

So the cell phone itself may not lead us towards a more sustainable life. But maybe the class of things the phone belongs to – what Wellner calls *DTs* (for *Digital Technologies*) – can. They indicate a shift of attention from *energy* – a concept driving the fossil era development – to *information*. This shift points to the possibility of controlling and optimising the behaviour of anything from burners of (fossil) fuel to recycling strategies. That would be a hopeful perspective on this amazing piece of modern technology.

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Daniela Zetti. *Das Programm der Elektronischen Vielfalt: Fernsehen als Gemeinplatz in der BRD, 1950–1980*. Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2014. Pp. 247. €31.

The first TV broadcasting station in the Federal Republic of Germany subject to public law started in late 1952; the ‘Second German TV Programme’ came on the air in 1963. A year later, the Bavarian regional TV programme, also subject to public law; and private TV channels came on the scene in 1984. As far as the literature on the institutional, political and programme history of German television is concerned, we are quite well served. Sometimes these studies also address social, economic and cultural issues. There is considerably less literature, however, on ‘production studies’, particularly on the technical procedure of putting together the material that is broadcast later.

In her book, a revised version of her PhD thesis at the Zürich Institute of Technology, Daniela Zetti makes a successful attempt to link these two fields of research but with special emphasis on television-recording technology and a detailed analysis of the editing techniques applied. How have these processes changed in German television in the period 1950–1980, and how have they, as a vital factor, changed German television? This means that not only technical but also aesthetic, cultural and political aspects are under consideration. In this context, Zetti offers a detailed analysis of the invention and implementation of the videotape recorder (VTR), the magnetic-recording technique that was introduced into German television at the end of the 1950s and of its replacement by the videocassette recorder (VCR) at the end of the 1970s. Of particular interest is her treatment of ‘electronic broadcasting’ in Germany from the late 1970s onward, with mobile TV teams roaming about consisting of three people: a cameraman, a technician and a journalist. The members of these teams not only did the recording but also the editing of the material, thus carrying out the tasks from choosing the

subject matter to be dealt with, the way to deal with it (a matter that could lead to much controversy), and the actual broadcasting at the end.

But Zetti presents other issues, too, which make up a constitutive part of her narrative: the people 'making the programme', conceiving the idea and the techniques applied. They made up and still make up the two big organizational pillars of a German broadcasting company. Ideally, the representatives of these two pillars could live in harmony and cooperate smoothly and, indeed, that happened sometimes. But, and this is of course more interesting, there were often strong differences between the two, which resulted in severe controversies. Zetti identifies the relevant groups of actors trying to gain and increase their influence and to implement their respective views. Which parts of the recorded material was to be chosen for broadcasting and why? What about the relevant recording and editing techniques, what about aesthetics, political and cultural views, messages and ideologies? What role did 'society' play, as was, to an extent, reflected in the ever increasing number of opinion polls? How did they influence the shape and content of TV programmes? As in other areas in German public life and in business, there was a lot of customer research in German television and the TV programme makers could not afford to ignore their outcome.

Although Zetti's book is not an easy read, it offers many interesting insights on a topic that has been thus far largely neglected. It would be interesting to read a continuation of this story into the present day, taking also into account the major private TV broadcasting stations in Germany. Treating this topic in a comparative international perspective would also be worthwhile.

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