

Foreword

The 13th Nordic Conference for Mass Communication Research was held in Jyväskylä, Finland, 9th-12th August 1997. The conference was hosted by the Association for Communication Research in Finland (TOY). Nearly 300 researchers from all five Nordic countries gathered to discuss current research and research findings. Roughly a dozen colleagues from the Baltic countries – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – participated, as well.

The conference comprised plenary sessions, working groups and a social-cultural programme. The plenaries had two themes: *Theory and Methodology in Media Research*, and *The New Media Landscape: Research on New Information Technology*. In their notice and invitation to the Conference, the arrangers described the dual focus in these words:

The media landscape has changed these past fifteen years at an unprecedented pace. The broadcasting monopolies in all five Nordic countries have been broken. Technological advances have drastically expanded communication capacity. Internet is in the process of becoming a new medium which unites traditional print and audio-visual media. Or what is it all about?

Questions of theory and methodology are eternal, but they gain new salience with every change and evolutionary step in our dynamic objects of research. What are the implications of the presence of an electronic network alongside print media and broadcasting? At the very least we can be sure that mass communication is no longer what it was. But do we have the tools to grasp and understand the new situation?

Working groups have been the meat of every Nordic conference to date, and the thirteenth conference is no exception. Papers were presented and discussed in twenty different working groups:

1. Media education (10 papers)
2. Local and regional media (4 papers)
3. Mass media images and visual rhetoric (7 papers)
4. Reception and audience studies (11 papers)
5. Media constructions of gender (13 papers)
6. Children, youth and the media (10 papers)
7. Public relations (4 papers)
8. Market communication: Information and aesthetics (2 papers)
9. The language and rhetoric of the media (12 papers)
10. Popular culture (10 papers)
11. The structure and economics of mass media (2 papers)
12. Historical perspectives on the media (11 papers)
13. Mediated interpersonal communication (2 papers)
14. The media's representation of reality: The aesthetics of realism (7 papers)
15. Media and political communication (7 papers)
16. Multi-media and new media technology (9 papers)
17. Public service broadcasting in transition (11 papers)
18. Media and global culture (3 papers)
19. Journalism research and critical analysis of journalism (7 papers)
20. The sociology and aesthetics of news reporting (6 papers)

This special issue of *Nordicom Review* presents all the keynote addresses presented to the plenary, plus a selection of papers presented and discussed at the conference which have been revised for publication in English as a demonstration of the breadth and depth of current Nordic media research.

The Nordic conferences for media and communication research play an important role in the development of the research field in the Nordic countries. It is our hope that the contents presented here will also be of interest to our colleagues abroad.

Göteborg in June 1998

Ulla Carlsson
Editor