Editorial:

Ethics, New Media, and Social Networks

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The last two decades have witnessed a rapid transformation of traditional media into new media that encompasses digital, computerized, and networked information and communication technologies. This shift has raised concerns and discussions around the positive and negative implications of the new media, and other issues such as: control of information, volume and speed of communication, Habermasian democratic public sphere, and the global influence of media conglomerates. Marshall McLuhan's theoretical research on communication technologies has enriched the historical understanding of social change. He argued that the dominant medium in a given time relatively shaped the way we perceived and understood the world around it; hence, we cannot understand a given technological experience without studying its social setting.

Social networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, among many others, have evolved as a result of Web 2.0 concepts and new media technologies. Millions of people around the globe, through social networking (internal, external, or mobile), are recently building online local, regional, and global communities to communicate their shared interests and activities, disseminate information, and interact through a variety of web-based tools. The use of new media and social networks (e.g. MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn, Habbo, Twitter, Nexopia) has implications for society, culture, and politics that has encouraged researchers to investigate a variety of related issues such as: social identity, privacy, distance learning, social capital, socio-psychological effects of the web, misuse of cyberspace, Diaspora, social status, and access to information. There have been also numerous incidents of misconduct that have led to negative and harmful situations, such as: political deception of constituents, suicide, libel and breach of privacy, cyber-crimes, and so on. In addition, the growth of new media means that journalism ethics is undergoing a difficult transition from a traditional, professional ethics to a mixed media ethics. Both professional journalists and citizen journalists struggle to re-invent media ethics, and debate whether and how to adapt existing norms, such as accuracy, verification and objectivity, to the new media environment. However, despite an initial clash of values, increasing numbers of responsible journalists offline and online are developing a media ethics that integrates traditional and new media practices.

Ethics and social responsibility are key fundamentals to the effective performance of new media. They should go hand-in-hand with the freedom of new media and social networking use. The theme of this issue of the *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition* (GMJ -- CE) is "Ethics, New Media, and Social Networks". This issue focuses on the relationship between ethics, new media, and social networks, covering a variety of themes and cases from global and North American perspectives. It includes analytic, critical, empirical, or comparative contributions that significantly discuss the most recent debates and discourses about such topics as: technoethics, technological society, social systems theory, copyright, moral rights, consumer power, participatory journalism, social media ethics, Web 2.0, environmentalism, young people online experience, online games, virtual ethnography, digital social networks, entertainment, media revenue, new media policy, microblogging, and user-generated content.

The refereed papers section of this issue of GMJ -- CE opens with a paper that focuses theoretically on the relationship between technology and ethics. Rocci Luppicini's paper, "Technoethical Inquiry: From Technological Systems to Society", explores technoethical inquiry as a social systems theory and methodology used within the field of technoethics. It aims to leverage reader understanding of theoretical concepts and considerations underlying technoethical inquiry. It sketches out social systems theory, its general principles, and its unique approach to the study of society, and discusses technology as a central organizing construct of contemporary society viewed as a technological system. The paper posits techoethical inquiry as a social system theory and method for guiding social and ethical inquiry.

In her paper, "Copyright and Ethics: An Innisian Exploration", Meera Nair examines the intricacies of copyright via the contribution of Harold A. Innis whose expertise with communication, economics, and the law touches the very ambit of copyright. She explains that copyright is deemed to function as the means to encourage both creativity and respect for individuality. The paper demonstrates that Innis' ideas, particularly his belief that creativity is fostered through the interaction of mainstream thinking with conditions wrought by life in the periphery, contribute to the construction of Canadian copyright law.

In their paper, "Ethique des médias sociaux et economie de la participation: Vers une nouvelle approche editoriale? Une étude comparative", Ghislain Deslandes, Laurent Fonnet and Antoine Godbert explain that users are no longer passive in their consumption of digital content. Users directly participate in the media conversation, which is no longer the prerogative of professionals, and are becoming a fully-fledged productive and critical force, especially vis-à-vis information professionals who are seeing their role transformed by the emergence of social media. A co-creation process for content production is being established. Illustrated by a comparison of three French websites, *Agoravox*, *Rue89* and *LePost.fr*, and based on the literature, this emerging phenomenon is analyzed in this paper from several angles, particularly ethics. In this exploratory study, the authors analyze the transformations of the role and social functions of journalism, and study the ethical implications of this allegedly "back-to-roots journalism".

Mapping the web presence of environmental nonprofit organizations (ENPOs) in Canada, Josh Greenberg and Maggie MacAulay study a sample of 43 websites, which belong to member organizations of the Climate Action Network-Canada, a peak ENPO with collaborative networks in the United States and Europe. Their paper, "NPO 2.0? Exploring the Web Presence of Environmental Nonprofit Organizations in Canada" examines the extent to which the online activities of ENPOs correspond with a "broadcast" paradigm—based on the principle of one-way information flow—or a two-way "dialogical" paradigm of communication. With a focus on the

use of social media technologies (Web 2.0) by these ENPOs, including Facebook, Twitter, RSS feeds and blogs, the paper interrogates the tension between instrumental and dialogical forms of communication, and demonstrates that although there are cases of effective web-based communication by ENPOs, most are not leveraging the potential these technologies afford for constituency engagement, relationship building and conversation.

Considering an online game and its relation to safety and privacy, Divina Frau-Meigs and Divina Meigs examine social and ethical issues raised by parental concern over harmful content. To gain real insights on the responsibility of adults, their paper, "Socializing Young People to Ethics via Play Experience: Browser Games and Parental Concerns for Safety Online", develops a hands-on approach that takes into account the major stakeholders, especially young people and the related circle of people around them. Using an ethnographic research framework, the paper explores a specific online game, provides a profile of participants, analyzes their types of actions in relation to safety and privacy, and discusses the results in terms of incidence of risk, peer-monitoring and community control. The paper demonstrates that there is a strong tendency to self-regulation in the game that is partly due to a strong presence of mediating adults and peers. Institutional protection and self-protection seem to re-enforce each other. The paper suggests considerations on the repertoire of ethical strategies set up online and the concerns of adults towards online risk as well as a need for policies on regulation and self-regulation.

In their paper, "Lien social et identités dans les réseaux sociaux numériques: Le cas des diasporas africaines", Myriam Montagut-Lobjoit and Olga Marlyse Lodombe Mbiock explain that the innovating tools provided by the Web 2.0 offer many new possibilities, notably the creation and/or the development of the social networking. For the members of diasporas, these tools are a new means of bringing the group to life and reinforcing group identity. As a result, the identity question spreads beyond a local level to international and virtual levels. Many questions arise from this sphere of communication and it is the Diaspora structure itself that might change with its new links. This paper analyzes the way in which the social relationships and the identities are built within the African Diasporas with the digital social networks.

Focusing on media globalization that is facilitated by development of new technologies within a framework of digitization and convergence, Kuo Huang and Naren Chitty explain that contemporary new media provide networks through which the mingling of media occurs, shaping a "multi-mediacy" age, and a connection of mediated/mediating venues in a condition of "immediacy". They argue that the business of communication has evolved from being the "communication of business" to the "business of business", and that multi-mediacy and immediacy have generated new avenues of profit from media. Their paper, "Selling Participation to Audiences in China", discusses new ways of farming revenue from media, undertaking case studies to examine, from ethics perspective, the increasing trend of "direct audience payment for participation" and its influence on the quality of media products and communication flow between media and audience.

Finally, in her paper, "Twittering in the OECD's 'Participative Web': Microblogging and New Media Policy", Tamara Shepherd explains that the recent popularity of microblogging site Twitter raises regulatory concerns that outstrip the purview of emerging new media policy. Recommendations in the 2007 report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development frame user-generated content as key to the development of public discourse. She argues that the report tends to ultimately conceive of user creations in terms of their contributions to the production of market-based value, and that Twitter challenges and upholds such a reading. For her, this becomes apparent upon examining the ways that policy adheres to

certain popular myths around the Internet and digital technology. Mainly the myth of the "End of Geography" works in the service of policy recommendations that reflect neoliberal, capitalist value systems. The paper suggests that new developments in new media regulation need to integrate critical perspectives on techno-myths in order to take a more nuanced approach to the structural inequalities that pervade online culture.

In addition to the above eight refereed papers, this issue of GMJ -- CE has a review section that includes two review articles and two book reviews. In her review article, "The Ins and Outs of the Public Domain", Sara Bannerman reviews the books: *Terms of Use Negotiating the Jungle of the Intellectual Commons* (2008), *The Public Domain: Enclosing the Commons of the Mind* (2008), *The Global Idea of "the Commons"* (2007), and *The Future of the Public Domain: Identifying the Commons in Information Law* (2006). In her review article, "Technologies et changements sociaux: Une quête à l'humanisme à l'ère du numérique", Ann-Margaret Salem reviews the books: *Quelle communication pour quel changement? Les dessous du changement social* (2009), *Internet, une utopie limitée: Nouvelles régulations, nouvelles solidarités* (2005), and *Le choc du numérique* (2001). Finally, Toby Fyfe reviews *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies* (2008) and Derek Antoine reviews *The Cult of the Amateur: How Blogs, MySpace, YouTube, and the Rest of Today's User-generated Media are Destroying our Economy, our Culture, and our Values* (2007).

About the Editors

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Citing this editorial:

Eid, Mahmoud & Ward, Stephen J. A. (2009). Editorial: Ethics, new media, and social networks. *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition*, *2*(1), 1-4.