Hannu Nieminen: The Promise of the Media Convergence

The term media convergence refers to the process in which television, computer and telephone, due to digitalisation, are coming closer to each other and amalgamating into new multimedia. Between the scholars, industry and politicians there exists however differences of opinion of the nature of convergence. The article reviews the development from the point of view of analytical scepticism, and questions the most optimistic visions on convergence. The main benefit from convergence goes to global television companies, which control the content production, and to telecommunication companies, which control the distribution channels. The role of public authority has remained supportive to private entrepreneurship, and the goals of democracy and equality have been kept in the background.

Jaakko Suominen: A Technological déjà-vu? The problem of historical parallels in the analysis of technohype

In the current discussion about the Information Society (or even "the Knowledge Society"), it is typical to emphasize ruptures, revolutions and inevitability. The main thing is also the strong orientation towards the future. Usually, then, the technological past is forgotten or doomed as series of less valuable happenings and techniques leading to the present. The attitude is common amongst company leaders, politicians and other people promoting the new information technology. An another way to approach the past is to seek parallels. However, the technological parallels (used by media researcher and others (are not always based on "the deeper understanding of history". Just well the aim can be to show naturalness of the present (and future) technological situation. It is possible to use history as a tool of analysing and explaining the current technohype, but only if the explorer sees the whole context of the past, as well as her/his own.

Susanna Paasonen: The Woman Question, or, How to Address Female Net Users

How to address women as Internet users? How to make women interested in information technology? What kinds of commercial services do women want? The woman question in Internet use has been given many forms throughout the 1990's, and there have also been multiple attempts to solve it through memoranda, guide books, and women-specific online services. The article looks at the ways in which the woman question has been approached and explained in different Finnish texts. The texts are seen as productive technologies that do not merely describe, but also produce, recycle and enforce certain understandings of gender. Gender is discussed in the texts mostly in terms of differences between women and men. In fact, gender difference surfaces as something common knowledge, taken for granted, and based on differences in genes, evolution, habit, convention, but also on mundane, bipolar understandings of gender. This also leads to somewhat rigid gender categories that are based on the assumption of sameness. It seems that this unwillingness to give space to multiplicities and differences between women actually reproduces the woman question. For when women are addressed as a homogenised group, few recognise themselves in the address.

Pertti Näränen: Interactivity as a Media Utopia and as a Possibility for Television Journalism

The article insists that the search for the borderline between interactive and non-interactive media in not very useful and that the line can never be found from the borderline of old and new media. This is due to the fact that the old and new media are often intertwined and also the concept of interactivity is fussy and theoretically incoherent. The article suggests that to study the interaction in media use and production the media and communications studies should return to the sosiological concept of human interaction between groups and individuals and to study the role of human audience interaction in different contexts of media production and media use as a social situation.

Maija Gerlander and Eeva Takala: An Individual in the Net: Fragments from the Discussion on the Information Society

This article discusses the role and place of individual in the current and future information society. It is mainly based on the series of experts' writings published in Helsingin Sanomat in 1996. In these writings the individual is observed from rather far and in the abstract way: the concrete "ordinary man" is hardly referred to. Individuals are manifested as being without body, gender or age. The optimistic nature of the national visions of information society is emphasized in the writings: for example the information networks are viewed to give individuals new possibilities for controlling their life. The addresses that brings out the dark side of this development are few. It seems that the information society offers many opportunities to them who answer its call but it also obliges everyone of us to acquire the competence needed in the world of information networks.