2016 marks the 50th anniversary of the University’s Centre for Mass Communication Research – the first Centre of its kind studying mass communication and the birthplace of the UK’s first media and communications Master’s degree.

The Centre was established in 1966 by James Halloran (pictured below) and attracted a diverse group of academics, leading to a multidisciplinary research approach—an ethos which still exists in the Department of Media and Communication today. In 1978, the Social Science Research Council (predecessor of the ESRC) invited Halloran to design and deliver the UK’s first Master’s degree in media and communications, a degree which remains popular and relevant to this day.

Coinciding with the anniversary, our University will be hosting the 2016 conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) in July. Fittingly, the conference theme is ‘Memory, Commemoration and Communication: Looking Back, Looking Forward’. In addition, a pre-conference on 26 July organised by Department colleagues Anders Hansen and Roger Dickinson will celebrate the anniversary, with speakers including Cees Hamelink, Peter Golding, Barrie Gunter, Philip Lodge, Peter Lunt, Graham Murdoch, Annabelle Sreberny, Helen Wood, and Gillian Youngs. A party celebrating the Department’s anniversary will be held from 7.30pm on 26 July in the Belmont Hotel—to which all are welcome.

Department staff and students in the early 1990s

June 13th and July 18th: Forced Migration and Media Series. An exciting new research initiative which brings together scholars, community workers and policy makers to further our understanding and practical knowledge on the mediation of (forced) migrants. Speakers include Idil Osman and Miriyam Aouragh.


July 7th and 8th: PhD students in the Department are hosting the MeCCSA PGN Conference: New Directions in Media Research. Keynote speakers include Kaitlynn Mendes, Mark Banks, Mirca Madianou and Simon Cottle. All staff and students are encouraged to attend: you can still register at mec-cspgn2016.com

July 13th Camp Convivialities and Refugee Communications: A One-Day Workshop, 10.30-16.00, Bankfield House. Hosted by the Media & Development Group with keynotes from Marie Gillespie & Myria Georgiou.

More events inside…..
Researching Miami Radio: field report

This April, Dr Katie Moylan conducted research into community radio production practices in Miami, interviewing broadcast practitioners within community-focused shows across the city. Miami’s location makes it a key migration destination for Cubans, Haitians and South Americans. This has produced layers of established and emergent diversity which is expressed in myriad ways on Miami radio. Programmes in the study were presented in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole and ‘Cringlish’—a combination of Creole and English. Practitioners talked about the ways in which they balanced representations of their constituent communities on air, often working out of relatively under-resourced local radio stations. Miami’s radio ecology features mainstream programming in both English and Spanish, but the city’s layered diversity means there is a need for grassroots programming serving otherwise marginalised groups in the city.

The Miami study forms part of Dr Moylan’s larger comparative project exploring community radio’s capacities for enabling representation of diversity in selected cities in North America including New Orleans and Toronto. The project is funded in part by a British Academy/Leverhulme Small Grant.

DEPARTMENTAL FUNDING SUCCESS

Jonathan Corpus Ong has secured a Newton Fund Institutional Links grant from the British Council, with £150,000 awarded to Leicester and an equal amount awarded to De La Salle University in the Philippines.

Sarah Gong has won a Wellcome Trust small research grant for her project ‘Health communication for Chinese migrant mothers in Northern England – an explorative qualitative study’.

Alison Harvey is a collaborator on a Social Science & Humanities Research Council Connection Grant worth $49,948. The project is entitled ‘Developing Feminist Digital Research Methods’. The Principal Investigator is Mary Elizabeth Luka.

Four projects within the Department have won College Research Development Funding:


Maria Touri: ‘Capacity building in Alternative Food Networks: Digitally connecting global food producers and consumers – a pilot study’.

Giuseppe Veltri: ‘The Privacy Paradox Project’.

Helen Wood and Jilly Kay: ‘The wedding spectacle across contemporary media cultures’.

Public Communication—one of the three research clusters in the Department—is pleased to announce two new research groups: International Promotional Cultures and Communication (led by Giovanna Puppin), and Health Communication (led by Stefania Vicari).
How long have you worked in the department?
For about 3 years, since July 2013.

What are you currently researching?
My research examines two complex phenomena in the field of digital media research: first, the phenomenon of digital divides, with my focus being mostly on user/non-user reflections on drivers of digital inclusion and repercussions from digital exclusion; and second, the phenomenon of digital research, where I aim to map out the state of digital research in social science and humanities and to untackle researchers’ views of the role of the ‘digital’ in their research work and its implications for their digital literacy and the conduct of interdisciplinary research.

Which academic author or text has most inspired your work?
This is a tough question. Like everyone, I’ve been influenced by many scholars, but if I am to choose one, I would say that I’ve been inspired most by Schultz’s phenomenology and his ‘life world’. Through reading Schultz’s work I began to comprehend why I need theory, concepts and some level of abstraction in order to be able to pursue informed empirical research of the questions and phenomena which are of interest to me.

Best thing about working in the department?
The support we’re offered for taking new research off the ground and for pursuing new research ideas and plans.

Tell us something about yourself that your colleagues wouldn’t know.
Not sure what my colleagues know and what they don’t know about me….some know more than others (laughter!) I would rather like to say what I would like my colleagues to know about me: I’m a believer of the great knowledge that collaboration has to offer, and that self-improvement is not possible unless others can help us with it :)

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Dr Panayiota Tsatsou, Senior Lecturer and Academic Programme Director

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**POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH ROUND-UP**

**MeCCSA PGN 2016**

Postgraduates held another successful ‘New Directions in Media Research’ (NDiMR) conference in June, and will also host the MeCCSA PGN conference in July—see p.1 for details.

Media and Communication PhD student Ayman Banjaid has successfully passed his viva. His thesis was entitled ‘A study of Online Impression Formation, Mate Preferences and Courtship Scripts among Saudi Users of Matrimonial Websites.’ His supervisors were Giuseppe Veltri and Athina Karatzogianni.

Take a look at the inaugural issue of the Department’s postgraduate journal, out now: journals.le.ac.uk/ojs1/index.php/4edialog

Recent high-profile blogs and media pieces written by department colleagues include Giovanna Puppin’s article ‘The notorious Qiaobi: behind the scenes of an “ad controversy” foretold?’ on the University of Nottingham’s China Policy Institute Blog, and Melanie Kennedy’s ‘WAGs are just fodder for tabloid slurs’ in the Leicester Mercury’s First Person column.

**CALLS FOR PARTICIPATION**

**The Practices and Politics of Inclusivity in Games**

This workshop, co-hosted by MeCCSA Women’s Media Studies Network and the ReFiG partnership, will showcase cutting-edge research from the perspectives of play, production, journalism, criticism and beyond. Speakers include Helen Kennedy (Brighton), Phoenix Perry (Goldsmiths) & Siobhan Thomas (South Bank). Send abstracts to Alison Harvey ah463@le.ac.uk by June 15.

**Something old, something new: the wedding spectacle across contemporary media cultures**

The Media and Gender research group at the University of Leicester is pleased to invite abstracts for this one-day symposium on how the wedding spectacle can be understood in relation to broader transformations in the politics of gender, sexuality, class and race. Speakers include Brenda Weber (Indiana Bloomington), Diane Negra (Dublin) and Deborah Jermy (Roehampton). Send abstracts to mediaweddings@le.ac.uk by July 15.

**POSTGRADUATE NEWS**

**Talks and presentations**


Helen Wood & Jilly Kay gave the paper ‘Commercial television culture, housewife-citizenship and gendered responses to the arrival of ITV in the Mass Observation archives’ at the conference Doing Women’s Film and Television Histories III: Structures of Feeling, hosted by De Montfort University in May.

Giovanna Puppin spoke at the Researching China event held at University of Leicester in association with the China Studies Research Alliance (ChiSRA), on the topic of ‘Unwrapping Contemporary China through Advertising: Why ideology, Identity and Creativity (Still) Matter’.

Alison Harvey gave the invited talk ‘Dream, Design, and Exclusion: The Aggressive Architecture of the Utopian Internet’ at the University of East Anglia, as well as the talk ‘Explosive Misogyny, Spectacular Feminism, and the Sneaky Sexism They Mask for Women in Tech’ at the Kobo Tech Ladies group in Toronto, Canada.

Melanie Kennedy gave the paper ‘Bratz, BFFs, Mermaids and Mean Girls: Female friendship and ‘authentic’ neoliberal selfhood in tween popular culture’ paper presented at the International Girls Studies Association Inaugural Conference at the University of East Anglia in April; and she presented the closing talk at the New Directions in Media Research Conference at the University of Leicester in June.

Kaitlynn Mendes gave the keynote address at the international Promediar conference in Santiago de Compostela in March. Her talk was entitled ‘SlutWalk, sex workers and the media’.

Jack Newsinger took part in the Glasgow Radical Film Festival and Unconference as part of his work with the Radical Film Network. The event was a major festival of political, aesthetic and socially-engaged cinema that brought film makers, trade unionists, academics and activists together in a range of venues and formats across Glasgow on the May Day bank holiday.

Stefania Vicari was invited to speak at the iSchool at the University of Sheffield to give a talk on her research on rare disease digital activism.