Editorial: International ICIE Symposium 2004

The second volume of IJIE (2/2004) is dedicated entirely to the publication of the proceedings of the International ICIE Symposium 2004 (http://icie.zkm.de/congress2004). The symposium was sponsored by VolkswagenStiftung and took place in October 4-6, 2004 on the premises of the Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany (http://www.zkm.de/). It was attended by some 50 participants from Argentina, Austria, Cameroun, Canada, China, Croatia, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Greece, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, UK and the US.

The International ICIE Symposium this year dealt with the ongoing debate on the impact of the Internet on the global as well as on the many local levels. This addresses the very heart of today's and tomorrow's political decision-making, particularly in a world that turns out to be more and more unified – and divided at the same time. The leading ethical question is how embodied human life is possible within local cultural traditions and the horizon of a global digital environment. The symposium discussed this topic with its normative and formative dimensions in three different perspectives, namely:

1. Internet for Social and Political Development: Community Building

2. Internet for Cultural Development: Restructuring the Media

3. Internet for Economic Development: Empowering the People

Therefore the symposium addressed, firstly, the question of how people with different cultural backgrounds integrate the Internet into their social lives. How far does the Internet affect, for the better or the worse, local community building? How far does it allow democratic consultation? How do people construct their lives within this medium? And finally: How does it affect their customs, languages, and everyday problems? In the second place it dealt with the changes caused by the Internet in traditional media and its impact on cultural development. And thirdly, it explored the economic impact of the internet: is it a medium that grants people better opportunities for economic development? Or is it an instrument of oppression and colonialism? What is the impact of this technology on the environment and how does it affect what has been called the cultural memory?

The symposium offered a platform for academic debate on these issues. They were addressed by keynote speakers and discussed thoroughly in working groups. A very important aspect of the symposium was the intercultural exchange amongst the experts from all continents of the world about the different approaches in the different cultures and traditions to deal with the challenges posed by the Internet.

A selection of the contributions to the symposium will be published in the ICIE book series at Fink Verlag Munich in 2005. All other contributions are published in this volume of the IJIE in alphabetical order.

We hope you will appreciate this second issue of IJIE as a valuable input for your academic and professional work.

Best regards and seasonal greetings.

Yours sincerely,

Rafael Capurro (Editor in Chief),
Thomas Hausmanninger and Felix Weil

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