issues are incorporated, namely interactive digital TV and mobile radio and UMTS cell phones. The first topic is interesting because it is the nub of the so-called convergence hypothesis, and the German situation with its high-quality free TV structure offers entirely different conditions for interactive digital TV than, say, the UK, where this TV format developed very dynamically. The expert analyses on this topic are being supplemented by TAB using information from studies not yet available to the experts. The topic of mobile radio and UMTS is interesting because there are important innovations pending here which will have far-reaching cultural consequences.

Media markets: an overview

The starting point for the analysis is the review of turnover in the markets, using prices to consumers. Market sizes accordingly reflect what the consumer pays for the relevant content (e.g. a book or film), for the communications channel (e.g. Internet access) or a terminal (including the necessary components, such as hardware and software). Total turnover in the media markets defined in this way amounted to DEM 208 billion in 1999. »Content« account for half of this (DEM 106 billion), which also reflects the fact that there is still very high vertical integration in the value-added chain in this sector.

Content

The major sub-markets here do not involve electronic or audiovisual media (as the media clamour about the New Media would suggest), but printed matter (newspapers, periodicals, book retailing). Only the TV market at DEM 16.7 billion has comparable size. In many sub-markets there is only small growth or even slight declines, so that the pressure to innovate comes not only from the technology (in the cinema sector for example the impending digitalisation, particularly in playback, which involves substantial costs and whose distribution remains to be negotiated within the industry).

The choice of »content« as a focus does not mean that it exists in isolation, as it were: content is tied to media (although it can be liberated from specific storage media through digitalisation). The traditional media sectors (cinema, print, music) today are still strongly vertically integrated in the value-added chain, commercially and organisationally (consider, for example, the book and publishing sector). The threat to traditional media has impacted the music industry above all in recent years. The key element here is the fact that the music industry has already reached the second stage of digitalisation, i.e. music can also be delivered digitally using efficient compression technologies. It remains to be seen whether or not established cooperation models will remain viable in the long term.

Business models under which consumers are willing to pay for content supplied via the Internet are being created and tested, but still have to prove themselves. Currently, there is no charge for most Internet content – the general user mentality is »Internet is for free«. As a result, most business models currently have to finance themselves indirectly (e.g. through advertising or sponsorships). The lack of readiness to pay on the part of private Internet users and the simplicity



of copying digital content pose a major challenge to established and new content providers.

The threatening disappearance of parts of the value-added chain can also circumvent established filters for content, i.e. readers and publishers, music studios and labels etc. Content is then potentially accessible unfiltered to anybody, anywhere – with all the attendant advantages and disadvantages.

Communication channels

The key characteristic »communication channels« represents a market with a value of almost DEM 43 billion (in 1999). The lion's share of this is accounted for by mobile radio connection fees, a sector of high economic dynamism.

Digitalisation increases the capacity of many communication channels. Forms of access and use for content which are currently only possible through e.g. TV, cinema or VHS cassette, will be made available in this way with constant quality through alternative communication channels. Broadband transmission capacity will be created in both the static network and mobile radio sectors; the »next generation telcos« like Callino and Firstmark Communications (new telecom providers concentrating on broadband technology) offer broadband static phone and data lines, the broadband cable is being upgraded to 860 MHz, and GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) and subsequently UMTS (Universal Mobile Telecommunications System) bring mobility to possible high transfer capacity.

Static Internet access is currently on the way to becoming a »commodity«. In the year 2000 price cuts for Internet access and static phone fees resulted in 17.1 million German residents between 14–59 having Internet access in their homes which they used at least occasionally (according to surveys by GfK Online Monitor). More recent surveys by ARD put the figure in 2001 at 24.4 million.

Terminals and associated components

Digitalisation and miniaturisation make possible terminals with applications and functionalities for which previously specialist individual terminals were used, a trend which is widely discussed under the heading of »convergence«. For example, a game console is no longer just a controller for the game, but itself a multifunctional unit with CD-ROM or DVD drive and Internet connection. Consumers are experiencing a »battle for the living room«.

It remains to be seen which terminal will come out on top. It also remains to be seen how far use habits can be changed, for example whether lean-forward applications on the TV screen will be broadly accepted, or whether users will habitually prefer other terminals (such as PCs) for interactive applications.

Digital interactive TV

Consideration of »interactive TV«, offered as »digital« and »free TV« and as »pay TV« is based on the results of the study by Booz-Allen & Hamilton, which takes as an international comparison the development and state-of-use of pay TV in the UK before looking in more detail at the situation in Germany. Here, UPC Nederland is used to examine the strategy of a cable operator which also acts as a programme provider for TV, including interactive services, and is accordingly seeking vertical integration in the value-added chain. This could be a possible business model for future privatised cable operators on German soil, and has considerable relevance as an industrial policy element (including media and anti-trust questions).

The central paradigm of the convergence hypothesis is the combination of TV, PC and Internet station. This convergence is naturally possible at the level of technology, so that the question is whether it makes sense in use (which is also a question of cultural factors). This question remains to be answered. However, this internal point is decisive for the future development of applications and markets. The selected perspective was accordingly the possible »interactivation of a mass medium«.

As the available studies show, the use of digital interactive TV leads to even more viewing and the neglect of activities outside the home (e.g. going to the cinema). Naturally, it remains to be seen whether these effects will stabilise in future.

Mobile radio and UMTS

UMTS will come – or rather will have to come, in the eyes of network operators and in view of the immense front-end costs. Whether this imperative is equally pressing for consumers is another question.

The market strategy of network operators could be to start out with a high-price strategy and tailor their services to professional users promising high turnover. In the second stage, high-price services to private users would follow. It is doubtful that they would follow. A mass market strategy with low-price hardware and services from the start is questionable. Prices will possibly fall only gradually, in



the same way as GSM network prices in the early days. Due to the large number of licensees and providers, however, it is also possible that the downward price spiral will get off to a vigorous start and proceed far more dynamically than in the initial years of the GSM networks.

In the event of an initial high-price strategy there will be a second »mobile« variant of the »digital divide«, at least for a transitional period. However, countervailing effects are also conceivable, such as that the cell phone will open up groups to Internet access who have previously shunned the more complicated route using PCs, special software and service providers.

UMTS would then act as an access technology through easy-to-use terminals and with limited display possibilities. Another possibility would be separate cell phone networks for closed user groups (like the earlier T-Online or CompuServe). This would really make UMTS cell phones more than just a new access technology. Including the agreed information formats, they would then constitute a separate world.

If UMTS succeeds in penetrating the mass market and cell phones with multimedia capability become an everyday feature, this would result in very extensive opportunities for users which would potentially have a lasting impact not only on media use but on leisure behaviour as a whole and parts of working life.

NEW FORMS OF PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND RECEPTION IN SELECTED CULTURAL FIELDS

Three selected cultural areas – literature, music and film – are being studied for emerging processes of transformation. These are established areas, so that no special concept of culture was required. For each area the forms of production, distribution and reception are described in terms of stages in a coherent cultural value-added process. This focus on process is supplemented by an actor-related view (for the areas music and film, discussions were also held with experts which revealed the viewpoint of the individual actors).

The three areas were selected specifically in terms of the severity of the current impact on them even before digitalisation, so that developments in one area can be used to draw conclusions about developments in another area, under a type of transfer hypothesis.

Following the availability of digitalised music on audio CDs and the development of efficient compression technologies, the music area has already reached the second stage of digitalisation, i.e. music can now be delivered digitally in nonphysical form with high quality. By comparison, the cinema area still has a certain grace period, as the transfer times and modalities are still too complicated – although the threatening development is obvious. However, the question whether the exchange of music files (Napster is the classic example) is affecting CD buying remains controversial. Sales in fact are continuing to rise again in both Germany and the USA.

The three areas are not covered at equal length or in equal detail in the present report. Literature and music are covered only briefly, while case studies for film (and video) are given more space, reflecting inter alia the consideration that this is first of all an area facing major change, secondly has high cultural relevance, and thirdly provides a different view and approach compared to TV.

One of the most interesting phenomena in the area of literature is the way that professional societies can restructure themselves with the help of ICT, e.g. by creating a journal which can be published entirely (including professional communication and expert reporting) on the Internet. The example described in detail is the »Living Reviews in Relativity« of the »Max-Planck-Institut für Gravitationsphysik« (in Golm, near Potsdam).

For the music area, the realisation emerged inter alia from discussions with experts that although many artists without recording contracts are trying to become known through the Internet and relevant music portals, few succeed. The Internet functions better as a platform for established names and as a forum for fan clubs.

Digitalisation of production technology has already started in film. As this can save costs, cut time, increase marketing opportunities and enhance artistic possibilities, digitalisation offers many advantages. In terms of distribution, the Internet plays a role primarily as a platform for communication and marketing. DVD is growing as a storage medium. Digitalisation of playback technology will come, in the opinion of the experts, but involves considerable costs, whose distribution must first be negotiated for the industry.

Three key questions can be formulated for all three areas. a) Is the Internet and its use closing the divide between culture makers and culture consumers? b) What is the importance and function of the traditional intermediaries, and can they retain their position or are they being threatened by new intermediaries?



c) Are the New Media with their ability to change production, distribution and also reception of culture promoting cultural diversity, or tending to promote homogeneity? The results of the Prognos study show that the gap is narrowing (but not closed – a software-based paintbox does not make you a painter, the question of talent is decisive). Traditional distributors are not simply abandoning the field or being pushed aside, they still determine events – but new and additional distributors are appearing. Cultural diversity is being promoted rather than levelled. As this aspect is of central importance, let us look at the conclusion which the Prognos experts reached for the area of music.

»In terms of cultural policy, the positive effects associated with digitalisation appear to outweigh the negative ones overall. The internet is opening up new creative scope, brings music makers and music consumers closer together, and tends to break up encrusted hegemonistic market power structures. However, hopes in many quarters for »democratisation« of the cultural sector as a whole are proving deceptive. Even in the online environment, intermediaries retain control of the mass market, new forms of marketing offering music makers greater influence on marketing their works are establishing themselves only at the margins or in niches. These approaches should accordingly be taken into account in cultural policy, their development should be promoted, and the transferability of this experience to other areas of culture should be studied.«

THEMES AND PERSPECTIVES FOR THE SECOND PROJECT PHASE

The three basic studies carried out for TAB by external experts not only provide access to many facets of the broad and complex subject of the project, but also contain a wealth of suggestions for further-reaching topics for discussion and research. These suggestions supplied an important basis for the internal TAB considerations on continuing the project.

Based on the indications in the basic studies and the comments on project presentations by members of parliament, TAB initially developed three broad options for possible key content in the second project phase. Discussion with the parliamentary rapporteurs for the project was followed by a process of narrowing the range of topics and operationalising individual topics.

The final section of this report contains an annotated listing of what TAB regards as particularly interesting suggestions from the basic studies, a presentation of the general content options developed by TAB for continuing the project, including their thematic differences, and finally a description of concrete study



concepts on two issues involving »cultural tradition« and »cultural globalisation« under the novel conditions of the Internet. The first of these two issues, »networked communication and processes of tradition«, focuses on three functions the Internet can fill, namely archive, memory and knowledge store. New communications structures also change the conditions under which cultural content is preserved, remembered and forgotten, i.e. the conditions for communicative and cultural memory. There has for some years been lively research into this area, and this should be accessed for this topic.

The suggested working package for the second topic, »Networked communication and cultural globalisation« involves inter alia further pursuit of the theoretical discussion, globalisation trends in cultural activities and the interaction between globalisation and localisation. »Cultural« globalisation is promoted by economic globalisation: while the latter involves extending the range of markets and entrepreneurial activity (up to the level of globally active groups), the central cognitive event in »cultural globalisation« can be seen as the acceleration of social comparative processes. The Internet is changing the cultural significance of proximity and distance, so that e.g. the development of feelings of cultural solidarity becomes possible without physical proximity.

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