Changing Media in a Changing World

Session 1. From Legacy Media to Digital Platforms

Unlike traditional media, digital platforms are complex systems that generate significant new revenue streams. In 2018, seven of the ten most valuable companies globally were based on a platform business model: the creation of digital communities and marketplaces that allow different groups to interact and transact. These new ecosystems require completely new ways of dealing with customers, partners and traditional competitors. They are also based on the acquisition of user data and on the ability to integrate communication services with other types of services, for example audiovisual platforms like Netflix, Google Play and Apple's App Store, where consumers pay directly for the service they receive. The pervasiveness of these platforms and the new economic challenges they pose require a new effort in terms of reflection and understanding.

Session 2. The Changing Patterns of Communication

Despite the promise of disintermediation, digital media introduces new and unprecedented forms of intermediation, where users create, share, or exchange content in new ways, using brand new forms of expression. However, some of these require a new awareness and understanding: Can skim reading, which in the digital age has become the new normal, allow us to grasp complexity? Does digital media's colonisation of our time leave space for contemplation and intimacy? Does the dissemination of information still allow fact-checking and in-depth studying that can evolve into knowledge and then become wisdom?

Session 3. The Future of Art, Education, Law and Democracy in the Digital Age

The boundaries of humanities, social sciences and art are the ones most obviously blurred by digital media. The radical changes brought about by digital platforms and algorithms require a reflection on the foundations and convictions of these two disciplines. This session aims at discussing values and practices, opening up prospects for the future.

In short, digital media poses a challenge to human interaction and society, in that it can influence human decisions for good and for evil, for justice and for injustice, for truth and for lies. Digital media offers opportunities to spread information and galvanize action around good causes. It could enable citizens to monitor government actions for the common good, but it can also be used to disseminate maleficent content and propaganda.

Communication is now so fast that it seems easier, but in reality it is mediated by the multinationals that own these profit-generating platforms and algorithms. These new environments thus require ethical norms that favour objective values, the common good, the integral development of people, social inclusion, the safeguarding of our planet and peace.