



Simon Ganahl
Campus Medius
Digital Mapping
in Cultural and
Media Studies

From:

Simon Ganahl

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Digital Mapping in Cultural and Media Studies

April 2022, 356 p., 92 b/w ill., 54 col. ill.

40,00 € (DE), 978-3-8376-5601-5

E-Book: available as free open access publication

PDF: ISBN 978-3-8394-5601-9

Campus Medius explores and expands the possibilities of digital cartography in cultural and media studies. Simon Ganahl documents the development of the project from a historical case study to a mapping platform. Based on the question of what a media experience is, the concepts of the apparatus (*dispositif*) and the actor-network are translated into a data model. A time-space of twenty-four hours in Vienna in May 1933, marked by a so-called »Turks Deliverance Celebration« (*Türkenbefreiungsfeier*), serves as an empirical laboratory. This Austrofascist rally is mapped from multiple perspectives and woven into media-historical networks, spanning from the seventeenth century up to the present day.

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For further information:

www.transcript-verlag.de/en/978-3-8376-5601-5

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Preface

The research project *Campus Medius* has been presented and reviewed many times over recent years. This preface is structured around some of the questions that came up repeatedly during these verbal and written discussions and that are relevant for the book edition.

Why was the project given the title *Campus Medius*?

- The Latin expression *campus medius* can be translated into English as “middle field.” I chose it as the title of this research project in 2012 because conceptually it was a matter of **mapping mediality as an experiential field**. The title only gained its pedagogical significance in terms of a platform for media education during the series of courses called “**Mapping Modern Media**,” in which students describe and visualize everyday media experiences.

Why publish a book about a digital project?

- The project’s complete historical case study has been online since the launch of *Campus Medius 2.0* in April 2021. From the outset, I had planned to publish the results in book form once this point had been reached, because it is important to me to establish a sensible connection between new digital and traditional models of publication.¹ Here, sensible means that the different media forms are harnessed in their singularity. The website *campusmedius.net* offers users an interactive media experience comprising not only texts and images, but also films and sound recordings, as well as giving its **creators** the opportunity to correct and update the program code and content (at least for as long as there is funding for this process). In addition, this web application allows not only for the content of the historical case study to be imparted from multiple perspectives, but also for it to be mapped as if with a moving camera.

By contrast, the book concentrates its readers’ attention due to the nature of its inherent material isolation. Those who

1 See Anne Burdick, Johanna Drucker, Peter Lunenfeld, Todd Presner, Jeffrey Schnapp: *Digital_Humanities*, Cambridge: MIT Press 2012, p. 125.

read it are guided through the various sections of the *Campus Medius* research project. They can follow the cross references to footnotes, chapters, and figures, or they can opt to read the text from front to back—in the case of the printed version, without having to use a stationary or mobile computer. In order to exploit this quality of the medium, it was necessary to conceive of the book independently, i.e., without the need for readers to visit the website in parallel. As such, the book edition performs another function in the media network that is *Campus Medius*, namely archiving the project as of the status of version 2.0 from 2021. Nowadays, it is no longer an issue to save electronic data in the long term; the most important formats are established, and many academic libraries have set up digital repositories. What remains unresolved, however, is the question of how websites can be archived as a whole such that they remain usable for decades: after all, the interfaces between the back end and the server and the front end and the web browsers are subject to technological change.

- 1.3 *Campus Medius* runs on **stable infrastructure** and, in my view, has good chances of surviving. Nevertheless, this book—in both its print and electronic editions—is intended to document the project in a way that will remain legible even if the digital environment changes to such an extent that the website can no longer be used (or rather if there is no longer the funding to continue developing it). Conversely, the reference systems of campusmedius.net have inspired me to encourage non-linear readings of the book. For this reason, besides the footnotes, there are also references throughout to figures and chapters that invite readers to jump back and forth through the volume.² This is nothing new; indeed, it has been customary in scholarly literature for centuries. However, it was working on the website that prompted me to make more use of these typographical possibilities than is the norm in monographs.

- 2 In each chapter, the sources contained in the footnotes are listed in full upon first mention and in abbreviated form thereafter. The complete List of Sources (see chap. IV.2) can be found in the Appendix. The internal references to chapters and figures are linked in the electronic edition of the book, as are the external URLs and DOIs. The decision was made not to include an index due to the open-access PDF version of the publication, the full text of which can be searched just like the website campusmedius.net.

What do the theoretical concepts of the *dispositif* and the actor-network have to do with mapping?

“Untangling these lines within a social apparatus [*dispositif*] is, in each case, like drawing up a map, doing cartography, surveying unknown landscapes, and this is what he calls ‘working on the ground,’” Gilles Deleuze wrote of the philosophy of Michel Foucault.³ Put very simply, I understand the *dispositif* as a concept with which to analyze historical patterns of relations, and the actor-network in the sense of Bruno Latour as a perspective on actions in which the focus is on the connections between people and things. In turn, a map is in essence a visualization of a set of relations,⁴ that is, also a possibility to make *dispositifs* and actor-networks perceivable. Modern cartography has standardized a series of such visualization methods, all of which are not neutral but rather have their own histories.

III In the “**Topology**” of *Campus Medius* 2.0, the bird’s-eye perspective, the panorama, and the street view are interwoven in three media-historical networks, so-called *dispositifs* of mediation, which span from the seventeenth century to the present day. Using the example of the “**Turks Deliverance Celebration**” (II.10 *Türkenbefreiungsfeier*)⁵ in Vienna on May 14, 1933, the aim is to show that these cartographic interfaces are worldviews in the ideological sense. In the case study, it was important to me not only to describe the *dispositifs* as historical patterns of relations by means of specific actors or mediators, but also

3 Gilles Deleuze: “What is a *dispositif*?,” in: Timothy J. Armstrong (ed.): *Michel Foucault Philosopher*, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong, New York: Routledge 1992 [French 1989], pp. 159–168, here p. 159.

4 See Todd Presner: “Lexicon,” in: Todd Presner, David Shepard, Yoh Kawano: *HyperCities. Thick Mapping in the Digital Humanities*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2014, pp. 12–21, here p. 15.

5 Upon first mention in each chapter, the German original of key terms such as “Turks Deliverance Celebration” is given in italics in parentheses; thereafter, only the English translation is used. Titles of works cited in the running text—but not in footnotes—are given first in the original and subsequently translated into English in parentheses. Conversely, the original titles of smaller works mentioned in the running text, such as articles or speeches, are provided in italics in parentheses after their English translation in quotation marks for ease of reading. →

- III.1.5 to demonstrate opportunities for resistance. Consequently,
- III.2.5 the **reframing** of the “Emperor’s Song” (*Kaiserlied*) protests
- III.3.5 against sovereign signs, the **exposing** of the buttocks against examining gazes, and the **canceling** of radio licenses against governed transmissions.

Why does the weekend of May 13 and 14, 1933, in Vienna serve as the historical starting point?

- I.1 As I explain in the **Overview**, I became aware of May 13 and 14, 1933, in Vienna while studying the *Third Walpurgis Night* by Karl Kraus. The political events of that weekend induced Kraus to come out in favor of the authoritarian politics of Austria’s federal chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss. What interested me most was the wide range of public gatherings in this time-space, which
- II was ultimately condensed into **24 hours in Vienna**: On the one hand the “Turks Deliverance Celebration” as a function that launched Austrofascism and the countermeasures taken by the National Socialist and the Social Democratic opposition; on the other hand the cultural events, such as those in the cinemas and theaters, which though at first glance seem to be unrelated are upon closer inspection interwoven with the political phenomena.

- IV.2 In addition to Kraus having drawn my attention to these happenings and my desire to understand their context, the rich media-historical **sources** spoke for choosing this case study. A wealth of textual, visual, and acoustic documents provided the opportunity to observe and convey the historical events from various standpoints. Furthermore, I consider the weekend of May 13 and 14, 1933, in Vienna and specifically the “Turks Deliverance Celebration” to be relevant in genealogical terms, in other words in the sense of a history of the present. By portraying the events from multiple perspectives, the intention is for manifest networks of modern media history

- As proper nouns, the names of political parties—and associated adjectives—have been capitalized, e.g., Christian Social Party, Christian Social federal chancellor; where used in the more general sense of a political theory or movement rather than a specific political party, such terms are written in lower case, e.g., socialist principles. In order to avoid misunderstandings, we also decided to replace the German letter “ß” with “ss” in the English edition of the book, e.g., Dollfuss instead of Dollfuß.

to emerge that not only make clear the media infrastructure that facilitated (Austro-)Fascism but also raise awareness of the ways in which these historical nexuses shape current media experiences.

Where is *Campus Medius* located in the research field of the digital humanities?

The *Digital Humanities Manifesto* was a key incentive for *Campus Medius*.⁶ Inspired by avant-garde manifestos, the text written by Jeffrey Schnapp and Todd Presner among others in 2008/9 called for a qualitative shift in the digital humanities, for interdisciplinary collaboration, careful curating, and multi-media publications. In the question below about authorship, I describe the genesis of the website campusmedius.net, in which the specific personal and institutional influences are made clear. There it becomes evident that *Campus Medius* is a digital project that builds on corresponding research undertaken in the School of Media Studies at The New School in New York and in the Center for Digital Humanities at UCLA.

Generally, but also with regard to the institutionalization of the research field in the German-speaking world, *Campus Medius* is located on the periphery of the digital humanities. Entirely contrary to the trend, it does not follow a big data approach but works with *small data*, which are dis- and reassembled from the perspectives of cultural and media studies, as well as informatics and design. It is not a quantitative but a qualitative DH project, which was carried out as a long-standing multidisciplinary collaboration and attempts to connect traditional with digital publication models. In this sense, *Campus Medius* pursues a sideline of the digital humanities and hopefully has a bearing on the “mainline.”

Who authored *Campus Medius*?

The historical case study of *Campus Medius* is a monograph in the field of cultural and media studies, which was published as a website in several phases from 2014 to 2021 and has now been released in the form of a book. I am the author of

6 See Jeffrey Schnapp et al.: *The Digital Humanities Manifesto 2.0*, 2009, URL: www.humanitiesblast.com/manifesto/Manifesto_V2.pdf.

IV.3 this work to the extent that I conceived and direct the project, researched and evaluated the sources, and wrote all the texts. However, it would not have been possible for me to realize the project without working together with others. Besides scholarly discussions and financial support, it required a decade of close **cooperation** with computer scientists, designers, and translators, the most important stages of which are described chronologically below.

The theoretical and empirical concept of *Campus Medius* was mainly developed in Vienna and Zurich. In Vienna it was primarily the research group Mediologie@Wien, founded by Arndt Niebisch and Martina Süess under the professorship of Eva Horn, as well as my PhD supervisors Roland Innerhofer and Wolfgang Duchkowitsch, whose expertise in the fields of literary and media studies shaped the project. The historical case study was also influenced by the work on the “Memory of the Turks” (*Türkengedächtnis*) conducted by Johannes Feichtinger and Johann Heiss at the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

For Zurich, the first person who should be named is the historian Philipp Sarasin, in whose department I was involved in founding the *foucaultblog* as a visiting researcher. From this digital platform, I developed the open-access journal *Le foucaldien* together with Maurice Erb and Patrick Kilian, which has been published by the London-based Open Library of Humanities since 2017.⁷ It was predominantly this editorial work that deepened my understanding of the concepts of the *dispositif* and the actor-network.

I.1 ***Campus Medius 1.0*** emerged from 2012 at the New School in New York and was based on the model of the Urban Research Tool developed by Shannon Mattern and Rory Solomon. Shannon’s urban media archaeology left a definite mark on the project, and Rory was instrumental—not only as the technical lead but also conceptually—in the first version of the website campusmedius.net from 2014, on which Darius Daftary as programmer, Mallory Brennan as designer, and Katy Derbyshire as translator also collaborated. This work was funded by an Erwin Schrödinger fellowship (J 3181-G20) from the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).

7 From 2022 the journal appears under the title *Genealogy+Critique*.

The further development of the project was made possible by an APART fellowship (11810) from the Austrian Academy of Sciences, which led me to the Center for Digital Humanities at UCLA in 2016. There I had the opportunity to discuss the plans for *Campus Medius* and hold the course “**Mapping Modern Media**” for the first time. Besides David D. Kim and Miriam Posner, Todd Presner must be mentioned at this point: he supported the project both on an organizational level and with his expert knowledge. The *HyperCities* mapping platform he directed was a model for *Campus Medius*, which—entirely in the spirit of the allegory—is a dwarf standing on the shoulders of this giant.

I.4

Continuing chronologically, next I would like to draw attention to the Critical Genealogies Workshop in which I was invited to participate in Denver in 2016. Carefully curated by Verena Erlenbusch-Anderson and Colin Koopman, this meeting to debate ongoing genealogical works served as a further bridge to help me navigate from the theoretical concepts to the empirical and digital realization of *Campus Medius* 2.0. My conversations with Robert W. Gehl and Thomas Nail influenced the subsequent direction taken by the project to a greater degree than they are probably aware.

Back in Vienna, it was again Roland Innerhofer who created the conditions at the Department of German Studies that allowed me to complete my research. Beneficial in this regard were on the one hand my collaboration on the lecture series “Germanistik digital” organized by Ingo Börner, Wolfgang Straub, and Christian Zolles, and on the other a series of workshops initiated by Katharina Prager, which in cooperation with the Vienna City Library and the Austrian Centre for Digital Humanities aimed to connect various digital projects on Viennese Modernism. Concerning the technical infrastructure, my thanks go to Susanne Blumesberger and Raman Ganguly for providing *Campus Medius* with full access to the digital repository PHAIDRA, and to the head of the Department of German Studies for supplying us with a virtual server at the Vienna University Computer Center.

I.2

Moreover, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Andreas Krimbacher and Susanne Kiesenhofer, who developed ***Campus Medius* 2.0** with me for several years. As a geomatics engineer, Andreas engaged with my cultural and media studies

thinking with curiosity and flexibility and conversely did not tire of explaining to me how databases and interfaces work. He authored the source code of the second version of the website *campusmedius.net* from 2021, which he programmed exclusively with open-source software and made freely available on GitHub.⁸ With her expertise in design and information technology, Susanne was constantly involved in the project's implementation and dealt with every visual detail with artisanal precision, including the graphic icons for which Mallory Brennan had conducted important preliminary work based on Otto Neurath's ISOTYPE. In this context, I would also like to thank Maria Slater for her perseverance and precision when translating from the German into English. A dozen rounds of editing were needed for the various lyrics for Haydn's

III.1.5 **"Emperor's Song"** alone in order to keep the translation of the content and poetry as faithful as possible to the original.

That the book edition of *Campus Medius* has now been released in German and English both in print and electronically as an open-access monograph was made possible by a publication grant (PUD 17-G) from the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). The design of the cover and the layout, as well as the typesetting, was undertaken by Stefan Amann, to whom I offer my heartfelt thanks for his patience during the creative process and for his typographic accuracy. The collaboration with the transcript publishing house, namely with Daniel Bonanati and Gero Wierichs, was exceptionally transparent and professional. Compared to other publishing offers, transcript stood out not only for its specialism and independence, but also for its comprehensive physical and digital distribution channels, openness when it came to matters of copyright,⁹ and clear cost-benefit ratio. That may seem very pragmatic, but

8 See URL: github.com/campusmedius/campusmedius.

9 Apart from the works cited in *Campus Medius*, which are protected by copyright, this book's content is—in line with the website *campusmedius.net*—available open access under Creative Commons CC BY 4.0. This license permits unrestricted use and distribution of the respective material, provided that the creator(s), who retain(s) copyright, and the source are properly credited. Preliminary versions of the first chapter (Overview) were published in Ingo Börner, Wolfgang Straub, Christian Zolles (eds.): *Germanistik digital. Digital Humanities in der Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*, →

for a scholarly publication financed with public funds on the basis of international peer reviews, in my opinion those are the most important criteria for choosing a publishing house.

Regarding the future of *Campus Medius*, its inclusion in university teaching is key—something that has become established in recent years and that I would like to continue to develop. After devising “Mapping Modern Media” at the Center for Digital Humanities at UCLA, I was invited to regularly hold the course at the University of Liechtenstein and at the University of Applied Sciences in Vorarlberg, Austria, for which I would like to thank in particular Roman Banzer, Markus Hanzer, Margarita Köhl, Monika Litscher, as well as Hubert Matt who generally offered considerable advice on the project. I also want to express my thanks to the dozens of students who attended these courses and whose works continue to support and motivate me to develop *Campus Medius* into a digital platform where everyday media experiences can be described and visualized. The discussions in the context of the research network YouthMediaLife, which Susanne Reichl and Ute Smit founded at the University of Vienna, have further contributed to the realization of these plans. *Campus Medius* also serves media education to the extent that the project’s historical case study provides the foundation for the introductory lecture series on the history of media and communication, which I have held at the Department of Communication at the University of Vienna since 2020. My sincere thanks go to Petra Herczeg, Klaus Lojka, Valerie Lechner, and Krisztina Rozgonyi for this opportunity.

I am aware that I am now testing my readers’ patience, but I would like to mention a few more people who did not make an appearance in this chronology yet helped me to conceptualize or implement *Campus Medius*. With thanks, I

- Vienna: facultas 2018, pp. 104–117; *spheres. Journal for Digital Cultures*, #1: Politics after Networks (2018), DOI: doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/3814; *medien & zeit*, 36/1 (2021), pp. 42–52. In an educational setting, the third chapter (Topology) constitutes the reader for the lecture series STEOP A: VO HIST in the Department of Communication at the University of Vienna, which has been published by facultas under the title *Medien- und Kommunikationsgeschichte* (“History of Media and Communication”) since 2020.

will therefore name them in alphabetical order by surname (and I ask for the forgiveness of those whom I have omitted to list here): Clemens Apprich, Thomas Ballhausen, Paolo Carpignano, Sabrina Corbellini, Georg Eckmayr, Alexandra Egger, Christian Fleck, Daniela Franke, Andreas Gelhard, Tanja Gnosa, Gerhard Gonter, Wolf Harranth, Kristina Höch, Margriet Hoogvliet, Rastislav Hudak, Thomas Hübel, Sigrid Kammerer, Franziska Klemstein, Andreas Koop, Anna Lindner, Hannes Mittergeber, Wolfgang Pensold, Robert Pfundner, Martin Reinhart, Barry Salmon, Gottfried Schnödl, Mathias Schönher, Elena Vogman.

Instead of thanking my wife and daughter at the end of this preface, I had better apologize to them for being unfaithful, for the countless hours that I spent caring for this illegitimate child, which though not yet fully grown is now at least mature enough to be let out into the world in the hope that it will make friends.

Vienna, fall 2021