This is the second research newsletter from the Department of Media and Communications at LSE. In the past year, some key developments have led us to look beyond our excellent ranking in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise and towards the Research Evaluation Framework. Notably, several new academic appointments have expanded our research expertise, range of funded projects and areas of doctoral supervision. The coming year will bring at least one further appointment and, we hope, good news from several grant applications in the pipeline.

This year too, the media think-tank Polis became structurally embedded in the research and teaching activities of the Department. Polis is aimed at working journalists, people in public life and students in the United Kingdom and around the world. It provides a full programme of events, generating a critically engaged forum for discussions of the media’s impact on society. Additionally, two discussion series – the Polis Dialogues for master’s and research students to quiz media professionals, and the newly formed Research Dialogues for scholars within and beyond the Department – provided lively opportunities for sharing ideas and findings.

In a spring term faculty away day, the consensus was that our research programme has diversified to bring a distinctive emphasis on social science and social theory, combined with empirically grounded qualitative and quantitative research, a commitment to critical and comparative analysis, and a direct engagement with regulation and policy. Our distinctive inter-and multidisciplinarity is best characterised, we decided, in terms of four intersecting thematic areas, providing a focus around which our research and teaching contributions are clustered.

- **Innovation and Governance**
  Policy and regulation in the information society in the global ‘north’ and ‘south’

- **The Mediated Public Sphere**
  Political communication, civic engagement and journalism ethics

- **Transnational Media Cultures**
  Global, comparative and diasporic perspectives

- **Mediation and Digital Literacies**
  Audiences, representations and identities in everyday life

Our Master’s programmes - MSc Media and Communications (including Media and Communication Governance), MSc Politics and Communication, MSc Global Media and Communications (with Fudan University and with University of Southern California), and MSc Media, Communication and Development - together with our Doctoral programme in Media and Communications attract some 225 students each year from around the world.

This is an exciting Department. If you would like to join our regular email list for notices of events, please do so at: [http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/media@lse](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/media@lse)

We hope this newsletter, which profiles recently completed work, will pique your interest in us. Email media@lse.ac.uk for further information about topics or researchers included in this issue.

**Professor Sonia Livingstone**
Head of Department of Media and Communications

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**Announcements & Appointments**

The department is pleased to welcome a number of new, and familiar, faces to the research, administration and teaching community this year: Dr. Myria Georgiou and Dr. Ellen Helsper both join as lecturers, Erin Keohan a newly appointed Administrator, and Dr. Shakuntala Banaji, Dr. Frederik Lesage and Dr. Mehita Iqani come on board as part-time LSE Fellows. This year’s visiting researchers and fellows are: Dr. Sarita Albagli, Mina Al-Iamri, Dr. Nanna Gillberg, Dr. Yang Liu, Claire Milne, Dr. Shawn Powers, Dr. David Souter and Dr. Lisa Tsaliki.

In other news, Prof. Lilie Chouliaraki has been appointed to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Peer Review College. This prestigious appointment runs from June 2010 to December 2014, and entails the review of funding proposals submitted to the Council.

Visiting Fellow Dr. Sarita Albagli has been appointed as member of the Consulting Committee of the Iberian-American Programme for Science and Technology for Development (CYTED), as well as the Scientific Committee of the International Conference Development Models of Emerging Countries: Characteristics, Scope and Challenges.
Media Organizations and Identity
Lille Chouliaraki’s new book, Media Organizations and Identity (Palgrave, January 2010), co-edited with Melita Morrison, of Corporate Social Responsibility at the Copenhagen Business School, critically examines the relationship between mediatization and organizational identity. Chouliaraki argues for a wider range of understandings of the conceptual and methodological possibilities for a sociology of journalism. Children, young people and their families tend to be at the forefront of new media adoption, benefitting from early take-up of the new opportunities afforded by the internet, mobile and broadband content, online games and peer-to-peer technologies. However, they also encounter a range of risky or negative experiences for which they may be unprepared. These risks, such as bullying, piracy and privacy concerns, are made worse by the speed and ease with which information can be disseminated and shared online. The book challenges the notion that children and young people are passive recipients of media content, and instead highlights the important role that children and young people can play in shaping their online experiences and the media environment.

The Information Society (Critical Studies in Sociology)
A four volume collection of 86 republished articles on The Information Society cover- ing the period from 1990s to early 2000s, together with four extended introductions by Robin Mansell was published as The Information Society (Critical Studies in Sociology) ( Routledge, 2009). The volumes include works on the economic and political, as well as the organisational and sociological, perspectives on the Information Society from both mainstream and critical perspectives.

Forthcoming: The Global Media and Communications Policy Handbook
Robin Mansell and Professor Marc Raboy, McGill University, Canada are co-editors of a new Handbook to be published in late 2010 by Wiley-Blackwell. An extended introduction to the volume by Robin Mansell and Marc Raboy traces the history and current development of forms of governance in the media and communication field from a variety of critical perspectives in the light of changes in technologies, markets, and practices informing the production and use of older and newer media from the telegraph to the Internet. 33 chapters are contributed by an international- ly recognised group of scholars, legal experts and several practitioners in the media industry worldwide. The Handbook (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming) is a contribution to the new Wiley-Blackwell series on Global media and communication in collaboration with the International Association for Media and Communication Research.

when news was new
When News Was New Terhi Rantanen investigates how news has re-invented itself at different historical moments - from medieval stork-keepers and 19th century newspaper tycoons to today’s cyber- punk journalists. The book tracks the evolution of news through history. It provides an innovative approach to the history of news; clear, succinct writing; and, effective use of photographs, maps, and tables which have strong appeal to the student reader. It offers a new way of understanding news in our history and culture.

South Asian Media Cultures: Audiences, Representations, Contexts
Edited by Media Cultures, Audiences, Representations, Contex- ts (Anthem Press, April 2010) examines a wide range of media cultures and practices from across South Asia using a common set of historical, political and social media cultures. It will also consider the context of such pressing issues as peace, conflict, democracy, religion, class, ethnicity and gender, the collected essays explore the ways different groups of South Asians produce, understand and critique the media available to them.

Kids Online: Opportunities and Risks for Children
At the internet and new online technologies are becoming embedded in everyday life, there are increasing questions about their social implications and consequences. These questions are examined in Kids online: Opportunities and risks for children (Policy Press, September 2009), edited by Sonia Livingstone and Leslie Haddon. Children, young people and their families tend to be at the forefront of new media adoption, benefitting from early take-up of the new opportunities afforded by the internet, mobile and broadband content, online games and peer-to-peer technologies. However, they also encounter a range of risky or negative experiences for which they may be unprepared. These risks, such as piracy and privacy concerns, are made worse by the speed and ease with which information can be disseminated and shared online. The book challenges the notion that children and young people are passive recipients of media content, and instead highlights the important role that children and young people can play in shaping their online experiences and the media environment.

Minding the gap between knowledge of humanitarian disasters and audiences’ moral responses
Dr. Shani Orgad, along with colleagues Dr. Bruna Seu (Birk- beck) and Prof. Stan Cohen (LSOE), will be commissioning a new research project funded by the Leverhulme Trust in October 2010. The project explores the moral responses of audiences to humanitarian disasters, knowledge of which is transmitted by the media within moments of their occurrence, making audiences virtual bystanders of distant suffering.

What does the knowledge of such suffering do to audi- ences; what do audiences do with that knowledge? What are audiences’ immediate responses to humanitarian disasters and audiences’ moral responses in the context of such pressing issues as peace, conflict, democracy, religion, class, ethnicity and gender, the collected essays explore the ways different groups of South Asians produce, understand and critique the media available to them.

New Research Projects
“Minding the gap between knowledge of humanitarian disasters and audiences’ moral responses”

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New publications

“the project explores the moral responses of audiences to humanitarian disasters”

Niall Brennan
Niall’s article ‘The Brazilian Television Mini-series: Changes in a Genre and Representations of Brazil’ has been ac- cepted for publication in the next issue of the journal.

Ranjana Das
Ranjana has recently published an essay forth com- ing in Communication Review in summer 2010. Using two recent journal articles as a narrative she comments on the role of the artist to participate in a network of campaigns, radical publishers and distributors.

“participatory media practices are less distinct from those of mainstream media than may have been assumed”

Marc Scalvini
Marc has recently had an article published in Social Semiotics. The article traces the shift in the AIDS/HIV representations in commercial advertising from the early 1990s. He has also had a chapter about Italian Islamopho- bia included in an edited collection, Islam in its Inter- national Context: Comparative Perspectives (Cambridge Scholars’ Publish- ing, 2010).

Featherd PhB Thesis:Ulla Rannikko
Ulla Rannikko’s recently submitted thesis is titled Geling ‘Indybay’ and the Agitative Journalism as a Mode of Civic Engagement. The research concerns participatory journalism and asks whether it leads to the production of a new form of political community and/or its ethos. This thesis explores online participa- tory media practices and posits that the value of participatory journalism can be seen in (1) the new challenges and opportunities it presents to journalism, (2) the new challenges and opportunities it presents to journalism, and (3) the new challenges and opportunities it presents to journalism. The research examines the role of the media, the role of the audience, and the role of the journalist in producing and consuming the new forms of participatory journalism.

Maria Kyriakidou
Maria has recently published an article in Studies in Eth- nicity and Nationalism titled ‘Exploring the Periphery: Local understandings of the Nation: Exploring Cosmopolitanism in Relation to Me- dia Representations of Distant Suffering’. Indrek Brus
Indrek has been acting as the head of the organising com- mittee of an International conference titled ‘Educational Challenge: Innovation in Creative Industries’. The confer- ence took place in Tallinn, Estonia in March 2010.

Indrek has also been participating in the implementation of an EU project called ‘First Motion’ dedicated to de- fining the new challenges and prospects for audio-visual industries in times of media convergence.

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Comparisons of Internet Use and Digital Exclusion around the World

Since 2001 Dr. Ellen Heisler has worked on the World Inter-net Project (WIP). The WIP is a major, international, collaborative project looking at the social, political and economic impacts of new communication technologies and other new technologies. Face-to-face surveys with a representative sample of the populations are conducted at least every two years in each of the 28 countries involved in the project. Ellen has been instrumental in setting up and getting funding for the survey in Chile and managed the British survey for three years.

The longitudinal nature of the study allows for a detailed analysis of the differences between internet users and non-users and how these change over time. Ellen’s research has found that even when countries have high levels of diffusion of the Internet and other ICTs there are striking inequalities in terms of Internet access, skills and types of use. More importantly the factors that explain general inequality or differences between social groups offline are the same factors that relate to digital inequalities around the world. The importance of education and social capital in explaining to what extent people engage with ICTs is consistent across countries with different levels of economic impact of the Internet and other new technologies.

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Robin Mansell granted sabbatical: new books planned

Robin Mansell was granted a sabbatical in the summer of 2010 and first findings in autumn 2010. The Department is also a partner in Family Platform, a new European consortium on the future of the European Family, combining family education and participation and with Ranjana Das responsible for young scholars liaison. As well as these, the Department is an institutional member of ECREA (the European Communication Research and Education Association) and a member of REA Communication and Democracy section. Further, the Department is the home of ECREA’s Communication & Media Education and Participation Panel, which will be publicly available at www.familyplatform.eu.

Dr. Myria Georgiou is leading a research team based at the Department and conducting research in three European capital cities for the EU-funded project ‘Media and Citizenship: Transnational Television Cultures Reshaping Political Identities in the European Union’ (consortium leader: C. Slade). This three-year project explores the patterns of television consumption among Arab audiences in the EU, as juxtaposed with their sense of belonging and their experience of citizenship in Europe and beyond. The project has applied quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the diversity and complexity of media use among Arab audiences in the EU. The LSE team (consisting of Myria Georgiou, Ahmad Ayyad, and Ramy Aly) has recently completed the preliminary mission’s Safer Internet programme. The project examined the dynamics of the Knowledge Society in the European Union and examined the impact of the Knowledge Society on everyday life, which several current members of the Department were involved in.

Everyday Life Network) projects led by Roger Silverstone, of belonging and their experience of citizenship in Europe and beyond. The project has

problematic issues connected with identity and equality in the global knowledge-based economy

‘we ask tough questions of the people that shape media policy in the UK’

Two Years on UK Communication Consumer Panel

Two Years on UK Communication Consumer Panel

Dr. Bingchun Meng, in a new planned research project, aims to study a rarely discussed aspect of peer production and state-centered information control in the Chinese context.

From its inception the Department of Media and Communication has been very active in European academic networks and has developed a range of related projects. This goes back to the two ERTU (European Media Technology and Everyday Life Network) projects led by Roger Silverstone, in which the Department were very active as post-doc researchers or associated investigators. Today, this engagement with the European research community is continued through a variety of research projects.

Directed by Prof. Sonia Livingstone, EU Kids Online, was a 21-country thematic network funded by the European Commission’s Safer Internet programme. The project examined European research on cultural, contextual and risk issues in children’s safe use of the internet and new media across 21 countries from 2006 to 2009. The network released its findings and research and policy recommendations in mid-2009. A new 25 country follow-up project has commenced: EU Kids Online II, also funded by the European Commission. This new 2.5m euro project is designed to develop and administer a thorough and robust survey instrument appropriate for identifying the nature of children’s online access, use, risk, coping and safety awareness. It will conduct original empirical research across EU member states with national samples of children aged 9-16 years old and their parents. Data is expected in the summer of 2010 and first findings in autumn 2010.

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Following these projects, Dr. Paolo Di and Prof. Robin Mansell have won a new European Commission funded project - Socio-Economic Impact Assessment for Research Projects (SEIJ20A) 2010-2012: €500k of which €150k to the LSE. The project is designed to develop methodologies for evaluation of EC Framework Programme 7 projects drawing on social science expertise and to selected a number of ongoing projects.

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Innovations in teaching: The new MC405 – a different approach

This year in Lent Term two Visiting Senior Fellows in the Department, David Seaborne and Claire Milne, delivered new content for the course MC405 Current Issues in Media and Communications. David and Claire, who have worked together on various projects over many years, are both communication policy consultants with many non-LSE clients, including a good deal of international travel to developing countries.

The ten-lecture course, which might better have been called Current Issues in Telecommunications, Internet and Development, focuses on different topics each week. David addressed the practical dimensions of the relationship between communications, society and public policy, with particular reference to governance issues and inclusion, while Claire addressed aspects of communications itself and communications markets as relevant to development, with an economic slant and particular reference to less advantaged consumers. The issues were certainly current - David’s last lecture discussed the ambivalent relationships between ICTs and the environment, and Claire’s lecture on tariff transparency was immediately followed by a new OFcom report on the topic.

Students commented on the benefits of learning about communications infrastructure - the “pipes”, switches and radio waves which actually carry messages between users - which is not emphasised in other MC courses. They have also enjoyed the real-life examples from developing countries, and exploring the complexities and constraints facing policymakers in government and business. Next year, the duo aim to repeat the course and publicise it to students in other departments.

Communication for Development Research Project

Central to communication for development debates is the centrality of participatory and inclusive decision-making in development policy planning and implementation. Dr. Linje Manyozo’s research project “Community engagement and participatory development in Malawi and London” investigates how local governments in Malawi and the UK work alongside local assemblies and community groups to design and implement sustainable development initiatives. The research project seeks to empirically demonstrate the influence of collaborative decision-making, oftentimes flagged for governments and development organizations as an indicator of participation, when, in practice, it is fraught with complexities and constraints facing policymakers in government and business. Next year, the duo aim to repeat the course and publicise it to students in other departments.

Digital and Analogue Networks

During his stay at the LSE in the Fall 2009 term, Centennial Professor Mark Pootler began working on a new project on the concept of the Network. Here are his preliminary remarks:

The term “network” has been the chief metaphor to designate the Internet. In fact, the network of networks. Highly successful works have been published using “network” as the central term for our epoch. (Manuel Castells) “The Network Society” is only used as one of the leading studies of new media. In the analysis of the Internet as network, little attention has been given to earlier, analogue forms of networks such as television networks, women’s networks, social networks in general, etc. In this presentation I ask if there is a structural difference between digital and analogue networks and, if so, what it is significance for understanding the network metaphor, especially in relation to the Internet.

Ambiguities of the term “Network”

The metaphor of the network is the leading term used for the Internet. Literally the Internet is a network of networks. Many interpreters of the Internet center their analyses on the term “network,” chief among them perhaps Manuel Castells. So important is the network in the Internet instantiation in his eyes that he extends the term to all of society in his six volume work. The Network Society. Castells, and many others, enthusiastically embrace the network as the key to fostering communication across cultures, extending democracy, and generally promoting a better life for online human beings. The positive valence given to the term network however is a sharp divergence from its previous uses, particularly in media studies. After all the television networks (CBS, NBC, ABC and row FOX and others) are blamed for censorship and authoritarian control over broadcast content, manipulation and degradation of the news, restrictions on public use of the airwave frequencies, fraudulent content shows, and countless other crimes against culture. These themes were well represented in Sidney Lumet’s multi-Oscar winning 1976 film with the same name simply “Network.” If that were not enough to give the term a bad image, politics since September 11, 2001 developed its own use for network. It became the organizational principle of the mass murderers known as Al Qaeda.

For more see www.charliebeckett.org and www.polinews.org

Before the birth of the Internet in 1969 and the World Wide Web in 1993, media networks were analogue.
MeCCSA Conference at LSE a Success

In January 2010, the Department of Media and Communications at the LSE had the opportunity to demonstrate how much it had grown since its creation only a few short years ago by hosting the the annual MeCCSA conference. The organising committee had put together an impressive programme in preparation for attendees from across the UK. The final challenge before starting the event was an unpredictable snow storm which generated extreme weather conditions that could have forced the conference’s overall cancellation. But rather than dampen the spirits of both organisers and attendees, the cold and ice outside contributed to a kind of ‘intrepid explorer’ high spirit among delegates who filled the room for conference’s inaugural address.

Plenaries and Panels

This year’s theme was “Media, Communication, Policy and Practice” which highlighted the Department’s commitment to interdisciplinary critical engagement with media and communications policy and research. As a whole, the conference consisted of 48 panels in addition to 4 plenaries organised across eight streams, including a stream profiling practice papers. Some of the plenary highlights included Chris Woolard, Ofcom’s Partner for External Affairs and Governance, who affirmed the regulator’s willingness to engage with academics as part of the opening plenary– an invitation we must be sure to take up in the coming months.

As part of the New Media, Mediation and Surveillance plenary, Eileen Munro (Social Policy Department LSE) highlighted the paradoxical situation in which the use of databases on ‘pre-delinquents’ increases the risk of missing children who are in danger. Other key themes addressed in the plenaries were cultural industries and the changing place of critique in media and communications. The wide-ranging panels included papers which focused on themes such as creativity, cosmopolitanism, and participatory media.

The Department continued the MeCCSA traditions such as the pub quiz. It also introduced an addition to this year’s events: a mini-plenary in which academic journal editors were invited to discuss their editorial process, policy and the challenges facing the publishing world. Its success suggests that it could find a regular slot in future MeCCSA conferences.

Network meetings

Some of the highlights of the MeCCSA network meetings included an inaugural meeting of the Climate Change and Sustainability Network which has received an international response by interested parties for joining the network. For further information, please see the network website http://www.meccsa.org.uk/climate-change-network/. Participants in the Women’s Network meeting discussed the position of women academics in this fragile sector. Women, although accounting for about half of the workforce in academia, are not equally represented in all the grades and are less well paid than men when occupying more senior posts.

Third Annual PhD Symposium Provides Platform For Early Career Researchers

For the third year running the Department of Media and Communications will be hosting a one-day symposium for PhD researchers, which will take place in June 2010. This year’s conference, organised by PhD researchers Max Hänska-Ahy and Ranjana Das, builds on those of 2008 and 2009 and offers PhD researchers the opportunity to present papers on the themes of media production, policy and regulation, as research on cultural industries; representations across a range of media technologies; audience and user research, public participation, engagement and democracy.

This year’s symposium will also feature roundtables organized around ‘keywords’, which will offer participants the opportunity interact in a more dialogic fashion. The symposium will take place in June 2010 and will feature a keynote addresses from Prof. Sonia Livingstone.