Editorial: In this issue

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M edia and communication research has closely followed the profound transformations undergone by global media systems in the past decade. Media research in the Asia-Pacific region, initially dominated by development oriented and cultural concerns, has evolved, taking into its sweep important critical, technological, political and cultural issues and frameworks to examine and understand the uses and implications of media in this region.

This issue of the APME aims at reflecting the variety and diversity of concerns, research orientations and perspectives that have come to characterize the regional media and communication research. It constitutes a modest attempt to showcase some of the manifold currents that motivate and inform media practice and critique within specific cultural context. It represents therefore a voyage of discovery and exploration into the world of culturally specific communication research and scholarship.

This diversity is amply reflected in the wide range of topics covered by this issue. In the following pages, the reader will discover attempts at general theoretical synthesis, such as *Amos Owen Thomas'* insightful overview on globalization and cultural change, as well as challenging quantitative assessments of the usage patterns and impact of the Internet on the daily realities and identity of Malaysian adolescents as presented by *Latiffah Pawanteh* and *Samsudin Rahim.*

Also in the sphere of media usage, but from a methodological perspective, is the contribution by *Jason Sternberg, Christina George* and *Joshua Green.* This article presents the results of a survey among the Australian youth, which explores the place of television within a rapidly expanding multimedia environment. The authors argue against conventional and oversimplified assumptions about the strong bond between teenagers and the new media. Their survey of media usage among adolescent youths in Australia proves that it is crucial to consider the new media in the context of established media and to examine media use in relation to leisure as well as the young people's everyday lives which are influenced by a wide range of factors.

John Cokley, Aderito Hugo, Jamie Lonsdale, Angela Romano, Christina Spurgeon and *Sharon Tickle* set out to evaluate the role of new media such as the Internet in nation building and democratization in a context devastated by civil war (East Timor). This article reports on an engaging

and admirable experimental project, the *East Timor Web Press Project* where students used the Internet to support the development of an independent press in East Timor.

Sharing this concern for the role of communication in social change, but in quite a different field and context, which is that of entertainment-education, are *Everett Rogers* and *Arvind Singha*l in this issue. Their article, which consists of an assessment of entertainment-education initiatives in Asia, concludes that these interventions facilitate social change not only in terms of knowledge and attitude change but also in overt behavioural change. They argue therefore that entertainment-education strategies have considerable potential in bringing about development and social change in the Asian context.

A number of articles in this issue are devoted to developments in journalism practice, training and their implications. *Beate Josephi* presents a comprehensive report of an ongoing study of cadet reporters in Germany, Australia and Hong Kong. The induction process of cadet reporters at the *South China Morning Post* confirms the findings in the other countries, that irrespective of their previous learning and education, cadet reporters are essentially influenced by the newsroom socialization process within their media organizations.

Two of the contributions in this issue are devoted to the important issue of public journalism. *David Loomis* discusses public journalism in the context of small town dailies and argues that despite the claims of its novelty by media researchers, public journalism and its twin -- civic journalism -- has long been practised in country papers except that the practice has not been labelled as such. *Jacqui Ewart* examines a New Zealand newspaper's use of public journalism to give voice to the voiceless. It focuses on how female sources fared during the project when compared to their male counterparts.

Nisar Keshvani takes up another important dimension of journalism today, namely the impact of online technology on work practices, management policy and online consumers' expectations. His discussion based on a case study of the Singaporean national daily, the *Straits Times Interactive* presents an interesting and useful insight on the impact of online technology on the news production process and its implications on journalism education.

The media commentaries provide a critical and perceptive discussion of such important issues in Asia as the disempowerment of women through their representation on television (*Shanti Balraj Ambigapathy*), the very real problems and challenges of social communication in India in a context which is characterized by a complex combination and conflict of caste, religion, culture and language

(*Vijay Jodha*), and finally the critical political implications of Western news coverage of Asia (*Kalinga Seneviratne*).

The two final media commentaries are important for their contribution to journalism training and policy. *John Batram* shares with the reader his long and outstanding experience as an international journalist and discusses the key issues in the training of journalists in an increasingly competitive and fast moving profession. *Susan Forde* takes up another significant issue in the context of Australian media and examines the future of independent newspapers in the country and suitable policy options and strategies to promote the creation and existence of independent news media, which have been struggling for survival. This paper draws on research conducted on the newspaper and magazine subsidy system that is practised in the Netherlands and in Scandinavia.

Guest editing this issue was an exciting experience. Now the song is over and all that the editors hope is that the readers will enjoy the melody and that the tune will linger on in their minds long after the curtain has fallen. That would have made the effort and the experience worthwhile. ∎