

Public Service Media in the Networked Society ***RIPE@2017***

The theme for RIPE@2017 Reader, the eighth book in our series of peer-reviewed edited books published by Nordicom, assesses characteristics, dynamics and implications of the networked society in relation to public service media [PSM]. The rapidly changing media ecology challenges PSM's historic societal position of centrality and greatly complicates core mandates. The networked society is enabled by communication technologies that greatly enhance growth in content choices and participatory affordances, but also encourage social fragmentation and advancing globalisation. Today's media ecology is highly disruptive for traditional markets, mass media structures and modes of communication, and complicates policy, regulation and operations. The concept and practices associated with networked communications media in a networked society context are often celebrated, and merit critical scrutiny.

The book tackles questions of fundamental importance. What is the 'networked society' in and for media practice, and with what essential implications for public media organisations and 'audiences'? Does the new ecology enhance or diminish PSM in contemporary societies – how much of each in which dimensions? Is what's happening the same everywhere, or varying? How can PSM strengthen the democratic potential of networked communications and counter disruptive forces that are eroding public trust in media? How do commercial and non-commercial media organisations interact in a networked society? Which aspects of legacy public service traditions can be preserved, what is obsolete, and what is needed that is new?

Our theme opens PSM discourse to critical analysis of relations between traditional and new media, institutional and non-institutional actors, and characteristics and dynamics of social networks for stakeholders that include government, NGOs, other public institutions, commercial media, and most importantly the public in diverse identities – as audiences, users, creators, citizens, activists, and consumers. The collection addresses many issues of particular importance to the theme and provides various single and comparative case studies. At issue is the relationship between PSM and the promise, challenge, and complications of the networked society in different countries and for diverse populations.

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