Introduction

The era of technological convergence has begun. In all areas of life and society the convergence of communication services and platforms is increasingly a reality. The definition of convergence proposed by the British organisation Ofcom can act as a guide to our proposals. Ofcom sees convergence as "the ability of consumers to obtain multiple services on a single platform or device or obtain any given service on multiple platforms or devices". This definition clearly distinguishes between services and platforms, as well as focusing attention on the change in consumer initiative and satisfaction. But although consumers are the ultimate beneficiary of the services of the new online digital era, convergence phenomena have a growing impact on all sectors, activities and players involved: companies, operators, regulatory authorities, media, professional routines, distribution circuits, training, etc.

Given the importance of this technological and cultural transformation, *Quaderns del CAC* has decided to dedicate a double issue to the issue of *Technological and audiovisual convergence* in order to debate and evaluate the specific impact of convergence on the world of the media. This issue number 31-32 therefore provides a broad look at the state of affairs regarding the trends, perspectives, opportunities and also risks of the new era brought about by convergence. The different texts have been ordered from the most general to the most specific. The first block contains articles related to the transformations resulting from the processes of technological convergence, continuing with more specific contributions on areas or aspects of audiovisual communication that are particularly affected by these processes.

Javier Echeverría starts off this double issue ("The two main processes of technological convergence") with a general essay on the two broad processes of technological convergence currently underway, namely that of ICTs (information and communication technologies) and the NBIC system (Nano-Bio-Info-Cogno). **Enric Plaza** provides an analysis of the new intelligent systems of social mediation, going from a content-based model of content distribution to a network-based model ("Overcoming Babel: social mediation and intelligent systems in discovering, filtering, accrediting and personalising digital content").

Josep Ramon Ferrer provides an overview ("Technological convergence: a state of the art on the issue") of convergence infrastructures and networks, as well as the perspectives for audiovisual consumption. **Joan Majó** ("Future trends in audiovisuals") concentrates on detecting the main developments involved in the evolution of audiovisuals, focusing on three areas: technologies, consumption habits and economic and political pressures.

Emili Prado ("The challenges of digital convergence for television") systematically analyses the most relevant transformations of media digitalisation and its three basic processes: the production of content, transmission and reception. **J.Ignasi Ribas** argues the intrinsic properties of interactive discourse ("Integrating media within interactive discourse: the case of cultural dissemination") and highlights the unlimited capacity for integrating media, as well as the difficulties in incorporating new applications. **Hugo Pardo**, **Joel Brandt** and **Juan Pablo Puerta** investigate the new culture of mobility ("Mobile Web 2.0. The new mobile communication industry") and provide a theoretical and technical panorama of the evolution of mobile telephony towards collaborative internet applications.

Ángel García Castillejo provides an overall legal review of audiovisuals in Spain ("Convergence and general audiovisual legislation in Spain") given the convergence between the telecom and media sectors, and argues that an audiovisual authority is required within the Telecommunications Market Commission (CMT). **Pere Vila** closely examines ("Content convergence") the adaptation of an audiovisual public corporation to the new demands of convergence, especially concerning content production policy.

David Sancha explores the impact of convergence on traditional journalism ("The convergence of newsrooms in the era of the open garden"), which has been forced to redefine new strategies of technological development and to consider integrated newsrooms and polyvalent journalists. **Pere Masip** and **Josep Lluís Micó** precisely evaluate the figure of the polyvalent journalist ("The polyvalent journalist within the framework of business convergence") based on the different experiences and perceptions of professionals themselves. **Genís Roca** tackles the challenges posed by media convergence from the market point of view ("Media convergence and the battle for the audience") and notes strategies to increase audience loyalty, with multiple platforms on different media.

Sonia Livingstone, **Uwe Hasebrink**, **Carmelo Garitaonandia** and **Maialen Garmendia** present the initial findings from an extensive comparative study on the levels of risk in internet use for children ("Comparing online risks faced by

European children: Reflections on youthful internet use in Britain, Germany and Spain" with proposals for lines of research and public policies. And **Núria Almiron** and **Josep Manuel Jarque** close the issue with a critical look at the dominant "digitalist discourse" ("Myth, digitalism and technological convergence: hegemonic discourses and political economics").

Finally, in addition to the specific theme, this double issue also includes the usual sections. In the *Observatori* we include five notable contributions from recent Catalan research: "The emergence of new imagery in quality television fiction", by **Anna Tous**; "Television fiction on TV3 and Catalan cultural identity: case study of the situation comedy Plats bruts", by **Luisa Martínez García**; "Analysis of information sources and respect for professional ethics in crisis situations: the media treatment of Barcelona's Carmel case", by Carles Pont; "The effectiveness of product placement on children: an experiment", by **José Fernández Cavia**, **Assumpció Huertas** and **Mònika Jiménez**, and "Analysis of comprehension by deaf pupils of captioned television documents and criteria for improvement", by **Cristina Cambra**, **Núria Silvestre** and **Aurora Leal**.

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