

Editorial Introduction

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This standard issue features six contributions from postgraduate and early career scholars working at the intersections of media, communications, education, sociology, and technoculture. In spite of the numerous challenges faced in 2020 due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and its knock-on effect on universities around the world, we are delighted to be closing the difficult year with the publication of this collection of articles. This is a reason for celebration – celebration of the authors whose work is featured herein, of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary connections that allow us to engage in academic dialogue across borders, of our resilience as a global collective of researchers, and our ongoing commitment to knowledge exchange.

The articles in this standard issue differ in their objects of inquiry – from sound in digital games, social networking sites, and digital technology in education, to broadcast journalism and romantic comedies, but they broadly converge around a common focus on temporality and time. Between them, the articles present a good mix of empirical work and significant conceptual development, moving forward theoretical debates in the fields of media and communications. Concepts are either developed, through in-depth engagement with the extant literature (Amaral 2020; Martins and Piaia 2020), or tested through empirical studies using a variety of methods – from surveys (De Andrade and Calixto 2020) to digital ethnography (Polivanov and Santos 2020) to participant observation and interviews (Gomes, Vizeu, and De Oliveira 2020). In some cases, altogether innovative methodological approaches for analysing artefacts are proposed, as in Luersen and Kilpp (2020), whose article opens this standard issue of the journal.

In ‘Anachronic sonorities of technoculture in digital games’, Eduardo Luersen and Suzana Kilpp develop a conceptual approach to contemporary technoculture through the prism of digital games, and specifically, their audible dimensions. Luersen and Kilpp review the extant literature on digital game sonorities and suggest a conceptual reframing, placing games as key technoculture artefacts within the broader media landscape and paying analytical attention to the mnemonic aspects of their sounds. They propose an archaeological approach to sonorities in games - excavating their genealogical traces to reveal how new and old technologies converge. Drawing on cartographic approaches, the authors conclude with a methodological proposition for genealogical analysis of sound in digital games through the method of “estranged listening” and the operationalisation of sound ‘constellations’.

In the second article of the collection, ‘Collapsed Temporalities in Social Media: Cuban Immigrants in Brazil and Facebook’, Beatriz Polivanov and Deborah Santos examine the perception of time on social media networks through digital ethnography, more precisely, the analysis of Facebook activity of Cubans living in Brazil. Polivanov and Santos propose the concept of ‘*collapsed temporalities*’ to describe expats’ efforts to communicate with both communities in their homeland, and friends and acquaintances in their new home, in Brazil.

The authors find that while social networking sites, especially Facebook, promote staying in touch with people and realities expats left behind, they also create “time gaps” and a feeling of distance and displacement, which expats attempt to fill by adopting an intermediary communicator role between their country of origin and their adopted country.

The third article in this standard issue presents findings from the large-scale *Inter-Relations Communication and Education project in Basic Education* carried out by the research group *Mediações Educomunicativas (MECOM)* at the University of São Paulo. 3700 students and more than 500 teachers in Brazil took part in the study, which examined how the use of digital technologies impacts the teaching and learning process. Authors Rogério Pelizzari de Andrade and Douglas Calixto employ a theoretical framework around the concept ‘social acceleration of time’ and offer empirical evidence of its concrete manifestation in the context of education. The study findings point to both teachers’ and students’ altered experience of time and their changing perceptions of knowledge acquisition and construction, driven by digital technologies’ ephemeral nature and acceleration mechanisms. In the conclusion, De Andrade and Calixto reflect on the design, implementation, and impact of their project, and discuss future directions of research at the intersection of education, communication, and technology in Brazil in the context of the COVID-19 reality.

In the fourth contribution to this issue of *Networking Knowledge*, Ana Beatriz Martins and Victor Piaia revisit the legacy of social theorist Alfred Schutz by critically positioning his work on time and memory in the context of mediated social realities. Martins and Piaia argue that a contemporary rereading of Schutz contributes to a much-needed dialogue between social theory and media theory, by bringing them together around a common theme – the concept of time, particularly in two of its dimensions - its acceleration and its relation to memory. To build bridges between media theory and social theory, the authors propose temporality as a “constitutive dimension” in the construction of social reality. They problematise the axiomatic conception of ‘the acceleration of time’ found in most of the literature, arguing that this perception is created by our more conscious awareness of the passing of time, compared to the past, since our digital lives force us out of the continuous flow of experience, or being in the present, into the time-space dimension of reflexivity. Martins and Piaia then move on to discuss how our perception of memory changes in a world of abundance of tools to build memories, and by extension, consciousness. They import Schutz’ concept ‘stock of knowledge’ to explain how individuals relate to/share social understandings of the world, based on collective memory, which has the potential to drive action and social change. Martins and Piaia conclude that the expansion of mediated interactions and increased exposure to information alter the process of memory construction, significantly affecting the knowledge generation process, and thus, the formation of social life.

The journal issue then turns to journalism, zooming in on the process of TV production and newsroom routines. In ‘The Decisive Instants in News-making: Individual and Collective Temporalities in Broadcast Journalism’, Elane Gomes, Alfredo Vizeu, and Jocélio de Oliveira argue for an analytical attention to temporality as an important category that drives production and even functions as a news value in its own right, particularly in time-based

media products such as TV programmes, whose temporal dimension is a defining feature. Gomes, Vizeu, and De Oliveira explore the impact of temporality of broadcast journalism on the production process, through participant observation in the Cabo Branco TV channel newsroom and interviews with key TV producers employed by the channel. Time, in its multiple manifestations - as a set of instants, moments, rhythms of newswork and routines - has a structuring effect on the decision-making processes in broadcast journalism in terms of deadlines and other 'decisive instants' that determine editorial judgements in a fast-paced production environment. Gomes, Vizeu, and De Oliveira distinguish between collective and individual temporalities in the production of a newscast, and they illustrate these concepts through empirical examples from their ethnographic work. Ultimately, the authors argue, time is the unifying principle of journalistic practice and values, and it is therefore a concept that merits considerable attention in studies of professional journalistic culture.

In the final article of this end-of-2020 standard issue of *Networking Knowledge*, Carolina Amaral introduces the concept 'temporality of the almost' to describe the micro-narrative structure of a popular film/TV genre – the (serialized) romantic comedy. Exploring the temporal connections in rom-com, and its storytelling strategies such as character development, suspense, and plot, Amaral argues that the 'almost' is a narrative element that characterizes the genre, whose performative power rests in its strategic temporal constructions and play with time (through postponements, cliffhangers, plot detours, and obstacles). The temporal deferral and control functions, making erotic resolution between the main characters 'almost happen', serve to intensify the desire between the protagonists, but also create narrative cravings in the spectator. Thus, romcoms' play with time, through temporal conventions such as suspense, anticipation, curiosity, mystery and surprise, foster viewers' affective involvement in a "temporal game between audience and story", a relationship which, as Amaral aptly puts it, "is still on after the *ever after*."

I hope you enjoy this stimulating collection of articles by postgraduate and early career scholars in media and communications. Personally, I would like to thank the authors for their trust, patience, and active engagement in the editorial process, in spite of a number of obstacles we had to overcome in putting this issue together. In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to all the reviewers, without whose thoughtful and constructive feedback this issue would not have seen the light of day. Let's keep working together, across cultural and disciplinary borders.

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Biography

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