

Introduction: Social Media: Culture, Identity & Inclusion Minitrack

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The knowledge niche of this minitrack connects digital and social media to culture(s), identity (ies), access, and inclusion. Looking ahead, technology-facilitated social media present opportunities for new frontiers of research both as they interact with cultures, identities, and diversity or inclusion and also as the technology type changes over time, just as we are seeing possible transformations resulting from the intersection of mobile media and the Internet of Things and beyond. What shapes will the interactions take in the future and what are the implications of such trajectories for research and practice?

The papers presented here serve as exemplars of cutting edge research. They treat inclusion in terms of those with disabilities (see “The New Agora: Social Media As A Vector for Sign Language...”), those who are recipients of cyberbullying via social media (see “A Socio-contextual Approach in Automated Detection of Cyberbullying”) and those who are urban refugees (see “Mobile-Phone Use by Urban Refugees in South Africa...”). Additionally, these papers use varying methods for examining the inter-sections of emergent social media-related technologies and inclusion challenges or opportunities, thus illustrating the breadth of methodological approaches in our research arena.

We need to remember (as do the papers in this minitrack) the culture kaleido-scope (the myriad levels of culture from small group and occupational to organizational, interorganizational and

national) as well as the inter-sectionality of culture, gender and identity. Similar to the culture kaleidoscope there are also multiple and complex identities including cultural identities, age and generational identities, racial identities, ability identities, and gender identities. Most importantly, the intersections among social media and the culture and identity kaleidoscope presage tremendous research opportunities as we examine social media usages (and concomitant outcomes) in myriad contexts. These papers set the scene for understanding better how digital and social media can foster (or serve as hindering factors) for diversity and inclusion in multiple settings in an increasingly local and global world.

The future trajectory of our minitrack knowledge niche is also open and provides plentiful research opportunities. Continuation of technology-facilitated collaboration processes and the trends of multistakeholder participation in policy-making pose continuing and significant research questions for those studying identity, inclusion and social media. Finally, major and emergent developments in the Internet of Things and in the interstices among internet, social media, and network neuroscience highlight a rich research arena for future work. This presages increased collaboration across disciplines and con-comitant future funding patterns with a focus on the three I’s of internet, identity, and inclusion as they intersect with transform-ational social media and, indeed, impact human lives.