Programme

09:15-09:30 Welcome (KUA1, room 22.0.11)

09:30-10:45 Keynote: Daniel Miller, Professor of Anthropology, University College London, United Kingdom

Hospices, smartphones and sociality
This talk has four sections: observations, analysis, applications and the future. The first section summarizes my study of the use of media by the patients of a hospice in villages north of London. These are patients who have received a terminal diagnosis but are looked after mainly in their own homes. Through examining each media in turn, including face to face, we were able to map the wider sociality of people at the end of life. The analysis is concerned to explain the high degree of isolation and loneliness that we uncovered in this rural setting through this method. My conclusion is that this is not the result of any decline in English sociality, which is how most popular accounts have explained this phenomenon, but because of the continuities in traditional sociality, which may be specifically English, but perhaps also pertain to the Nordic region. I then turn to the practical recommendations made to the hospice as to how they might use new media in the future as an illustration of how applied outcomes can arise from such academic projects.

Finally I turn to the future, specifically the rise of mHealth, that is, health-related phone apps. I consider the impact of smartphones on our understanding and experience of age itself, the potential and threat of mHealth for older people and the question of how we might research this topic in the future. How can we maintain a wider and more holistic perspective when apps are designed for private encounters with specific conditions? How do they relate to contextual issues such as widening asset differentiation within this population and the implications for potential bypassing of professional medical services? Could an ethnographic and comparative approach that examines the changes in our experience and understanding of both age itself and new media help turn these apps into more effective interventions in terms of the welfare of populations?

10:45-11:00 Coffee break

11:00-12:00 Keynote: Rasmus Helles, Associate professor, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Personal media devices in individual lives: a realist reframing of the nexus between mediated communication and everyday life
How do we address the relationship between media and everyday life at a time when most people carry the full battery of online media in their pockets throughout the day? And what can we expect to gain from studying it? For decades, cross-sectional studies have consistently described older people as late adopters of new media. Today, however, smartphones and other digital media devices have become a part of the media repertoires of older people, which fundamentally changes the range of choices with regard to the media and communication that are available to them. In this lecture I will argue that the advent of the smartphone signals a change from everyday media use based on collective processes of appropriation – in the family or the household – towards individualized forms of appropriation. This creates new choices and opportunities as well as challenges for people, including late in life. I also argue that this calls for a theoretical re-orientation in media sociology towards explanations based on individual agency – a shift urgently needed if we
want to adequately address and understand the way personal media change the way media shapes everyday life. The lecture shows how critical realism offers a useful foundation for assessing the role of individual choice vis-à-vis media and daily life, and uses examples from recent survey research to show the varied ways in which older people in Europe appropriate digital media and how they use them to shape everyday life and interaction.

12:00-13:00 Lunch

13:00-14:30 (KUA2, room 15A-0-13)

Growing old with digital media: thinking “of” or “with” media
Cecilie Givskov, Assistant professor, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

How does older people experience the fact that computers, tablets and smartphones enable them to act across time and space in new ways? Fieldwork on 22 older women’s everyday media use and sense-making were thematically coded to reveal a spectrum of experience – from thinking “of” media – to thinking “with” media in the context of a variety of economic, social and cultural projects.

Precarious ageing with media and “warm experts”
Maja Klausen, postdoc researcher, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

The “warm expert”, as defined by Bakardjieva (2011), plays a central role for those elderly citizens who cannot manage digital communication with public authorities on their own: the elderly turn to warm experts for help, thereby allowing the person assisting them to access their private documents concerning for instance health and finances. Drawing on interviews with both low-income old-age pensioners and a warm expert, the presentation discusses the elderly’s everyday life with media and the role of the warm expert.

Older people in nursing homes: agency through life with media
Christine Swane, Director, EGV Foundation (Social Inclusion of Older Adults), Denmark

Interacting with media is deeply connected to the agency of older persons in nursing homes as it bridges the gap between living in an institution and a long life’s preferences and participation in social and cultural worlds outside the institution. Based on observational studies and interviews with residents, the presentation analyses biographical dimensions in preference of media devices and how media are integrated into meaningful everyday life activities.

14:30-14:45 Coffee break
14:45-15:45

**Shifting perspectives: how older women produce generationally or individually framed narratives about media technologies in qualitative interview situations**

Barbara Ratzenböck, Research associate & PhD candidate, University of Graz, Austria

Older adults’ use of and ascription of meaning to media technologies is influenced by both generation-specific experiences and individual biographical backgrounds. This talk addresses the question of when and under which circumstances generationally or individually framed narratives about everyday life experiences with media technologies emerge in qualitative research situations with older women.

**Ensounded bodies, affective rhythms and social life: radio listening in a life-history perspective**

Anne Leonora Blaakilde, postdoc researcher, Denmark

Radio listening can establish an “affective rhythm” in everyday life. In this presentation, a post-phenomenological perspective will be applied to the study of listeners in later life. From a life-history perspective, the presentation investigates how affective rhythms related to radio listening affects the bodies of older adults in their everyday lives, and whether this can have an impact on their social lives.

15:45-16:00 Break

16:00-17:00

**Between technical support and the living room: on the choice of ICT support services**

Christoffer Bagger, research assistant, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

This presentation will discuss ICT support services aimed at older adults. These services, as implied by their self-labelling as “data living rooms” or “PC cafés”, have to play a dual role as both competent and authoritative technical support services in a sometimes difficult field, as well as a cosy and inviting space. Against this background, the presentation will discuss what motivates the users to seek out these services in particular and describe them as useful for their everyday lives with digital media.

**Evoking a shared past or enforcing nostalgia?**

Christa Lykke Christensen, Associate professor, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Everyday life at a nursing home is saturated by media, not only in private rooms but also in shared spaces such as the living room and kitchen. Based on observational studies and interviews with residents and staff at nursing homes, this presentation describes how media devices are integrated into everyday life and activities in nursing homes. The questions are: who administers the use of media in common rooms and what are the criteria for the choice of media? How do residents evaluate media chosen for them and what are their media preferences?

17:00-17:30 Discussion and closing remarks