

**Title:** Digital Public Space(s): redefining *publicness*

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### **Abstract**

In the last decades a number of labels have been employed to describe how urban spaces have changed, augmented by layers of digital information. However, the digital realm is seldom acknowledged as a social space itself, being typically conceptualized as a mere utility. Therefore, I would like to introduce the concept of Digital Public Space(s). DPSs are neither physical nor digital spaces, but the result of a hybridization process in which physical and digital spheres have merged to constitute a new hybrid typology.

This paper explores how in contemporary social spaces the concept of *public space* is contested by the inclusion of social media, through Chattr. Chattr is a provocative experiment and artwork that brings the benefits of social networking into a physical café. Under the slogan ‘your privacy is very important to us’, Chattr mirrors the policies of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. Chattr participants must accept the Data Use Policy to access the restricted area that constitutes the café, in which all conversations are recorded, transcribed and broadcasted online via Twitter and Chattr website. Chattr’s participants experience a dystopian space governed by social media rules, in which they have to negotiate the boundaries between physical, digital, private and public communication.

A first prototype of Chattr premiered at FutureEverything (Manchester, March 2013), and an improved version was presented at TodaysArt (The Hague, September 2013). Drawing from a comparative analysis between the two events, I describe how participants experience, negotiate and appropriate a space ruled by a new concept of *publicness*.

**Title:** A Day in the Digital Life Project: Private Spaces v Public Places, can there be a distinction?

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### **Abstract**

Digital technologies have long been associated with huge data centres, pervasive surveillance, and the ability to replicate and instantly distribute information globally, and these conversations have been part of the public sphere since the 1960s (Nissenbaum 2010). The concerns then were of massive databases on standalone computers under the control of government and large institutions. Rapidly changing technologies, in particular those related to mobile, distributed and ubiquitous computing, have altered the digital landscape unrecognizably and each decade of technological adaptations has with it different associated privacy concerns (Nissenbaum 2010). We ask the question, are we now at a point in time where private and public places are so entwined and blurred, that they are indistinguishable? A current concern is how privacy, surveillance, social media and social relations, are being informed and informing large scale cultural shifts; Trottier and Lyon (2011) refer to Bauman's (2000) notions of the 'liquid modernity' of these shifts. Bauman suggests that modernity shifts from a solid to a liquid phase, which means that social shifts cannot serve as scaffolding for human action and life strategies. Trottier and Lyon argue against this notion and say that it is not entirely shapeless, as the constraints of structural and institutional facilitators have not simply melted away. There is a need to form a central focus around which we can examine impact of changing technologies and cultural shifts, which has inspired the Day in the Digital Life Project (DDL). The focal point of the DDL project is to create a lightweight, repeatable methodology to quantify an individuals' digital footprint over a 24-hour period (Fletcher et al 2012). The development of a methodology will enable the

quantification of individual's digital footprints at various points in time and regions, enabling International and longitudinal comparisons, and providing a data set which can inform discussion and analysis of privacy in the information age. The first phase captures an individual's digital footprint as their presence is recorded by a broad range of surveillance and communications technologies over a 24-hour period. The second phase uses a wallet analysis approach to generate baseline digital identity, which will be the focus of this paper. The combination of these will enable the quantification of change to the digital footprint. Moreover the footprint which emerges provides a solid representation of an individual's digital self, enabling examination of how it is surveilled, and its changing public / private nature.

**Title:** “Media Practices and Social Change: Rethinking Concepts of Publics in the Digital Age”

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### **Abstract**

The confrontation of a predominantly political public sphere with ubiquitous publicness in social media challenges the identification of the public with political prerogatives and with a normative ideal of deliberation. As the media of communication diversify and become embedded in many quotidian social practices, the forms and structures of public discourse change toward more heterogeneous, agonistic and dissonant formations. One decisive consequence of this ongoing social change is that journalism’s pivotal role in creating publics for issues of broader concern is no longer a given. Instead, the simultaneity of professional and non-professional modes of public communication creates new social orders in which dissonance and conflict account for the value of public discourse in general. Instead of bemoaning the demise of journalism in this new confusing communication environment, our paper develops a theoretical model of a dissonant public, in which the heterogeneity of media practices is interpreted as an important dimension of current social change.

The connection between media and social change is integral to understanding how new media technologies are domesticated in new routines of communication. The concept of ‘media practices’ describes change as an ongoing process of transposing routines of actions (as cultural resource, performative procedure, narrative form) to new contexts. Media practices thus account for varying levels of agency both on the individual and the collective level. Because not every kind of mediatized articulation can claim relevance for constituting a (political) public, media practices establish a link between individual acts of appropriation and collective structures of articulation. In this view of publics as (communicative) practice, the prestructured routines of online social networks, for example, do not necessarily infringe on individuals’ ability to articulate, organize and mobilize collective interests. Because media

are embedded individually as social practices, structural restraints can also serve as resources for new forms of agency and empowerment.

In our paper, we propose a theoretical model that promotes cross-cultural comparison of how quotidian media practices of individuals change processes of public communication, agency and political articulation. At the core of the model is a critical development of practice theories, such as Nick Couldry's concept of 'media as practices', structuration theory, and recent research on the 'mediatization' of everyday life worlds. Specifically, we are interested in how media practices on the individual level contribute to and shape collective processes of mobilization, political activism and the formation of political subjects.

**Title:** The Public-Private Sphere: the Constant Oscillation between ‘Public’ and ‘Private’ Oriented Communication on Twitter and its Power Relations

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### **Abstract**

Some public sphere research tends to rely on Habermas and the idea that political deliberation ought to be characterized by ‘impersonal’ kind of communication, in which the participants are supposed to represent particular interests in society rather than themselves. But there are also attempts to deconstruct this notion and instead emphasize the desire for private oriented discourse and individualized, personal and semi-informal communication in all kinds of public contexts. However, the Web gives proof of communication that makes this analytical dichotomy somewhat outdated. A social media service such as Twitter could be viewed as a public-private sphere due to its constant oscillation between public and private oriented communication. Despite the great number of studies about social media, including Twitter, there is need for more empirical research and detailed analyses of their assumed discursive transformation of the traditional public sphere.

Thus, the purpose of the paper is to empirically examine the communicative character of the budding public-private sphere of Twitter. The empirical material consists of a network of tweets, generated by three Swedish elite users (a Minister, journalist, and PR-practitioner) during three days (18-20/2-2014). The analysis focuses on their cross-professional communication as well as their interactivity with other users/twitter accounts. The study seeks to combine general public sphere theory, network theory (Cardoso 2012) and Bourdieu’s (1998) field theory with the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and the concepts of genre and discourse type (Fairclough 1995: 76-78). The twitter articulations are embedded in different genres, which emanate from the users’ different professional belongings and/or personal backgrounds, which, in turn, give rise to various discourse types, i.e. hybrid combinations of genres which become more or less public/private oriented. The study demonstrates the ways in which the strategic and/or spontaneous twittering provide the three selected users with more or less power in various situations, depending on whether or not the

communication is more or less public/private oriented. More precisely, their management of the public-private divide generates various extents and kinds of cultural and symbolic power; on Twitter, within their particular profession/field of expertise, and/or in society as such.