

CICR 2011

Farewell and VERY preliminary conclusions

Over the course of the past two days media practitioners, scholars, and students have risen to the challenge of contemplating the possibility of *Life Without Media*, in order to gain deeper insight into the key roles the mass media have played in the recent past.

They have submitted their research and analyses on topics such as the importance of the new social networks and the digital society, and to what extent they are taking over the central function which the traditional media have so far exercised.

Some of the questions that were addressed were:

How do news outlets, books, magazines, encyclopaedias and social networks contribute to, affect, or even jeopardize cultural competence, media literacy and education in general?

How do Internet advertising, viral advertising, Spam, or direct mail affect our market economy?

Do online publications, social networks, forums, chats and blogs provide a space for public debate, argument, demagoguery and even aggression?

Are these the same practices that in the 20th century used to be performed by the "traditional" media?

Media theorists, media practitioners, philosophers, and media students have debated these questions fervently and controversially, but they have agreed in one fundamental aspect: the mass media may radically change, evolve possibly converge, but they will not disappear. Even though *Life without Media* is an interesting thought experiment to explore critical questions about the role and import of the media, it remains a utopian or dystopian scenario.

As you know, you can consult many of the participants' conclusions in the conference proceedings in book form and DVD or online. But furthermore, additional ideas and conclusion will become available soon as many participants have opted to submit their contributions to a peer reviewed edited book which will be published by a prestigious English-language publishing house. We will shortly provide you with more details about this publishing.