

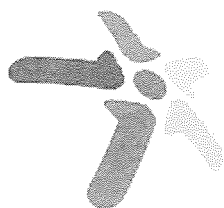
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Geneva, Paris, Lugano, Orbicom Actively Prepares for the Summit

In February and March, Orbicom covered three important international meetings to prepare for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that will take place in Geneva during December 2003 and Tunis in 2005.

The first meeting was PrepCom II which was held in Geneva from 17 to 28 February. Orbicom President Alain Modoux, also Consultant to the Swiss Authorities organizing the Geneva Summit, and Orbicom Secretary General, Vice-rector Claude-Yves Charron, together with Dr. Khan, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information at UNESCO, – the institutional member of Orbicom representing UNESCO – participated in the second preparatory meeting of WSIS that convened representatives of the States, private sector and civil society.

Although PrepComs are an evolving process, it is now possible to have a preliminary notion of what the Declaration and the Action Plan might look like at the time they are endorsed by the Summit. The two important draft documents are annexed to document WSIS/PC-2/DOC/0012 and may be read at the WSIS website: <http://www.itu.int/ws>

Orbicom is following with interest most of the Summit issues. Questions about access to communication and information infrastructures; access to content and information; the role of governments, business sector and civil society in the promotion of ICTs for development; capacity building issues; regulatory environment; ICT applications; diversity and local content issues; ethical issues and freedom of expression are all of vital interest to the information (or knowledge) society, and therefore to the Orbicom membership at large.

It is interesting to note that the draft Action Plan in its section 35 d) provides a direct linkage with two of Orbicom's on-going projects, Monitoring the Digital Divide (DDI) and The Digital Review of Asia Pacific. The document outlines in its objectives the following: "Launching and gradually developing an aggregated ICT Development (Digital Opportunity) Index and publish it annually or every two years in an ICT Development report, where ranking of countries will be accompanied by analytical work on policies and their implementation. (ITU is to catalyse and combine in a coherent structure the existing experiences in various organizations, universities, think-tanks etc.)". For the information of readers, the first edition of The Digital Review of Asia Pacific is scheduled for release in early summer this year while the DDI will be published in the fall.

In parallel to PrepCom II, the UN ICT Task Force also convened a meeting in Geneva. Our Secretary General was able to participate in this important venue under the UNESCO umbrella. As this Task Force gathers the most prominent policy makers involved in ICT for development from around the world (about 100 people) the inclusion of Orbicom is an encouraging achievement.

In the context of ICT for development, the Scientific Director of Monitoring the Digital Divide project (DDI), Dr. George Sciadas, also made a presentation at the OECD/UN/World Bank Forum on the Information Economy on 5 March in Paris. This presentation of the methodology, model and test with nine countries attracted considerable interest, like the previous one made at the InfoDev symposium in Chongqing, China, in December 2002. The full report will target 100 countries. The presentation took place during a special session on measurement instruments that also included a presentation of the newly published Global Information Technology Report 2002-2003 (GITR) a combined effort of INSEAD, the World Economic Forum and InfoDev. In short, Orbicom's DDI (sponsored by CIDA, InfoDev and UNESCO) focuses on measuring the divide, both digital and analogue, through a set of indicators that also cover human resources aspects. The GITR's main focus is on E-readiness of countries for competitiveness.

Also in the context of the Summit, a Round Table took place in Lugano, Switzerland, that gathered international experts in archives, libraries, education, media and sciences in order to help develop international projects to be eventually implemented by content professionals of developing countries with the support of their international associations. This successful meeting conveyed by the Swiss Commission for UNESCO (14 – 16 March), constituted a decisive step in the preparation of several projects.

At the end of the Lugano Round Table, Orbicom President Alain Modoux, in association with representatives of international organizations of content professionals, launched a most interesting initiative called The Platform of Content Professionals. The idea received the support of six of the seven associations present at Lugano. It proposes to give a special voice during WSIS to content professionals: specialists who create, process, preserve or diffuse information and facilitate communities in creating knowledge. Content professionals play a crucial role within the information society and it is important that they be duly recognized and their views carefully considered.

Pierre Giguère

Shaping Tomorrow's Media Systems

Conference of the Russian Chair
23-24 May 2003, Faculty of Journalism of Moscow

The change of centuries has been marked by the changing role of media in many societies regardless of their economic and social structures. A driving force for changes is certainly a progress of information and communication technologies. However, the growth of new media happens to become the most evident outcome of current shifts, but not the only one. Commercialization, fragmentation of audiences, decrease in responsible and socially oriented journalism are further consequences of evolving changes.

In all respects changes in traditional media systems seem to be really profound. Economic foundations and business models of mass media industries are losing traditional contours. Professional norms and ethical standards are put under new pressures. Traditional media have been put into a new, contradictory and highly competitive environment driven by commercial market and technologically determined forces. Print media are facing new challenges resulted from visible changes of audience attitudes and multiplying distribution channels. Analogue broadcasting is losing ground in competition with growing digital TV and radio channels, while established systems of PSB are contested by commercial channels however offering still a limited number of news shows and entertainment programs, soap operas, etc. Educational and cultural role of TV broadcasting is questioned by global commercially driven entertainment audiovisual industries.

Changes similar to those in media industries and structures might be seen in media performance and media norms. Reliability of news is challenged by competition for scoops, cultural and educational potentials of media are substituted by info- and edutainment, advertising is merging with editorial texts thus producing content for advertisers more than for audiences.

We are witnessing profound transformations of traditional media systems decomposed and restructured by present changes. The Faculty of Journalism, Moscow State University, would like to put these issues forward for a discussion of international scholars.

The Faculty is a well-known research center which has produced a number of studies of national media systems. The Faculty has established several international centers to study media systems in Germany, France, Scandinavia, Japan, India. Therefore, the purpose of the conference "Shaping Tomorrow's Media Systems" is to integrate research of national media into the global context and to compare the models of coming media systems. The format of the Conference will include presentations of Russian and foreign media experts on a variety of issues. We propose several topics for discussions:

- National media systems in the globalized and glocalised environment.

- European media systems vis-a-vis American media culture
- Content production – a new market in the media industry
- Mobile phones as convergent media or media channels
- Global visual and audio communication in the national context: regional and continental aspects
- Asian media markets as the new emerging global factor
- Cultural industries in the media context: cinema, CDROM, DVD
- Regulation and self-regulation in the global media market: who will regulate – UN, UNESCO, WTO, global or national journalistic community? Changing journalism standards
- The global future of the PBS and commercialization

The conference will take place at the Faculty of Journalism, Moscow State University, May 23-24, 2003. Working language of the conference – English.

There is no registration fee.

Those who are interested in participation, please contact :

Victoria Orlova
vorlova@journ.msu.ru

Television and children



Television and children is a subject of special interest to many. It interests parents, media persons, marketers, educationists and of course children themselves. It is empirically established that children are avid viewers of television, they watch all types of programmes ranging from children's to programmes meant for general audience – soaps, musicals, plays and occasionally documentaries. While some formats like cartoons and fantasies interest them maximally, other formats typically of soap opera and the musicals also interest them a great deal. The specific preferences will depend on the age-group, gender, socio-economic strata and a host of other factors. There is little doubt however, that television is amongst the most popular media of children. There is therefore considerable viewing amongst children which may run into late evenings. This subject, therefore, is of natural interest to everyone.

Subhash Joshi
sureg@icenet.net

Full text on Orbicom's Web site, "columns" section.

Medios de Comunicación: Guerra, Terrorismo y Violencia "Hacia una Cultura de Paz"

Conferencia de la cátedra de México
5 y 6 de mayo 2003, Universidad Iberoamericana

Presentación

La Cátedra UNESCO en Telecomunicaciones y Sociedad, del Departamento de Comunicación de la Universidad Iberoamericana (UIA), en coordinación con ORBICOM, red mundial de Cátedras UNESCO de Comunicación, organizan la Conferencia Internacional "Medios de Comunicación, Terrorismo y Violencia: Hacia una Cultura de Paz", a celebrarse el 5 y 6 de mayo del 2003 en las instalaciones de la UIA en la Ciudad de México.

La Conferencia pretende ofrecer un enfoque particular sobre el debate en torno al terrorismo y otras formas de violencia desde la perspectiva de los medios de comunicación. Los debates buscan poner a discusión las formas en las que se reportan acciones y hechos vinculados a los actos terroristas tanto en medios locales como en los internacionales, la manera en la que los medios contribuyen a crear y mantener los estereotipos acerca de los perpetradores y las víctimas, así como la contribución al entendimiento sobre las causas y efectos del terrorismo y la violencia.

Objetivos

Cuatro son los objetivos centrales de esta conferencia:

- Discutir las formas en las que los medios internacionales han definido, redefinido y estereotipado a los movimientos terroristas

y sus víctimas, así como la manera en la que esta situación ha generado nuevas percepciones acerca del "otro".

- Analizar el papel que las organizaciones de medios juegan en las formas en cómo se reporta y transmite un conflicto.
- Distinguir las formas en las cuales los medios, al retratar a organizaciones violentas, contribuyen a su legitimidad o ilegitimidad.
- Perfilar la contribución de los medios para lograr un mejor entendimiento del "otro".

La conferencia está dirigida a:

- Estudiantes y académicos de instituciones educativas públicas y privadas, preferentemente vinculadas a la temática del Foro.
- Servidores Públicos de organismos de Seguridad Pública en sus tres niveles de gobierno.
- Servidores Públicos de instituciones de administración y de procuración de justicia federal, estatal y municipal.
- Analistas, escritores, directores de medios, etc.
- Medios masivos de comunicación en general.
- Organizaciones sociales vinculadas a los temas del Foro.
- ONGs y público en general.

Gabriela Warkentin
gabriela.warkentin@uia.mx

Orbicom reçoit une distinction du programme UNITWIN de l'UNESCO



K.F. Seddoh, Directeur de l'éducation supérieure à l'UNESCO, Pierre Giguère, diplomate en résidence

Orbicom, le réseau des Chaires UNESCO en communication, dont le Secrétariat international est situé à l'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), a reçu, le 13 novembre 2002, la distinction du programme UNITWIN de l'UNESCO, lors du Forum mondial des Chaires UNESCO tenu ce mois-ci à Paris.

Le programme UNITWIN (de University et Twinning) a été créé par l'UNESCO en 1992. Son objectif est d'encourager la coopération interuniversitaire et mettre l'accent sur le transfert des connaissances et la promotion de la solidarité académique mondiale. UNITWIN regroupe six cents chaires et douze réseaux de l'UNESCO, dont Orbicom.

La distinction d'UNITWIN a été décernée à Orbicom pour l'excellence du travail accompli depuis sa création en 1994. Le prix a été remis à Pierre Giguère, diplomate en résidence à l'UQAM qui représentait le Secrétaire général d'Orbicom, Claude-Yves Charron également vice-recteur aux services académiques et au développement technologique de l'UQAM. Koïchiro Matsuura, directeur général de l'UNESCO, a profité de l'occasion pour souligner le succès d'Orbicom et des chaires du réseau dans le domaine de la société de l'information.

Pierre Giguère a rendu hommage à l'UNESCO et à l'UQAM en tant qu'institutions fondatrices en déclarant que le soutien de l'UQAM a été un élément clé pour la réussite d'Orbicom. Il a également remercié les partenaires, gouvernements du Canada et du Québec, Montréal International, ainsi que Bell Canada.

Éléments sur la problématique de la communication des biotechnologies



Domaine des plus contemporains, voire, aux relents futuristes, les biotechnologies se déploient progressivement sur toute l'étendue de la planète et de l'humanité, au plan des espoirs et des craintes qu'elles suscitent, au plan des remises en question et débats qu'elles provoquent, aux plans philosophique, religieux, moral, social, éthique... Ni les frontières physiques et économiques, ni les barrières culturelles, ni même la disparité des capacités des sociétés de les générer, de les inventer, de les fabriquer ou de les appliquer, n'empêchent cette propension qu'elles ont de s'imposer comme sujet d'actualité universellement préoccupant, ou du moins, inévitable à ignorer ou à occulter.

Qu'il s'agisse des aliments génétiquement modifiés, des transplantations d'organes (de l'animal sur l'homme surtout), du clonage des espèces (de l'homme surtout), de la thérapie génique (insertion d'un gène normal dans des cellules pour corriger une anomalie), élites scientifiques et politiques, autorités morales et religieuses, publics et regroupements civils, dans les pays biotechnologiquement riches comme dans les pays biotechnologiquement pauvres (à l'instar du « fossé numérique »), réagissent à la déferlante de ce nouveau champ de la connaissance, à cette nouvelle étape de l'éternel dessein de l'homme de modifier la nature et le « cours naturel des choses ».

Enjeu, donc, pour toutes les sociétés – et qui sera de plus en plus partagé au futur – c'est là un domaine dont l'évolution dépend, malgré tout, en partie du moins, de sa force de persuasion, de sa capacité à vaincre toutes ces diverses et complexes barrières humaines: barrières économiques, barrières psychologiques chez les individus, barrières philosophiques, religieuses, morales, éthiques... chez les groupes, les communautés et les sociétés.

Autrement dit, la marche des biotechnologies et leur rythme d'avancée et de recul sont étroitement liés à l'état de leur communication. C'est-à-dire que ces technologies, de par les enjeux sociaux et éthiques qu'elles soulèvent, le plus souvent dans une atmosphère de passion et de controverses entre ceux qui y voient des présages catastrophiques et ceux qui y décèlent des promesses de mieux-être pour l'espèce humaine, sont fondamentalement tributaires des processus et modes de communication qu'elles empruntent ou qui les mettent en scène sur la place publique, c'est-à-dire, devant le grand public. Soulevant des questions cruciales pour l'avenir de l'humanité, elles sont à la merci du défi majeur que constitue leur perception par le public, le seuil d'information que ce dernier arrive à constituer et à assimiler à leur sujet, le degré, aussi, de la capacité de ces technologies à satisfaire le besoin d'information qu'elles suscitent auprès du grand public, avec ses différentes catégories, profils, référentiels, cultures, croyances et motivations.

C'est donc à une problématique de communication que ces biotechnologies sont confrontées, de façon de plus en plus critique, au fur et à mesure que leur invasion s'étend aux confins de la vie collective et aux recoins jamais explorés de l'intégrité de l'être humain, au fur et à mesure qu'elles font tomber des barrières traditionnelles entre des secteurs de la connaissance et de la pratique humaine, jadis distincts et même cloisonnés.

Mais, en fait, la problématique de communication, telle qu'elle se pose par rapport aux sciences de la vie, ne date pas d'aujourd'hui. Pour ce qui est de certains de ses aspects, elle est même classique et nous en avons fait l'expérience à de multiples occasions d'inventions et d'innovations technologiques. Il y a des constantes dans cette problématique.

Jamal Eddine Naji
naji@qc.aira.com

Texte complet disponible sur le site web d'Orbicom.

Conferences

ITU Symposium: African ICT Roadmap to Achieve NEPAD Objectives

1-3 April 2003

Arusha, Tanzania

www.itu.int

Media and Terrorism

5-6 May 2003

Unesco Chair in Communication of University Iberoamericana of Mexico

gabriela.warkentin@uia.mx

GKP Africa Day and Media Forum

15-16 May 2003

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

www.globalknowledge.org

GKP EXCOMM Meeting /GKP Annual Meeting

19-23 May 2003

Rome, Italy

www.globalknowledge.org

Shaping Tomorrow's Media Systems

23-24 May 2003

Faculty of Journalism, Moscow

vorlova@journ.msu.ru

Festival des médias: "Convergence technologique: éducation, médias et technologie"

25-28 mai 2003

Montréal, Canada

www.reseau-crem.qc.ca/festival

Mídia Brasileira: 2 Séculos de História:

Tema central do I Encontro nacional da rede alfredo de carvalho

1-3 de junho de 2003

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

lislopes@unicarioca.edu.br

Canadian Communication Association

Annual Conference

1-3 June 2003

Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada

www.acc-cca.ca

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Orbicom, P.O. Box 8888, Downtown Station
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orbicom@uqam.ca

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