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Trends in technology and the future of media management (research)?

Keywords: technology development, media management research, bricolage

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Abstract

Recently, a debate arose about the question, how media management research can be lifted to a “next stage development in theorisation and relevance for practice” (Picard & Lowe, 2016: 61; cf. also Mierzejewska & Shaver, 2014; Achtenhagen, 2016; Küng, 2016). Beside concrete suggestions e.g. for theory development and research methodology (Küng, 2016: 4ff), for a better connection to general management research debate and for a better education of doctoral students and young scholars (Achtenhagen, 2016: 121), the debate includes several valuable approaches on the role of emerging technologies for the field which can be systematized as follows.

(1) Regarding the field development in general, Picard & Lowe (2016) highlighted that media management research can be shaped by the influence of technologies (ibid: 66). Küng (2016) pointed out that media industries are facing extreme change (ibid: 1). Mierzejewska & Shaver (2014) identified technological content diffusion as key change impacting media management research (ibid: 47). (2) Emerging technologies shape conceptual work and empirical research within the field, regarding (a) core issues as media companies (Hess, 2014), specific media industries and products (e.g. broadcasting (Murray, 2013); publishing (Blankfield & Stevenson, 2012); news (Ottosen & Krumsvik, 2012)), business models (Lawson-Borders, 2010), value chain (Kehoe & Mateer, 2015) or media branding (Chan-Olmsted, 2011) and (b) core methods of research (Murthy, 2008; Gunzerath, 2012). However, reflecting both dimensions, the relevance of emerging technologies for media management scholarship were not yet explored systematically on a level of deeper analysis and higher abstraction. Our contribution is aiming at closing this gap.

According to Rotolo, Hicks & Martin (2015), we define emerging technologies as “a radically novel and relatively fast growing technology characterised by a certain degree of coherence persisting over time and with the potential to exert a considerable impact on the socio-economic domain(s) which is observed in terms of the composition of actors, institutions and patterns of interactions among those, along with the associated knowledge production processes. Its most prominent impact, however, lies in the future and so in the emergence phase is still somewhat uncertain and ambiguous” (ibid). Starting with this definition, we ask the question: *How will emerging technologies shape the future of media management research?*

Following Shepherd (2016) who suggests “If we return to the perspective (or delusion) that as researchers we can think and act entrepreneurially, then we can at least think about what we know about the identification of entrepreneurial opportunities to approach the identification of research opportunities” (ibid: 8), , we aim to explore this question in a novel way that includes both, an analytical and a constructive perspective:

1.) Analysis of emerging technologies

By an in-depth literature review, we aim to capture recent trends in technology development. To do so, we explore the cutting edge of technology development as published in science with support of the IEEE community (Xplore Digital Library from 2010-2016) as well as in trend reports (e.g. Reuters Journalism, Media and Technology Predictions 2016; Accenture Technology Vision 2016; Deloitte. Technology, Media & Telecommunications Predictions 2016) and publications of media professional associations. On a level of higher abstraction, we deduce 10 to 15 trends of emerging technologies.

2.) Analysis of media management as research field

By a structured review of the literature on media management as a research field (Albarran, Chan-Olmsted & Wirth, 2006; Küng, 2008; Picard, 2011; von Rimscha & Siegert, 2014; Hollifield, LeBlanc Wicks & Sylvie, 2015; Lowe & Brown, 2016), we aim to paint a map of media management as field of research. We aim to differentiate (a) areas of research that include media organizations (products, business models, value chain...), media industries (markets, internationality, ...) and media management (strategy, leadership, growth, ...) and (b) methods of research. According to the common ground of the field, we suggest a framework of media management research.

3.) Construction of potential questions of the future

In a third step we bring both analyses together by applying 'bricolage' as an entrepreneurial technique to create new questions of relevance for media management research. Bricolage can be assumed as "combinations of the resources at hand to new problems and opportunities" (Baker & Nelson, 2005). Applied in science, e.g. in organization theory, bricolage "refers to the assembly of different knowledge elements that are readily available to the researcher" (Boxenbaum & Rouleau, 2011: 281). By combining existing elements from both analyses (1. & 2.), we aim to create questions of relevance for the future of media management research.

By combining scientific analysis and entrepreneurial construction, we aim to provide the EMMA community with new questions and dimensions of thought to inspire their and our future research.

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