

Call for abstracts/articles:

Age, generation and the media – proposal for theme issue of *Northern Lights*

Spring 2013 (eds: Eli Skogerbø & Göran Bolin)

The media landscape is more diverse than ever. The traditional media -- TV, radio, newspapers and magazines, film and music -- continuously diversify their products and enter new platforms. In addition, new social networking and personal web-based media have expanded extending our communication spaces.

For media producers this brings with it increased competition for target audiences. Formats, programmes and genres are designed and specifically tailored to fit specific audience groups in order to satisfy the advertisers' need to more effectively capture digital consumers. Young audience segments are typically targeted as they are conceived of as heavy consumers and trend-setters, but also because these audiences bring symbolic values to the products they are believed to desire. The targeting is often formed in terms of points of identification, which traditionally has led to overrepresentation of certain age groups in media content, and a corresponding underrepresentation of others.

Media consumption is, as we know, divided in terms of social and demographic variables. In the Nordic countries the oldest age groups in general watch more TV, read more newspapers, listen more to radio, than younger groups, whereas the pattern is the opposite regarding the use of Internet, blogs, the advanced functions on smartphones and other mobile personal media. Interestingly, some age gaps seem to be closing: the use of the Internet, some uses of the mobile phone, and social networking sites such as Facebook are increasingly used by older segments. Yet other gaps are widening. The dynamics of this development are yet to be fully explored, and especially the elderly and the older age groups are rarely singled out as an important target group for advertisers, nor have they to any extent been the main focus for media research. While the elderly seem a neglected research topic, there is an abundance of studies examining media use and preferences of the young, often highlighting innovative and/or dangerous media use.

Northern Lights invites theoretical and empirical articles on the theme "Age, generations and the media". We especially encourage cross-age/generation analysis and focusing on the older age groups as mediated representations, target groups, media users, interpreting subjects, etc. Research themes and questions may include (but are not restricted to):

- Comparative cross-generational studies of media use
- Techno-generational divides
- Age and/or generation-specific contents
- Age and generations as target groups
- Generational segmentation in production
- Generational experience in reception
- Niche markets for the older age groups
- Representations of age and generation in news, fiction and entertainment
- Media generations as theoretical and empirical categories
- Interrelations of age/generation and media content

- Historical analysis of media in generational perspectives (e.g. how certain media have been defining for some generations).
- Representations of age in the media (advertising, news, entertainment, life-style magazines)
- The role of age and generations for the interpretation and reception of media content.

Send abstracts of 3-400 words to eli.skogerbo@media.uio.no and goran.bolin@sh.se

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Final article submission: 1 October 2012.

See more about information on *Northern Lights*, including style guide for authors, at <http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-journal,id=143/>