

Editorial

Wayne Hope, School of Communication Studies, Auckland University of Technology, NZ

All articles in this issue illustrate the double sided impact of digital technologies. Oscar Gandy details the integration of artificial intelligence, semi-autonomous computer systems, machine learning, algorithmic sorting practices and mobile cameras within the criminal justice system. The resulting forms of surveillance, especially in the United States, systematically reduce the life chances and wellbeing of poor, non-white populations. Yet, as Gandy notes, the institutionalised accumulation of data and images concerning police work also constitutes a potential legal resource for aggrieved citizens. Tarek Cherkaoui and Ravale Mohyidin's article shows how the killing of Jamal Khashoggi inside Istanbul's Saudi Arabian consulate in October 2018 triggered a geopolitical clash of media narratives between Turkey's Anadolu news agency and the Saudi Press Agency. Simultaneously, the two countries engaged in a multi-faceted media war which included online news outlets and multiple websites. In this context, the authors conclude that mass media and digital networks will be central to geopolitical conflict in the Middle East for years to come.

In the realm of mediated popular culture, Abigail Reed notes that *Fifty Shades of Grey* began as an online published work in 2011 before becoming a literary and cinematic trilogy of worldwide significance. The BDSM-centred plot drove a mass-mediated/online merchandising campaign for sex toys, perfumes and fashion accessories. Reed observes, critically, that the *Fifty Shades of Grey* phenomenon incorporated women as a commodity audience and spread misinformation about BDSM practices. The official merchandising reflected corporate interests and heteronormative ideology. However, the resulting controversy across mass media and digital communication networks also sparked constructive discussions about women's empowerment and sexual wellbeing. Argelia Larroa's analysis of online video-on-demand platforms (OVODs) in North America also reveals a double-sided aspect of digital communication. From one perspective, the digital streaming of VOD content can generate a diverse screen ecology in terms of content, range of providers and audience experience. But this is a modest development according to available statistics from various sources. The opposing tendency, also empirically supported, is that older concentration tendencies throughout the culture industries are partly replicated in OVOD sectors. Here, Larroa observes that US entities such as Disney, Warner Brothers, Netflix, Amazon, Apple and Google have a strong presence in Canadian and Mexican OVOD markets.

Peter Greste's and Richard Murray's commentary explains how recent counter-espionage laws in Australia threaten journalistic communication within mainstream media and online environments. The online and offline campaign against these laws involving journalists, media organisations and activist groups demonstrates the strategic centrality of digital communication itself. Similarly, Wayne Hope's review of Benedetta Brevini's and Graham Murdock's *Carbon Capitalism and Communication* alongside Alana Mann's *Voice and Participation in Global Food Politics*, reconfirms the politicised nature of digital communication infrastructures and networks.