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Special Section

Editors' introduction: Stakeholder essays on audience interaction and participation

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This Special Section is resulting from the work of the Working Group on "Audience interactivity and participation" of the COST Action IS0906 "Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies" (TATS). COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology, allowing the coordination of nationally-funded research at the European level.

The Action "Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies" (2010-2014) is coordinating research efforts into the key transformations of European audiences within a changing media and communication environment, identifying their complex interrelationships with the social, cultural and political areas of European societies. A range of interconnected but distinct topics concerning audiences are being developed by four Working Groups: (1) New media genres, media literacy and trust in the media; (2) Audience interactivity and participation; (3) The role of media and ICT use for evolving social relationships; and (4) Audience transformations and social integration.

Over the past three years, Working Group 2 of the TATS COST action has collected a series of essays combining self-authored and interview essays with key members of media organisations, politicians, academics and civil society members, in relation to the theme of audience, interactivity and participation.

With this project, Working Group 2 wanted to establish a dialogue with the wide variety of people that were dealing with the notion of the audience and issues concerned with interactivity and participation. The objective of the essays was to invite the stakeholders to enter a debate on contemporary issues concerning the audience and to invite them to voice their perspective on contemporary issues of interactivity and participation.

This objective is part of the broader remit of Working Group 2 within the TATS Cost Action, as it aims to study the possibilities and constraints of mediated public participation. This includes the roles that new and old media institutions and professionals play in facilitating public participation and in building citizenship; the interlocking of mainstream media and non-mainstream media and their production of new hybrid organisational structures and audience participation.

More information can be found at:

<http://www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/>

And for Working Group 2 specifically:

<http://www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/node/6>