# Conceptualizing Audiences in Convergent Media Environments

<span style="float:right">**13**</span>

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Chapter Objectives
1. To raise awareness for the fact that audiences have to be regarded as constructions that are shaped by specific interests
2. To understand the consequences of media convergence for audience behaviors
3. To introduce the concept of media repertoires as an instrument to analyze stable patterns of cross-media behaviors
4. To reflect the fact that the close link between technical devices and concrete activities is about to disappear
5. To understand the argument that users' actual communication modes are clearly triggered by the respective information need

## 13.1 Audiences in Analogue Media Environments: Where Do We Come From?

From a management perspective audiences have always been a highly risky and volatile component of media business. The "people out there" perform a wide range of highly individualistic practices of media use that are dependent on social context and situational conditions. Thus audiences are hard to control. In order to gain control media companies are—as Ien Ang put it as early as 1991—"desperately seeking the audience." This desperate search has led to a specific conceptualization of audience that helped to construct audiences as countable and tradable commodities. In the second half of the twentieth century a powerful research

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industry has developed that focuses on providing evidence on what people do with the media. The media industry has an existential interest in finding out how many people use their products; it is exactly this kind of audience data that media companies can sell to the advertising industry. The challenge for this kind of research is that mass media audiences cannot be regarded as a concrete and countable group, as for example the audience being present in a theater or cinema. Instead, it is necessary *to construct* media audiences by certain operational definitions and methodological procedures. All over the world, the media and advertising industries have developed similar mechanisms to construct the "mass audience" as the dominant model of research on exposure to media (Ang 1991; McQuail 1997; Webster and Phalen 1997).

The theoretical and empirical core of this model can be characterized along the following premises:

- Audience measurement focuses on *contacts between users and specific media*; thus the respective research is mainly based on behavioral measures as the frequency and duration of use.
- Audiences are described as *aggregate behaviors* for instance as the percentage of users that have been reached by a specific medium.
- Audiences refer to *single media*, so the respective research constructs television audiences or radio audiences or newspaper audiences.

In the following we will discuss how this dominant model of audience research is challenged by the ongoing process of media convergence. Based on that, we will present two conceptual approaches to audience research that help to adapt to the changing media environments. Finally we discuss some implications for the role of audiences in media management.

## 13.2    How Does Convergence Affect Audience Behaviors?

The concept of audience as described so far is under pressure. This is not a new phenomenon: many researchers have questioned the industry's "dominant model" of constructing audiences as a controllable and tradable commodity since the early beginnings of audience research (e.g., Ang 1991; Webster and Phalen 1997; Napoli 2011). However, today, due to the process of increasing media convergence, the concept is challenged on a more fundamental level.

As outlined in more detail in other contributions to this volume the term *convergence* refers to several parallel developments. Firstly, as indicated by the earlier keyword *multimedia*, today's media services increasingly combine and integrate different forms of presentation, i.e., pictures, moving images, sound, written text. Secondly, the concept of convergence refers to the fact that, as a consequence of digitization, any media content can be distributed by using different networks and platforms. Thirdly, convergence refers to the development of new technical devices, which integrate formerly separated functionalities, for example telephone, TV screen, and games console. And fourthly it refers to the merging of at least three industry branches, i.e., information technology, media, and

telecommunication; this process is partly the condition, and partly the consequence of the other three developments.

From the users' perspective the process of convergence is linked with several consequences. Different technical functionalities and services get merged and are made available on the same device. At the same time a single service may be used via different technical platforms. Thus a service is no longer rigidly coupled with a certain device, and neither are forms of media use and communicative activities bound to a certain technical equipment or distribution platform. It is not possible to decide at first glance what a user is actually doing when he or she uses a certain device, e.g., a laptop, a mobile phone, or a TV set. Below we will introduce the concept of communication modes that meets the challenges of this development.

While these aspects challenge the previously unproblematic definition of the concrete medium that has been used, another consequence of current changes in media environments follows from the increasing role of cross-media strategies on the supply side. Again, the fact that people do not use just one medium but combine different media and different kinds of content is all but new; as Schrøder (2011) has put it, media use has always been inherently cross-media. However as shown above this has not been reflected in the construction of media audiences. Today, with concrete media content being distributed on different platforms and with new forms of trans-media story-telling being developed, approaches to the analysis of audience behaviors have to consider this aspect in order to provide meaningful results on current patterns of media use. This challenge will be taken up in the next section.

## 13.3 Cross-media Repertoires: How Do Users Combine Different Media?

Research into media use traditionally focuses on the use of single-media types such as television or newspapers or the Internet, or of single genres such as news or daily soaps, or of specific topics or products; in doing so the entirety of different media that an individual uses and the interrelations amongst these different media are often ignored. On the other hand we see a growing need for trans-media approaches in research on media use because of the processes of differentiation and convergence of media technologies and media products and the increasing importance of cross-media strategies for media industries.

Research into media use is also characterized by a conceptual gap between two paradigms (for a recent overview, see Nightingale 2011): On the one hand there is the large industry of audience measurement and sometimes also academic studies that aim at providing an accurate picture of people's media-related contacts and behaviors (Napoli 2011; Webster and Phalen 1997); this kind of research mainly relies on large standardized representative surveys that allow for solid descriptions of aggregate audience behaviors. On the other hand there is a broad mainstream of academic, mostly qualitative research on audiences and reception processes that aims at reconstructing individual media use as meaningful practice within social contexts (Jensen and Rosengren 1990; Livingstone and Das 2009). Although both paradigms share individual and aggregate patterns of media use as their main object

of investigation, there is no productive cooperation; as a consequence results of large-scale audience measurement studies are generally highly descriptive and far away from people's everyday practices and thus "meaningless," while results from qualitative receptions studies have limited capacity to generalize their concepts and empirical findings to broader populations.

In order to help to overcome these two gaps of research on media use, we have proposed the concept of media repertoires (Hasebrink and Popp 2006; Hasebrink and Domeyer 2012[1]): the media repertoire of a person consists of the entirety of media he or she regularly uses. While the trans-media aspect is quite obviously an inherent characteristic of this approach—therefore it provides a conceptual basis to overcome the above-mentioned single-media bias of audience research—the concept of media repertoires also offers a potential to productively combine the two research paradigms and to link findings on aggregate patterns of behavior and their distribution among the population with results of qualitative work on the meaning of media practices. From the perspective of a repertoire-oriented approach these two paradigms and their corresponding methodologies are regarded as the two sides of a coin—taken together they allow for a more insightful analysis of trans-media practices.
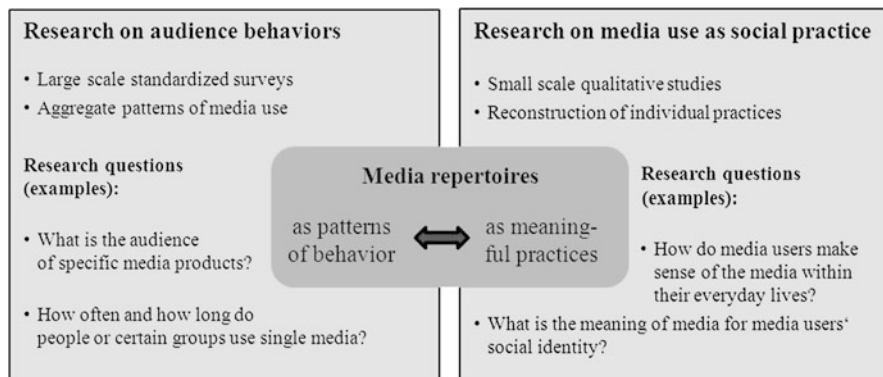
Figure 13.1 characterizes the two areas of research on media use as sketched above. Media repertoires as we conceive them can be regarded as a relevant issue for both areas: they may contribute to both kinds of research questions, since they are understood as patterns of behavior—as such they are compatible with audience research—and at the same time they are understood as meaningful practices—as such they are compatible with research on media use as social practice.

The concept of media repertoires refers to the entirety of media that a person regularly uses. Media repertoires can be regarded as relatively stable trans-media patterns of media use. A repertoire-oriented approach to media use is characterized by the following principles:

- User-centered perspective: the concept of media repertoires moves the media user into the focus; rather than taking the media-centered perspective that asks which audiences a particular medium reaches this concept emphasizes the question which media a particular person uses.
- Entirety: the repertoire-oriented approach stresses the need to consider the whole variety of media regularly assembled by a person; this shall help to avoid misinterpretations resulting from approaches to single media.
- Relationality: within a repertoire-oriented approach the interrelations and specific functions of the components of a media repertoire are of particular interest since they represent the inner structure or coherence of a media repertoire; this reflects our basic assumption that the media repertoire of a user is not just the mere sum of different media he or she uses, but a meaningfully structured composition of media.

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[1] The following paragraphs are based on this publication.

| Research on audience behaviors | Research on media use as social practice |
|---|---|
| • Large scale standardized surveys<br>• Aggregate patterns of media use | • Small scale qualitative studies<br>• Reconstruction of individual practices |

**Media repertoires**

as patterns of behavior ⟷ as meaning-ful practices

**Research questions (examples):**

• What is the audience of specific media products?

• How often and how long do people or certain groups use single media?

**Research questions (examples):**

• How do media users make sense of the media within their everyday lives?

• What is the meaning of media for media users' social identity?

**Fig. 13.1** Media repertoires as conceptual link between two areas of research on media use, Source: Hasebrink and Domeyer (2012)

In order to demonstrate the fruitfulness of a repertoire-oriented approach to audiences in converging media environments we will present exemplary results of a repertoire-oriented analysis of audience data. While the concept of in principle allows designing qualitative as well as quantitative studies we decided to present an example for a standardized survey, since these kinds of data are used most often in audience research.

The empirical basis of our analysis is the German study *Mass Communication*, which has been run every 5 years since 1964; we have used the respective surveys of the years 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2010. The surveys are based on representative samples of the German population (14+ years). The questionnaire includes a broad range of indicators for media use, e.g., the frequency and amount of use of television, radio, newspaper, Internet (since 2000), magazines, books, video/DVD, CD/records. In addition there are some items asking for evaluations and opinions regarding the respective media. At this place we will present three steps of analyses that can serve as examples for different approaches to the analysis of media repertoires.

### 13.3.1 Describing Relative Proportions of Media Within People's Time Budget

The first and rather simple approach to an analysis of media repertoires is to take the proportion of time that is devoted to different media and to present the findings as trans-media time budget (see Fig. 13.2). General descriptions like this can be used as indicator of the aggregate media repertoire of the population and of the relative importance of the single media that have been investigated. The findings indicate a substantial increase of the overall repertoire in terms of the time devoted to all media between 1980 and 2010 reaching a level of 9–10 h per day in the years 2005 and 2010. As for the relative importance of single media Fig. 13.2 shows that
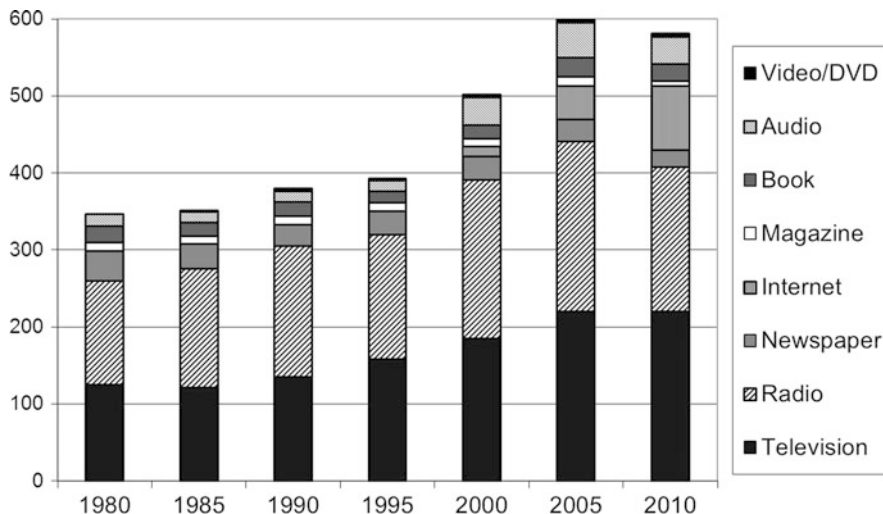
**Fig. 13.2** Time budget for eight types of media in Germany 1980–2010 (in minutes per day), Note: representative samples of the German population 14 years and older. 1980/1985: $n = 2{,}000$; 1990/1995: $n = 6{,}000$; 2000: $n = 5{,}017$; 2005/2010: $n = 4{,}500$. 1990 has been the first survey that included the area of the former GDR. Until 1995 data were collected by means of face-to-face interviews; since 2000 data are based on telephone interviews. Source: Hasebrink and Domeyer (2012)

almost all media have increased the absolute duration of use except newspapers and magazines. In relative terms, the percentage of television has slightly increased (1980: 36 %, 2010: 38 %); starting with a first reliable measure of 3 % for the year 2000 the Internet increased its share up to 14 %. The clearest decrease can be observed for newspapers (1980: 14 %, 2010: 4 %).

## 13.3.2 Investigating Correlations Between Different Media

While this kind of analysis is quite familiar it is only a first step towards the description of media repertoires. A second approach to this kind of data is an analysis of the correlations between different kinds of media or content. When we calculate bivariate correlations between the amount of use of two media, e.g., television and Internet, a negative coefficient would indicate a certain tension between these two media, i.e., they do not seem to fit to each other, and using one of them goes to the expense of the other one; as a consequence there should be few people who combine heavy use of both media. A positive correlation between the frequencies of use of these two media would indicate that they are likely to be combined within media repertoires. Finally, a zero correlation between the two media would suggest that we can find any combination of them within different media repertoires. Thus, we regard the bivariate relations between different media or kinds of media content as one important indicator for media repertoires.

**Table 13.1** Correlation between the frequency of online use and the frequency of use of other media in 2005 (Pearson correlation coefficients)

|  | Total population | Selected subgroups | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Adolescents | Middle age, middle class | Pensioners |
| *Respondents* | *n = 4,500* | *n = 444* | *n = 915* | *n = 1,052* |
| Television | −0.15 | 0.02 | −0.03 | 0.00 |
| Radio | 0.00 | 0.22 | 0.02 | 0.11 |
| Newspaper | −0.06 | 0.22 | 0.02 | 0.09 |
| Magazines | 0.03 | 0.21 | 0.09 | 0.06 |
| Books | 0.02 | 0.06 | 0.05 | 0.11 |
| CD/records | 0.20 | −0.03 | 0.12 | 0.13 |
| Video/DVD | 0.33 | 0.20 | 0.15 | 0.17 |

Source: Hasebrink and Popp (2006)

As an example for this kind of analysis we take up the ongoing discussion about how the increasing role of online media might affect the use of traditional media. The data provided by the above-mentioned study allow for the calculation of correlations between the frequencies of use of different media. Table 13.1 analyzes the extent to which the frequency of online use correlates with the frequency of use of seven other media in 2005. For the whole population the findings show that there are small but (due to the big sample size) highly significant negative correlations with television and newspapers and moderate positive correlations with listening to audio media and watching videos or DVDs. This finding could be read as follows: The more people use the Internet, the less they watch television and newspapers—an interpretation quite in line with the public debate on the consequences of online media on traditional media. However, as detailed analyses for more specific groups demonstrate, this interpretation does not hold at the more particularized level. Within the group of adolescents the correlation between online and television is zero, and for newspapers there is a moderate and highly significant positive correlation. For young people these data say the more they use the Internet the more they read newspapers, which is clearly against common assumptions on the relationship between the Internet and newspapers.

The lesson to be learnt from this empirical example is twofold: Firstly, the patterns of how people compose their media repertoire are more complex than often expected. Research on media use has to systematically analyze the relationships between different media as they are reflected by patterns of exposure. Secondly, it is crucial to consider the role of demographic and other contextual variables. At first glance there is a negative correlation between the Internet and television. However, when we look at specific groups there isn't one to verify this finding. Thus the correlation for the total sample can be fully explained by social factors—in this case the fact that older people watch a lot of television and are less likely to use the Internet compared with young people.

### 13.3.3 Identifying Patterns of Media Use and Types of Media Users

The principal idea of media repertoires obviously goes beyond the level of bivariate correlations between pairs of media. Media repertoires are conceived as comprehensive patterns of media use. Empirical approaches to the analysis of patterns are, for instance, configuration frequency analysis, or, most important in the field of lifestyle research, cluster analysis. The rationale of these approaches is to identify cases which share the same attributes and as such can be regarded as one cluster of media users that can be clearly distinguished from other clusters of media users with different attributes of media use. Thus, to identify clusters of media users on the basis of their overall pattern of media use is the third empirical approach of the proposed repertoire-oriented approach.

The rationale of this step has been the assumption that people's media repertoires differ with respect to the favorite medium; the survey used above included the respective variable, which was used as a categorical variable in a two-step cluster analysis together with eight variables indicating the frequency of use of eight media (see Table 13.2). Due to this procedure four of the five clusters are mainly characterized by one of the media as favorite; however the analysis also reveals significant differences between the clusters with regard to the frequency variables indicating that the five repertoires differ with regard to the favorite medium as well as to the frequency of use of the other media. Cluster 1, for instance, includes users who say TV is their favorite medium and who watch TV more often than any other group; they combine this TV-oriented pattern with high frequencies for radio and VCR, and low frequencies for Internet and particularly for books. Thus this repertoire is characterized by a clear preference for audiovisual content. Those who regard the Internet as their favorite medium (Cluster 5) have quite a rich media repertoire with regard to all electronic media, while they are less frequent readers of newspapers. The only cluster that includes users with different favorite media (Cluster 2) is characterized by the lowest use of the traditional news media (TV, radio, and newspapers) and an above-average frequency of Internet use. Compared to the other cluster with high Internet use (Cluster 5, see above), this repertoire indicates a generally low interest in media.

To our understanding this kind of approach to media audiences meets the challenges linked with converging media environments. Instead of characterizing media users by single indicators this approach takes a holistic view on media-related practices. Thus it takes into account that today's media users face a rich media environments and that the core question from a communication management perspective is which of the available offers they select and combine with which other kinds of media offers.

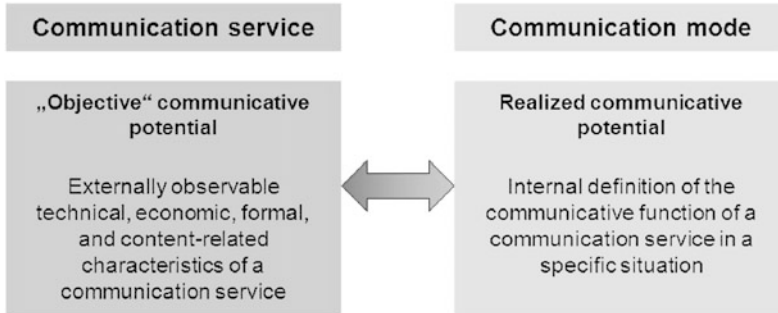**Table 13.2**  Clusters indicating five media repertoires in Germany 2005

| Cl. | % | Favorite medium | TV | Radio | Newspaper | Internet | Magazine | Book | Video | Audio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 35 | TV | ++ | + | | − | | −− | + | − |
| 2 | 10 | Various | −− | −− | −− | + | - | | | |
| 3 | 11 | Newspaper | | | ++ | − | | ++ | − | − |
| 4 | 24 | Radio | | ++ | | − | | | − | |
| 5 | 21 | Internet | + | + | − | ++ | | | ++ | + |

Source: Analysis based on the 2005 survey of the German long term study 'Massenkommunikation'; $n = 4{,}500$; result of a two-step cluster analysis with one categorical variable (favorite medium: TV or radio or newspaper or Internet) and eight continuous variables (frequency of use of the eight media). +/−: higher/lower than average, $p < 0.05$; ++/−−: higher lower than any other cluster, $p < 0.05$. Source: Hasebrink and Domeyer (2012)

## 13.4  Communication Modes: What Are People Actually Doing When They Use a Medium?

The repertoire-oriented approach as presented before provides a conceptual framework for the description and explanation of media users' stable and often habitualized patterns of cross-media behavior. The second approach to audiences in converging media environments sets out to solve another problem that media companies have to face: due to multifunctional devices and forms of digital content that are distributed through different platforms it is increasingly difficult to decide what an individual is actually doing with a certain media service. Are people who watch a TV newscast on their mobile phone watching television? And what kind of activity is it if they download TV news from *YouTube*? Do users of social networking sites or micro-blogs look for information in order to build an opinion on current issues? Or do they rather manage their personal networks? From a management perspective this uncertainty is quite threatening: how can you develop formats or content for specific target groups if you do not know how the users will perceive and use the respective offer?

Traditional approaches of audience research have been aligned to devices and services: the assumption was that each media device is linked with a specific media activity. People sitting in front of a TV set were regarded as watching television, and so was the assumption for listening to the radio or for making a phone call. Current technical devices, however, are no longer limited to one specific function; rather, they provide many options of usage. At the same time any concrete media-related activity can be realized with different devices. The same is true for media services. A concrete website offers a wide range of functionalities. Thus the structural link between a device or a concrete service and its specific use is repealed. The consequence of this decoupling of apparatus and media service on the one hand and communicative activities on the other hand is that audience research cannot infer a specific communicative action just from the device or service that has been used; instead we have to take a user-centered perspective.

| Communication service | Communication mode |
|---|---|
| „Objective" communicative potential | Realized communicative potential |
| Externally observable technical, economic, formal, and content-related characteristics of a communication service | Internal definition of the communicative function of a communication service in a specific situation |

**Fig. 13.3** Communication services and communication modes as interrelated concepts

In order to meet these challenges we propose the concept of *communication modes*, which refers to how users define themselves and their current activity in a concrete situation of media use (see Hasebrink 2004; Hölig 2012). To think in terms of communication modes includes a user-centered perspective: It is the user, who defines her or his communicative situation, e.g., as "watching TV," "reading a newspaper," and "chatting with a friend," etc. Nevertheless it is assumed that communication modes are linked to the respective communication services. While a specific communication service cannot determine the communication mode of its users, it defines the range of modes which can be realized by using the respective service. Communication services are defined on the basis of externally ascribed, "objective" criteria referring to technical and economic features and to the content and presentation of the service. In dealing with a specific communication service users realize a particular part of the given functional potential; this is what we call the communication mode (see Fig. 13.3). Following this conception communication services and communication modes are mutually related to each other; the theoretical status of this relationship is analogue to the discourse on media genres: by using certain genre-specific indicators the service triggers certain genre-related schemata, which help the user to make sense of the respective story; however, the producers as well as the recipients can also play with the respective genre conventions and thus open a wide spectrum for interpretations.

Communication modes refer to the situational level of analysis: a communication mode is the concrete form of using a communication service in a given situation. It is the situation-specific result of functional expectations and the way of handling the respective service. Furthermore it is assumed that in any situation the users are in exactly one communication mode and that they know what they are doing, i.e., in which communication mode they are. This does not mean that they explicitly or consciously reflect their current mode; instead the knowledge might be rather implicit—it becomes particularly obvious when there is a dis-match between the mode and the respective service: as soon as the ongoing interaction does not suit the current expectations, the user will reevaluate the situation and change the service (according to the function he or she would like to realize) and/or redefine the communication mode (according to the features offered by the respective service).

At this place we will exemplify these conceptual considerations by asking what people are doing when they use the Internet for information. The range of functionalities that are part of what we are used to call "the Internet" seems to be interminable. The Internet does not only represent a source of content, but at the same time it is a communication channel; it is not just a means to receive information but also to produce, distribute, or share information. In addition, communicative activities on the Internet can refer to one single communication partner, but also to specific user groups or even large publics. This makes it hard to decide if the user is engaged in interpersonal or mass communication. Audience research and communication management cannot rely anymore on the plain question if and how often people use "the Internet"; instead it is necessary to investigate how people themselves define what they do with the Internet, i.e., which communication modes they realize.

Following this argument Hölig (2012) investigated how media users deal with the Internet in order to realize a range of information needs located on the spectrum between interpersonal communication and mass communication. The first research question was which characteristics media users apply in order to distinguish different information services on the Internet. In order to answer this question an open card sorting method was applied: subjects got a set of 31 cards each indicating a specific Internet service—e.g., reading a newsletter, watching live stream television, chatting, etc.—and were asked to sort them according to their similarities and differences. The core data of this step were collected by recording think-aloud-protocols of subjects' explanations why they felt that a specific service differs from the others. These arguments have been analyzed with a focus on the spectrum between mass and interpersonal communication; the following criteria were identified as characteristics that are used to distinguish between different Internet services:

- *Users' Activity:* users distinguish usage situations according to their own activity. The distinction is made between being active (e.g., producing, sharing or distributing), passive (e.g., reading, listening, watching), or interactive (dialogic communication).
- *Communication Partner:* users make clear distinctions concerning their communication partner and evaluate if the source or the recipients correspond to their expectations. Applied categories are friends or relatives, interested anybody, expert or authority, mass media or journalism.
- *Co-audience:* in addition to the type of communication partner the audience size and access possibilities, as perceived by the Internet user, are relevant. Differences are made between individuals, closed groups, public but focused group, and a mass audience.
- *Temporal Distance:* the common differentiation between synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (with time delay) communication is supplemented by quasi-synchronous communication (not real-time communication but near-term) and communication without any time relation.

Any particular combination of these four criteria characterizes a specific communication mode. Thus these criteria can be used as an instrument to assess the mode of specific communicative actions.

In order to validate this instrument, a second research phase was based on the following considerations: in a concrete situation the salient information needs and thus the specific gratifications sought influence the communication mode that is applied. The argument here is that the concrete activities performed on the Internet are not determined by the Internet as the platform or by a certain Internet service, but to a considerable extent by the interests and needs of the user.

The research design simulated different information scenarios. With regard to either political or health-related issues subjects were asked to imagine one of four basic types of information needs (a) general orientation on the respective field; (b) specific interest in a concrete issue; (c) knowledge of what the relevant peer group thinks about these issues; and (d) individual problem-oriented issues (Hasebrink and Domeyer 2010). The hypothesis was that depending on the respective information need users would realize different communication modes. Subjects were asked to search on the Internet for the information they needed. They were completely free to choose any service they wanted, be it an online newspaper, *Wikipedia*, or a direct message to a friend on a social networking platform. When they felt they had reached their aims they were asked about what they had done on the Internet along the four criteria that were identified in the first step. The analysis showed that only very few out of the logically possible combinations of these four criteria appeared significantly more often than expected. These combinations can be interpreted as typical communication modes:

- *Journalistic mass communication*: passive reception of content from journalistic sources with a small temporal distance and a disperse mass as co-audience
- *Public expert communication*: passive reception of content from specialized sources with a small temporal distance and a public co-audience
- *Private expert communication:* nonpublic, real-time conversation with a topic-related specialized communication partner
- *Personal communication*: nonpublic, real-time conversation with friends, relatives, etc.

These communication modes have been meaningfully linked with the different information needs: *public expert communication* is significantly linked with concrete thematic interests, while the mode of *private expert communication* is applied if there is an individual problem to be solved. The mode of *personal communication* is closely connected with peer-related information needs, and *mass communication* with undirected information needs for general orientation. The findings support the assumption that the communication mode, which is applied in a concrete situation, is strongly related to the salient information or communication need. While this statement might seem rather trivial, it clearly emphasizes the fact that users' media-related practices cannot be inferred from the specific media platform or service they use—as audience research often does. The observations in this study demonstrate that even single services or websites, for example, a concrete social networking platform or the portal of a newspaper publishing house, are used for different communication modes, depending on the respective information need of the user.

**Conclusions**

This article has started from the established model of audience research according to which audiences are constructed on the basis of the number of people reached by the respective medium or service, the frequency and duration of use, and the structure of this group in terms of specific target groups. As we have shown this approach is under pressure. The consequences of the current process of media convergence question many of the premises of former audience research. We have discussed two of the challenges that arise.

On the one hand people's manifold media-related activities cannot be understood appropriately on the basis of information of contacts with single media. All users use different media; they combine different platforms, genres, and kinds of content and thus compose an individual media repertoire that makes sense to them within their everyday life. Communication management in convergent media environments has to deal with these media repertoires in order to understand the role of specific media offers within these repertoires. Particularly cross-media strategies have to be based on this kind of evidence.

On the other hand the former link between a certain technology or a certain device and users' activities has substantially eroded. Today we cannot know what a user is doing when he or she watches a TV screen or a mobile phone or visits a social networking site. Research has to ask users for their own definition of the current situation. As we have shown this insight does not mean that there are no regularities or patterns of user behavior; the concept of communication modes refers to certain culturally established practices that users realize when they use the media. For audience research that sets out to deliver relevant theoretical and empirical evidence for purposes of communication management this concept can help to identify these patterns and regularities even in converging media environments.

## Exercise Questions

- What are the main construction principles of classical audience measurement?
- In how far are these classical approaches challenged by media convergence?
- What are the main differences between a repertoire-oriented approach and classical audience measurement?
- How can media repertoires be investigated?
- How are communication modes defined?
- What is the conceptual link between information needs and communication modes?

## Reflexive Questions (Food for Thought)

- In all, the two approaches presented here might lead to a loss of control of media companies over their audiences. Can you imagine strategies that can help to regain control?
- How can you find out if a concrete newscast on a mobile device is received in the same communication mode as the same newscast on the TV screen?
- Which criteria of communication modes would be relevant for other gratifications sought (e.g., entertainment, catharsis, etc.)?

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