

Special Issue:

The Future of Mobile Communication Research

A Tribute to Rich Ling

Call for papers for a special issue of *New Media & Society*, Volume 24, 2022.

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Overview

In recent decades mobile communication has become central to how people navigate and experience everyday social life. As mobile phones diffused globally in the 1990s, scholars began investigating changes in how people relate to distant and proximal others, as well as the physical surroundings. Among the first was Rich Ling, a sociologist with one foot in industry and the other in academia. Throughout his career as a researcher with Norway's Telenor Group and a faculty member at universities around the world, Rich Ling has contributed to the foundation of the emerging field of Mobile Media and Communication.

In light of Ling's approaching retirement as an endowed professor at Nanyang Technological University, this special issue pays tribute to his scholarly contributions as we look to the future of mobile communication research. It is no stretch to suggest that Rich Ling is one of the most prolific and influential scholars of mobile communication. He wrote the first single-authored book on the social consequences of mobile communication, *The Mobile Connection* (2004, Morgan Kaufmann), which remains one of the most heavily cited volumes on the subject. His second book, *New Tech, New Ties* (2008, MIT Press) reveals how ritualistic use of mobile media facilitates cohesion in the intimate sphere of friends and family. He extended this analysis in his subsequent book, *Taken for Grantedness* (2012, MIT Press), which offers a broader theoretical framework explaining how mobile communication has become embedded in social structure. Along with these and other books, Ling has also published hundreds of journal articles, book chapters, and industry/policy reports on the uses and consequences of mobile media and communication.

In addition to his own scholarship, Rich Ling's influence in the field is evident through his leadership, serving as editor of many volumes, editor of *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, and founding co-editor of the journal *Mobile Media and Communication*. Ling is also recognized for being a generous mentor, providing opportunities for new generations of scholars to become active in the field. As such, Rich Ling's contributions not only shape the past, but also strongly influence the future of mobile communication scholarship.

This special issue seeks papers that envision the future of mobile communication scholarship in the light of Ling's contributions to research and theory. While articles should primarily raise and address questions about future scholarship in the field, they should also be, at least to some extent, grounded in some aspect of Ling's work. Submissions can focus on different types of topics and approaches. Articles may centrally address future directions in research questions pursued, theory, methods, or other aspects of mobile communication scholarship. We are also open to different types of manuscripts, ranging from theoretical essays, empirical investigations, critical/cultural analysis, and other forms of scholarship.

Submission

Proposals of no more than 1,000 words should include a brief abstract and a clear explanation of the main argument and how the full submission would contribute to the aims of this special issue. Please email your proposal to Future.of.Mobile.NMS@gmail.com no later than **December 30, 2020**. Authors can expect feedback on their proposal by **February 1, 2021**, and invited paper submissions will be due **May 1, 2021**. Invited submissions will undergo peer review following the usual procedures of *New Media & Society*. Approximately 10-12 papers will be sent out for full review. Therefore, the invitation to submit a full article does not guarantee acceptance into the special issue. Full articles will need to follow the *New Media & Society* submission guidelines. The special issue is scheduled for publication in **Volume 24 of 2022**.

References

- Ling, R. (2004). *The mobile connection: The cell phone's impact on society*. San Francisco, CA: Morgan Kaufman Publishers.
- Ling, R. (2008). *New tech, new ties: How mobile communication is reshaping social cohesion*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Ling, R. (2012). *Taken for grantedness: The embedding of mobile communication into society*. Cambridge, MA; MIT Press.