

## *merzWissenschaft* | medien + erziehung call for papers 2018

### Children | Media | Rights – Complex requirements for access, protection and entitlement in the day-to-day media world of children and young adults

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Children have rights. This fact is notably anchored in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This revolutionary 1989 agreement is unfortunately still not taken as a matter of course today. In the context of media in particular it is worthwhile to examine how the rights of children are taken into consideration in the formulation of media products and also in the realization of media-educational concepts. This is more important than ever in the course of comprehensive mediatization in all aspects of life ("deep mediatization"). New digital technologies provide individuals with new opportunities for societal participation; children and youth benefit for example from the diverse range of available information and communication.

In the sense of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been in effect for 25 years now, it is appropriate to examine on the one hand the rights to access, information and expression, and on the other hand guarantees of protection of minors in the media and in their private lives. Analyses of the exact manifestation of this balancing act between active participation and protective exclusion, between personality development and developmental impairment and between playful discovery and family and legal restrictions are still rare in German-language scientific debate. In addition to the fundamental question of what form the children's rights to be guaranteed will take on in everyday media practice in a digitally networked world and how these rights will be implemented at a political and practical level and accompanied at societal and legal levels, many communication-related phenomena require respective specific considerations with differentiated approaches, solutions and guarantees.

In this context *merzWissenschaft* invites all interested authors to submit contributions on the topic of "Children|Media|Rights". The following are examples of possible, although not exclusive, key questions to be handled in the submitted contributions:

#### **At the societal level:**

- How do the media-related conceptual tasks faced by society and resulting from children's rights change with the age of the child? What role do age and developmental stage of the child play in the relationship between parent, child and state? What is the underlying concept of "childhood"?
- Are state obligations to create adequately varied and child-appropriate content derived from children's rights? What qualitative and media-educational demands will this type of "positive content" have to meet? How far can/should state regulations on content go?
- News comprises important information for both children and young adults. What requirements on form and content emerge from children's rights when it comes to the journalistic range offered? What specific possibilities and limitations result for personalized news-feeds for minors?

## At the state level:

- Participation means codetermination. What are the actually existing ways of integrating children and youth in societal and political discourse on media-related children's rights and their specific formulation, and which currently appear to be Best Practices?
- Information-related and media-related children's rights are classically oriented towards public communication media. How will it be possible in the future to guarantee these rights without excessively restricting the use of new forms of interactive, semi-public or private communication among children and between children and adults? How far can and should the conceptual task of protecting children from themselves go, for example with regard to self-revelation in the network?
- Consent in data protection law is a classic example of the intersection of child participation and state-granted parenting rights on the part of the parents. What premises for electronic consent on the part of children emerge from the developmental goals of children's rights? Will Art. 8 of the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) fulfill these requirements after taking effect in May 2018?

## At the level of academic institutions:

- To what extent does the right to education also include a right to digital learning or to the conveyance of digital competence in schools? What requirements for digital teaching aids arise based on defined development goals and objectives deriving from children's rights?
- In the age of algorithm-driven and bot-based communication, media literacy also includes critical reflection on the processes of media production and clarity regarding the communicator, which cannot (can no longer) be guaranteed. How can the corresponding skills be conveyed as soon as during early childhood?
- Digital technologies make it easy for minors to produce their own communication and media content. The opportunity for self-expression in media at an early stage brings positive chances for participation and development. How can the active and critical encounter with the new possibilities for expression succeed?

## At the family level:

- What role should parents play in the realization of the children's rights to be guaranteed? What is the relationship between these rights and parental media education? What forms of educational efforts, campaigns and when appropriate technical limitations are necessary in order to adequately protect the rights of children (e. g. with regard to the phenomenon of "sharenting", or the prolific sharing of images of the parents' own child in social networks)?
- What is the role of the right to free time, recreation and play where digital media are concerned?
- What can and should be the role of technical protective instruments and "automated" access decisions in media education?

## At the level of the media market:

The possibilities and practices of observing media use by children on the part of private providers, their contractual partners (e. g. advertising providers) and by state instances are ubiquitous.

- What is the significance of this form of "ubiquitous surveillance" from the point of view of the development of the child's personality?
- What are the consequences of children's rights for the conceptualization of products and services that collect data?
- What limits are required in the context of the unmanageable proliferation of Internet-connected sensors (voice assistants, connected toys, GPS tracking, home automation) with regard to the least possible restriction on development?

- What risks to the developmental goals of children's rights are posed by insertion of individualized advertisements in content? What role can, may and should the perspective of children as (young) consumers play in the conceptualization of products and services?
- What forms of media-related research on use and observation of supply-driven markets are called for by children's rights? What kind of knowledge basis is necessary in order to guarantee children's rights in media practice?

*merzWissenschaft* provides a forum advancing scientific analysis in media education and promoting progress in the theoretical foundation of the discipline. For this purpose qualified articles are called for from various relevant disciplines (including media-educational, communications sciences, (developmental) psychological, legal and philosophical perspectives), also with an interdisciplinary approach, for the continuing development of expert media-educational dialog.

Of interest are original papers with an empirical or theoretical foundation, presenting new findings, aspects or approaches to the topic and which are explicitly related to one of the topic areas or questions outlined above or which explore a separate topic within the scope of the overall context of the Call.

Abstracts with a maximum length of 6,000 characters (including blank spaces) can be submitted to the *merz*-editorial team ([merz@jff.de](mailto:merz@jff.de)) until February 19, 2018. Submissions should follow the *merzWissenschaft* layout specifications, available at [www.merz-zeitschrift.de](http://www.merz-zeitschrift.de) (follow "über merz -> für autoren und autorinnen -> style guide merz-Wissenschaft"). Please feel free to contact Susanne Eggert, tel. +49.89.68989.152, e-mail: [susanne.eggert@jff.de](mailto:susanne.eggert@jff.de)

## Summary of Deadlines

February 19, 2018: Submission of abstracts to [merz@jff.de](mailto:merz@jff.de)

March 2, 2018: Final decision on acceptance/rejection of the abstracts

June 11, 2018: Submission of papers

June 12 to July 23, 2018: Assessment phase

August/September 2018: Revision phase (with multiple cycles, when appropriate)