

ECREA Digital culture and communication (DCC) section

Section report 2008

Outgoing Team:

Section Chair: Maren Hartmann, University of the Arts Berlin
Section Co-chair: Kate O’Riordan, University of Sussex
Section Co-chair: Caroline Bassett, University of Sussex

Incoming Team:

Section Chair: Caroline Bassett, University of Sussex
Section Co-chair: Kate O’Riordan, University of Sussex
Section Co-chair: Elisenda Ardèvol, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

In 2008, we first of all tried to stay in contact with those people who had attended the workshop at Sussex University in autumn 2007. We involved some of them in the selection of abstracts procedure for the big conference in 2008 and tried to otherwise keep them informed as well (e.g. to explicitly invite them to submit abstracts for the conference). The reasons behind this, amongst others, was the attempt to build a more stable membership base. This strategy – together with some returning members at the Barcelona conference – seems to have worked. There is now a feeling not only of a great interest in the section, but also some participation in its activities. One of the results of these actions is also the recruitment of Elisenda Ardevol as a new co-chair.

Apart from that, our main task in 2008 in terms of conferences was the selection of abstracts for the Barcelona conference as well as the preparation of a larger section conference in 2009 (in Berlin, see below). The selection of abstracts, as already hinted at above, was problematic insofar as there were a great number (the section managed to score amongst the highest number of abstract submissions). Thanks to the high number, the rejection rate was very high. From those chosen through the peer assessment exercise, we selected two pre-arranged panels and made up seven panels from the selected papers (we grouped them thematically). We also had five posters.

Not all of the invited speakers did in the end appear, but the spread of papers was fairly good. Our sessions had quite a few visitors most of the time and the general atmosphere was very productive; session attendance varied but some sessions were full to capacity. The business meeting was also well received and quite a few constructive suggestions were made. The interest in the section seemed high.

Next to that, we have been working hard to coordinate the call for papers for next year’s section conference. It will take place in November in Berlin (at the University of the Arts) and is co-organised together with two sections from the German Communication Association (the media sociology section as well as the computer-mediated communication section). There will also be a call for a COST 298 (Future of the Broadband Society) panel and there is some support from the Centre for Material Digital Culture at the University of Sussex. The call has now been agreed and will be distributed shortly. The main task for 2009 will be to organise and run this conference and to further develop the membership base.

We are very happy to have recruited Elisenda Ardèvol as a new co-chair for the section, who was elected at the Barcelona conference. She is an experienced researcher in the field with much enthusiasm and has already brought in some new ideas. This also means a further geographical spread, which seems to be useful for the section.

Maren Hartmann, on the other hand, has given up her Chair in order to stand for election for the Executive Board of ECREA. She, too, was elected in Barcelona and is now responsible for Networking and Matchmaking: Stimulating international co-operation for ECREA members.

As one of the main organisers of the next section conference, she will, however, remain very much involved with the section for the time being. Beyond that, she also hopes to remain involved in the future.