

**Call for Papers**  
**Media, Communication and Nostalgia**  
**“...you’ll have to wait till yesterday is here”**

**Special issue of *medien&zeit* [media&time]**

Nostalgia is booming. People recollect and embrace media formats and communication technologies of their childhood. We witness a revival of vinyl records and how media design adopts new products to the vintage appeal of old media technologies. TV dramas, music styles, advertisements and product design alike are flirting with the charms and lifestyles of the past. We decorate our apartments with vintage furniture and rediscover retro-drinks and retro-fashion. People share memories about past media practices, commodity brands and other everyday experiences from romanticized pasts to communicate and identify who they are today, and where and how they belong. The recent hype about nostalgia however is more than just mere fascination for the past in a variety of cultural spheres and contexts. It hints to more profound social and cultural developments: Memory – nostalgic or otherwise – is not neutral but carries biases regarding political orientations, social norms, and cultural values. It bears an inherently social dimension. This special issue thus invites original articles (4000 – 6000 words), which address nostalgia, through, by and towards media and in various communicative contexts and ask for the potential role of nostalgia as a seismograph of cultural and political sentiment. Media can serve as vessels, addressees and also lenses through which people look at fond memories; they can amplify as well as deafen nostalgia and memory.

In research nostalgia has widely been conceptualized as a common element of individual and collective engagement with the past related to experiences of loss, lack and longing. Recent publications in media and communication studies, history, sociology and social psychology commenced exploring social and historical implications, origins and influences of individual and collective nostalgic attitudes, emotions and practices. Thereby they aim to extend the scope of research beyond individual emotional states or aesthetics of nostalgic media contents and to thus emphasize the social implications and consequences of and influences on nostalgia. The issue aims to contribute to understanding the role of nostalgia for constructing and sharing individual/collective memories and official/alternative histories.

Theoretical contributions and empirical case studies are welcome. Topics to be addressed by the issue include but are not limited to questions like:

**Nostalgia & Theory:**

- The study of nostalgia is a transdisciplinary project. What can we learn from existing concepts, categorizations and typologies of nostalgia? How can they be used for media related questions? Is a specific understanding of nostalgia in the context of media and communication studies required? What do concepts of nostalgia have in common, where do they differ? What could alternative or critical concepts be like?
- What are communalities and peculiarities of concepts such as mediated nostalgia, mediatized nostalgia and media nostalgia: How are media (technologies) and nostalgic memories interrelated? Why and how do media themselves become objects of nostalgic longing?
- Nostalgia is not an exclusive mode of memorization: How is nostalgia related to other modes of constructing personal or collective memories and engagements with the past.

**Nostalgia & Media**

- What role does nostalgia play for production, commodification, distribution, and exchange of narratives and mnemonic objects in domains of public/social communication, from mass communication to popular culture?

- How has nostalgia in media (contents) changed over the course of media history? What were people/media nostalgically longing for in different periods and given different contemporary contexts and challenges?

### **Nostalgia & Technology**

- Nostalgia can be directed towards certain old media technologies. Why do some people try to keep “dead media” alive? How is nostalgia towards old media expressed, why are some past technologies like the music juke box, video game platforms and others still so appealing? Is there a promise of authenticity in some media? How do media technologies serve as portals to a personal or historical past? Can media technologies themselves “be” nostalgic?

- Digital media practices can contribute to nostalgia in, through and towards media in many ways. Digital artefacts themselves can be the target of nostalgic sentiment and platforms to share memories and connect with others: Which features of nostalgia do we find in a digital memory culture? How does the connective potential of digital communication enable community formation and identity building among individuals with shared political, cultural or economic interests?

### **Nostalgia & Community**

- How does nostalgia for media or communication technologies contribute to community formation and establishing a sense of belonging in communities (e.g. retro Gamers, children of the 70s, and so forth).

- What role does nostalgia play for media practices and experiences in families and other social formations, subcultures, scenes or even activist groups and social movements? How are media experiences shared between generations or across cultures and countries?

### **Nostalgia & Society**

- Where does nostalgia take us to? Are nostalgic memories anchored in the national or local histories and cultures or can we observe a transnational exchange of favorite pasts that return as ideal models of life. Are nostalgic narratives implicitly conservative or even reactionary or can they also be progressive?

- How is nostalgia instrumentalized in political communication, for political goals or social activism? What role do media memories (content, technologies, practices) play for the articulation of nostalgia for past political systems or regimes (E.g Ostalgie as nostalgia for the GDR or nostalgia for the and in the former Soviet Union) or for envisioning future states of society?

Authors who would like to contribute to the special issue of *medien&zeit* should first submit an extended abstract (in English, 600 - 800 words) by **February 15, 2016**.

Editors will review these proposals within two weeks of receipt. Authors whose proposals are selected will be asked to submit full papers (in English, 4000 – 6000 words) by July 4, 2016. Papers must be original, and should not be published or be under review in other journals. All full papers are peer-reviewed.

Abstracts should be submitted electronically via email as Microsoft Word or PDF attachments and should include a cover sheet containing corresponding author's name, paper title, affiliation and email address.

Submissions should be sent to the two guest editors of this special edition:

[manuel.menke@phil.uni-augsburg.de](mailto:manuel.menke@phil.uni-augsburg.de) (Manuel Menke MA, Augsburg University)

[christian.schwarzenegger@phil.uni-augsburg.de](mailto:christian.schwarzenegger@phil.uni-augsburg.de) (Christian Schwarzenegger MA, Augsburg University)

*medien&zeit* is an interdisciplinary, Vienna-based journal that welcomes contributions addressing theories, methods and issues of communication history. Number 4/2016 will be guest edited by Manuel Menke (Augsburg University) and Christian Schwarzenegger (Augsburg University).