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This paper applies the Frankfurt School theorists' conceptualization of the culture industry to the internet. First, it describes the culture industry and then it positions the debate surrounding the social impact of the internet in the framework provided by the Frankfurt scholars. This paper argues that increasing online commercialization and centralized control undermine the internet's potential in spheres of production, dissemination and reception.
- Rethinking Life Online: The Interactional Self as a Theory for Internet-Mediated Communication** 27
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This paper presents an emerging concept called the interactional self to illustrate how there are no clear phenomenological distinctions between the so-called "virtual world" and the dichotomously positioned "real world" in Internet-mediated communication settings. Ultimately, the paper shows how the philosophies of human experience can help the communication researcher better conceptualize the tight intermingling of the online with the offline, users' phenomenologically-rooted use-contexts, performative practices, and intersubjective life-world experiences in Internet-mediated sociability.
- When Messages are the Medium: Researching Best Practices in Online Education** 59
Sharon S. Kleinman
This paper discusses a comparative case study of online media history courses designed from the constructivist perspective (Moon, 1999). Data were analyzed

for insights regarding factors affecting student participation, satisfaction, and achievement. Innovative strategies for designing online learning environments that encourage interaction, active learning, and academic integrity were field-tested and critiqued. Among the innovations that shaped “classroom” dialogue and fostered an active learning community were: (1) using and publicizing the course management system’s capabilities for tracking students’ course website usage, and (2) creating a course feedback discussion forum.

Exploring the Half-life of Internet Footnotes

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Michael Bugeja and Daniela V. Dimitrova

Vanishing online references are becoming a problem for scholars. This exploratory study examines use of online citations, focusing on 2003 AEJMC conference papers accepted by the Communication Technology and Policy division. Authors analyze papers using URL reference addresses in bibliographies and document some 40% of online citations being unavailable a year later. Results show that .edu is the most stable domain. Error messages for “dead” URL addresses also are explored. Finally authors offer much needed recommendations for researchers who use Internet citations.

Unique and Ordinary Problems in Internet Research: Research Ethics, the Law, and Power

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Mark D.

While some regard Internet as public texts, much of interest to researchers is actually human social interaction, subject to institutional review. The law leaves much to the discretion of institutional review boards (IRBs). Reviews are influenced by concerns for protecting institutions from liability, negative publicity, or scrutiny from funding sources. This creates an “atmosphere of apprehension” for IRBs, and challenges Internet researchers, because their work demands innovative methods in a field unfamiliar to most IRBs. This paper is intended to offer both cautions to those anticipating internet research, as well as advice on dealing with the IRB.