

BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN

ESSAY

CONVERGENCE IN JOURNALISM

Kenneth C. Killebrew: *Managing Media Convergence. Pathways to Journalistic Cooperation*. – Ames (IA), Oxford, Carlton (Victoria): Blackwell Publishing 2005 (= Reihe: Media and Technology Series), viii+218 Seiten, USD 44,99.

Achim Matthes: *Convergence Journalism. Die Auswirkungen der Mediakonvergenz auf den praktischen Journalismus*. – Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller 2006, 121 Seiten, Eur 49,-.

Kathrin Meyer: *Crossmediale Kooperation von Print- und Online-Redaktionen bei Tageszeitungen in Deutschland. Grundlagen, Bestandsaufnahme und Perspektiven*. – München: Herbert Utz Verlag 2005, 387 Seiten, Eur 64,-.

Stephen Quinn: *Convergent Journalism. The fundamentals of multimedia reporting*. – New York etc.: Peter Lang 2005, 256 Seiten, Eur 26,70.

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INTRODUCTION: CONVERGENCE – STILL A »DANGEROUS WORD«

Ten years ago, Roger Silverstone warned that »convergence is a dangerous word!«, expressing a concern about overusing the concept to articulate a bewildering variety of processes, trends and developments taking place in society in general and throughout the media in particular. Indeed, convergence is a label readily deployed to cover a wide array of activities affecting the way media operate. In the field of journalism studies convergence as a concept is primarily used to document the emergence of multimedia newsrooms, the subtle yet pervasive changes in work routines and organizational structures connected to these new production arrangements, the development of new news formats windowing content across media formats, and the disruptive impact of such phenomena on the way journalists do their work. In doing so, scholarly observers are tempted to stay within the instrumental parameters of convergence, focusing on enabling or constraining conditions of the digital technologies involved. Correspondingly, much academic work on convergence gets trapped in reproducing the discourse of efficiency (or lack thereof) with which convergence efforts are generally introduced in the media industry. What most – if not all – works on convergence and journalism inevitably conclude or suggest is that convergence in news organizations is not so much a technological, but rather a cultural process, which is experienced by the professionals involved as a struggle over their professional identity. In other words: Multimedia journalism, in whatever shape or size it comes, influences, changes and challenges what it means to be a (good) journalist.

A second crucial observation on the role of convergence in journalism is that it is not just a top-down process – which refers to media companies merging and/or introducing multimedia tech-