

Editorial Introduction

Sue Turnbull, Joint Editor
University of Wollongong, Australia.

In November 2001, *Particip@tions* Volume 1 Issue 1, consisting of an editorial introduction, three provocations to thought and two book reviews, made its web debut. In their preamble to this then brave and rather 'odd' new venture, Martin Barker and Ernest Mathijs presented the case for a specialist journal to address the complexity of audience research. Seeking to extend the scope of audience studies from the usual suspects of film and television reception, they flagged the possibility of a cross-disciplinary approach which could encompass museum audiences, theatre reception, festival publics, visitor studies and all sorts of interactive and participative audiences.

As an online journal untrammelled by concerns about 'space' in the virtual publishing environment, *Particip@tions*, they surmised, would allow contributors the room to provide a fuller account of their research than print journals. In other words, there would be time and space to reveal the workings of the research endeavour rather than just a review of the findings in the hopes that this would enable audience researchers to learn from each other in a genuinely collaborative environment. Barker and Mathijs concluded with a hopeful invitation for submissions.

Nine years later, and *Participations* 9.2 is a testimonial to the success of that vision. A quick look at the contents, and it will be immediately apparent that this is a 'bumper' issue which vividly demonstrates the vitality of the field of audience and reception studies in all its diversity and reach.

Not only are there three 'general papers', but four special sections each containing a large number of papers from scholars across the globe. These include: Comic Book Audiences introduced by Roger Sabin (7 papers); Audience Involvement and New Production Paradigms introduced by José Noguera (11 papers); Music Audiences introduced by Lucy Bennett (8 papers), and last but by no means least a section on Multi-method Audience Research by Kim Christian Schrøder (8 papers) whose co-authored book on *Researching Audiences* was reviewed in that tentative first issue. And while everything published is in English – perhaps an inevitable limitation in a single Journal – the international range of the contributors is very clear.

The editors would therefore like to thank all of the theme editors and each and every contributor for their invaluable contribution to this landmark issue. Which (at time of

writing) comprises around 40 scholarly articles all engaging in some way with audience research, more than would be likely to be published by any academic journal in any one given year. *Particip@tions*, it would appear, has more than just arrived, it has effectively commandeered the field as an inclusive and inspiring location for those who are fascinated by what people do with the media and how to study this.

Thanks are especially owed to our production editor Rhys Fowler, who does this out of simple love. And also to the small army of referees who care enough about the ideas the essays deal in, to provide friendly-critical feedback through our still almost unique open refereeing system.