

Birmingham Centre for Media & Cultural Research

Research Seminar Series: June

Birmingham City University
City North Campus
Rm 210 Baker Building
Perry Barr
B42 2SU
2:00-4.00pm

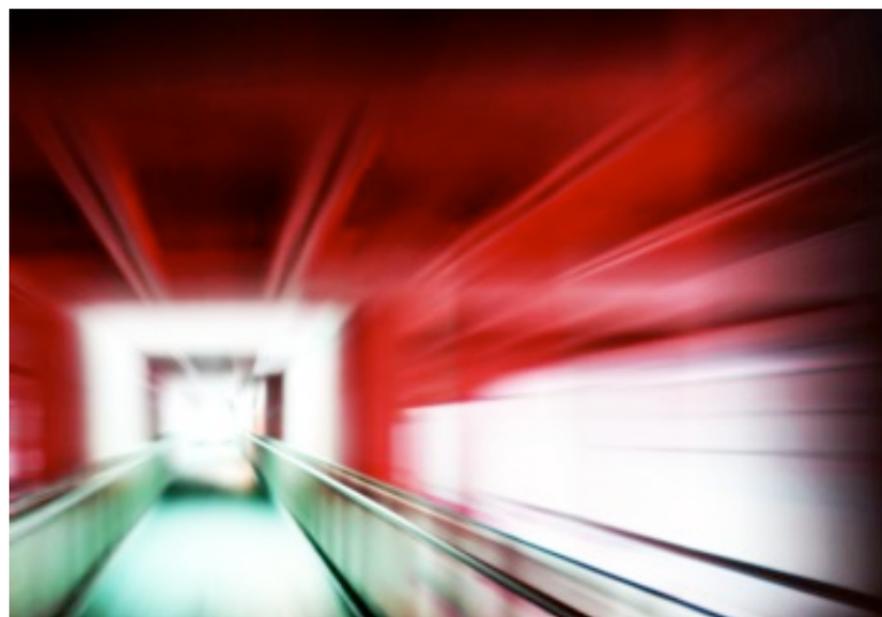
Wednesday 05/06/13 2:00-3:00pm
2pm - Speaker: Dr Paul Reilly: University of Leicester

Title: *Social media, sousveillance and civil unrest in the United Kingdom*

This paper focuses on the use of social media sites such as Facebook and Youtube to provide alternative perspectives on civil disturbances. It does so by reviewing the relevant literature on the use of social media for sousveillance (often referred to as 'inverse surveillance') and presenting the findings of a critical thematic analysis of 1018 comments posted in response to Youtube footage of the disturbances in the Stokes Croft area of Bristol in April 2011. In this way, it will explore whether the use of social media for sousveillance has the potential to elicit support for groups whose narratives do not always feature in mainstream media coverage of civil disturbances.

Dr Paul Reilly is a lecturer in Media and Communication at the University of Leicester. He specialises in the study of online political communication, with a specific interest in how social media is used to promote better community relations in divided societies. He has written one book on the role of the internet in conflict transformation in Northern Ireland (*Framing the Troubles Online: Northern Irish Groups and Website Strategy*, Manchester University Press 2011) and is currently writing his second on the role of social media in promoting positive intercommunity relations in the region (due 2014).

His work has been published in a number of journals including *Policy and Internet* and *Urban Studies*. His current research projects include a study of Youtube comments posted in response to footage of the 'anti-tesco' riots in Bristol and analysis of the campaigns of UK online disability activists. He has also organised a knowledge exchange seminar for the Economic Social Research Council and has been an invited speaker at events organised by the Arts Marketing Association (East Midlands) and Royal United Services Institute.



Wednesday 05/06/13 3:00-4:00pm
3pm - Speaker: Jennifer Jones & David McGillivray: University of the West of Scotland

Title: *Citizen Media: Translating Theory to Practice*

This paper focuses on the use of citizen and community journalism as a means of opening up channels of debate and discussion and offering new spaces for critique around major sporting and cultural events. The paper draws on a case study of a participatory arts and media project #citizenrelay (www.citizenrelay.net), which formed a strong community of local reporters and utilised everyday digital tools and techniques to cover the arrival of the Olympic Torch Relay in Scotland in the summer of 2012.

Over recent years, citizen media movements have used ubiquitous mobile devices, freely available and shareable web platforms and a do-it-yourself ethos to subvert established representations in the mainstream media. Though disparate at times, individuals and collectives are now using hybrid media environments to mobilise, organise and discuss issues pertaining to restricted media frames around mega events, and beyond into other spheres of civic importance. They have, with varying degree of success, exploited the fact that "digital infrastructures offer citizens new channels for speaking and acting together and thus lower the threshold for involvement" (Bakardjieva et al, 2012. pi). The authors talk about how these abstract ambitions and aspirations were translated into practice in the #citizenrelay project. They emphasise the importance of immediacy (of content generation and upload), connectedness (physically and virtually), locality (the origin of stories), empowerment (to become media makers) and participation (the ethos of accessibility) as features of successful citizen journalism initiatives.