



Aalto-yliopisto
Taideteollinen korkeakoulu

Media concept as a context for text

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Background

Magazines as

- A) target of research
- B) context for research
- C) data bank for research of a variety of disciplines

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Questions

How to conceptualize and analyze a media title as a context for its visual and textual content – used in readership construction?

a) the title **uniqueness** = differences compared to others inside magazines genres (What separates Vogue from Elle from Cosmopolitan?)

Media concept as a tool for analyzing goals, values etc

b) the **sameness from issue to issue** when each issue has different content but same story types

Media concept as tool for analyzing the action concept

c) Genre / title / issue / story type as a context for unique content





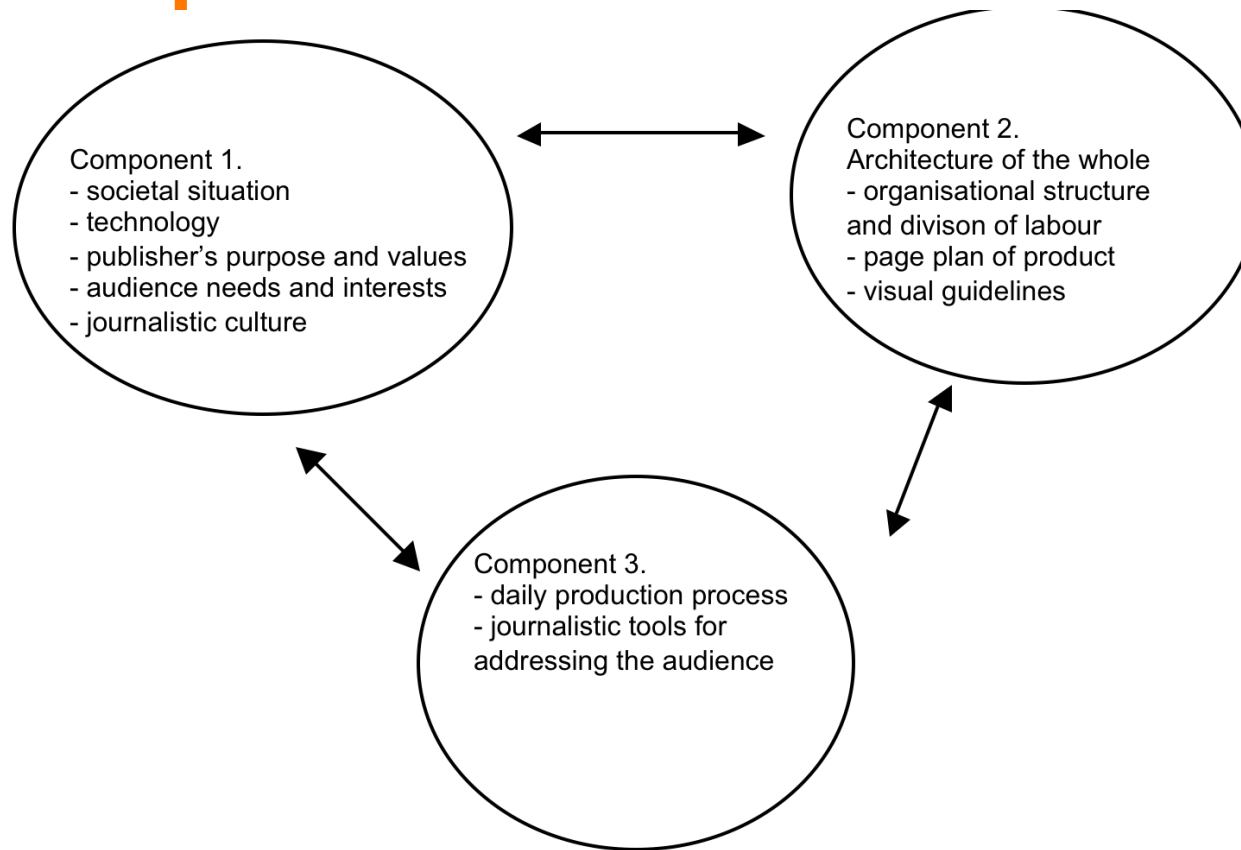
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Three levels / components of media concept



Our research interest

- Based on our notion of a Media Concept
- Involves interventions in the newsroom
- Method of intervention is Mediaconcept Laboratory
- Ethnographic observation and interviews
- Audience research – reception of texts, media experience

Data from four ethnographic research projects (Helle, Töyry):

1. National Finnish newspaper 1995-1997
 2. Finnish sports magazine 2006-2007
 3. Finnish national newspaper and its new website 2006-2007
 4. National third sector magazine (2008-2009)
- Research question:
How are audiences constructed by journalists in the era of media convergence



Audience as a construction

- **Predicted audience**

An educated forecast of the target audience/implied reader

- **Measured audience**

Audience as represented by audience measurement firms

Central product of the audience market place, a sample

- **Actual audience**

Invisible ideal of audience market place, largely unknowable

Napoli 2003: Audience economics

Tool for analysis: model reader, based on the idea of implied reader

- The concept of an implied reader comes from literary studies and narratology (Iser 1971; Rimmon-Kenan 1999; Abbot 2002).
- The implied reader should not be confused with the real life reader. It does not depict a reader in flesh but is a fictive reader for a story or narrative is targeted at.
- Journalists create a idea of reader by constructing a shared model reader (“Lisa, 35 years, homely woman with children”)

Different discourses of audience by journalists

1. Absence of audience - discourse.
 - a. audience not mentioned
 - b. dumb audience, thus irrelevant
2. Marketing and measuring audiences - discourse.
 - a. by marketing people
 - b. journalists interested in web clicks



Audience discourses

3. Important information for the masses, chosen and delivered by journalists - discourse.
 - a. passive recipients
 - b. activating citizens
4. Me, colleagues and friends as the audience - discourse.
5. Addressing audience interests and needs - discourse.



Publications

- 2009. Helle, Merja, Töyry Maija. New practices in journalistic world. In Print Media - Principles, Processes and Quality. P. Oittinen and H. Saarelma (ed). Helsinki: Paper Engineers' Association, p 2-22.
- 2009. Helle, Merja, Töyry, Maija. Media Concept as a Tool for Analyzing Change in Media. In Print Media - Principles, Processes and Quality. P. Oittinen and H. Saarelma (ed). Helsinki: Paper Engineers' Association, p. 498-525.
- Helle, Merja (2009) Toimitustyön muutos ja sen etnografinen tutkimus. Teoksessa Esa Väliverronen (toim.) Journalismi murroksessa, Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 91-111
- 2009. Töyry, Maija: Readership in Magazines. In Changing Journalism. Väliverronen, Esa (ed). Helsinki: Gaudeamus, p 129-149.
- 2010 Annika Ruorana Lukija etsimässä (Searching for the reader) Master Thesis 2010