

Indrek IBRUS

***Content Providers Facing the Device-Agnostic Web
Emancipatory Struggles of the Mobile Web***

The paper will reflect on the preliminary results of the research project I conducted in 2006 and 2007 in several European and Northern American countries. The study focused on the dialogic practices behind creating the many norms and standards for the nascent media platform of the mobile web. It was methodologically based mostly on the interviews with the representatives of various handset and browser vendors (Nokia, Opera, AvantGo), operators (T-Mobile) various technology and service enablers and regulators (Segala, dotMobi, Volantis, W3C, Open Mobile Alliance) and content providers (BBC, Buongiorno, Deutsche Welle, Microsoft, ProSiebenSat1, Axel Springer) among others that were actively engaged at the time in establishing various technical and economic characteristics and representational standards for the mobile web as a new media platform. This paper will undertake the analysis of the emerging meta-discourses that these industry stakeholders had on the representational conventions of the mobile web. It will focus on how were the different norms for this new platform established in relation to the 'old form' of the desktop Web. More specifically it will examine the discourses on the balance between developing new representational conventions for the mobile web as an independent content platform or instead developing cross-platform content production strategies that would create the mobile web more or less as another extension of the 'old web'. The paper will aim to analyse how the different solutions to this dilemma ('transcoding', 'adaptation', 'remediation') at this particular moment corresponded to the varying interests of engaged agents of different kinds, their legacies, business models, etc. The paper that uses discourse analyses as its main methodology will discuss the results of the study in light of the theories from traditionally distant disciplines and approaches such as (Kittlerian) media archaeology, (Lotmanian) cultural semiotics, (Luhmannian) systems theoretic sociology and (Schumpeterian) innovation studies.

Indrek IBRUS is a PhD Candidate at London School of Economics with previous degrees from University of Oslo, Norway (MPhil in media and communications) and University of Tartu, Estonia (BA in journalism and media studies). He is currently writing up his thesis on early evolutionary dynamics of mobile web – the interrelationships between the developments in its media forms, its business models and its technological standards. In general his research interests lie around the theoretical domains of media archaeology, media ecology, media semiotics, political economy and interdisciplinary approaches to innovation studies. But more specifically he is working currently and has developed expertise on the historiography of the convergence process that is about to bring us the mobile web as a new media platform. His future research-related aims include the studies on ongoing norm development for the mobile web and other new media platforms as well as practices of cross-platform content development. E-mail: I.Ibrus@lse.ac.uk.

