



# *Teacher Training – the Interplay of IT and Society*

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- Introduction
- IT – Signs of a new era?
- Update of the classics
- Karl Marx – in memoriam
- Max Weber – in memoriam
- Norbert Elias – in memoriam
- Surmounting the "new ..."
- Outlines of a media- ...
- Media-philosophical ...
- Knowledge in the age of IT
- CSCL – ...

[Home Page](#)

[Title Page](#)



Page 1 of 15

[Go Back](#)

[Full Screen](#)

[Close](#)

[Quit](#)

# 1 Introduction

## Demands on the educational system

New media form a significant part of the current and future life of students. Therefore, in Germany and elsewhere, there are increasing demands from the public and the education supervisory boards for teachers and teacher educators to include new media in students' and future teachers' education and curricula in a pedagogically responsible and scientific way. Generally, there is consensus among those addressed that these are reasonable demands. (We shall not discuss those who refuse to accept this premise here.)

First reactions in dealing with these demands demonstrate that after an initial phase of euphoria, there is a danger of simply learning and teaching how to use specific products. Due to a lack of fundamental reflections on the material, it is likely that a merely affirmative media education is being dealt out.

Therefore, employing sociological methods, it is necessary to reach a differentiated understanding of the problems surrounding the interplay of new technologies and society, in order to be able to deal with the new technologies in a critical and autonomous way.

Introduction

IT – Signs of a new era?

Update of the classics

Karl Marx – in memoriam

Max Weber – in memoriam

Norbert Elias – in memoriam

Surmounting the "new ..."

Outlines of a media-...

Media-philosophical ...

Knowledge in the age of IT

CSCL – ...

Home Page

Title Page

◀▶

◀▶

Page 2 of 15

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

## 2 IT – Signs of a new era?

There are irrefutable indications of a radical and global change in society due to the development of IT

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### Consequences for reflection

- ➔ Avoidance of mere positivism
- ➔ Dialectic reflection
- ➔ Odo Marquardt:  
"Future needs a historical perspective"
- ➔ Update of what education means

Introduction

**IT – Signs of a new era?**

Update of the classics

Karl Marx – in memoriam

Max Weber – in memoriam

Norbert Elias – in memoriam

Surmounting the "new..."

Outlines of a media-...

Media-philosophical...

Knowledge in the age of IT

CSCL – ...

Home Page

Title Page



Page 3 of 15

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 3 Update of the classics

## Reviewing and rephrasing classical sociological questions about knowledge in view of current developments

Three prominent examples

➤ **Karl Marx (1818 – 1883)**

Which contradictions appear in economic/social structures determined by IT? What are their consequences for politics, law and society's consciousness?

➤ **Max Weber (1864 – 1920)**

Which (non- or quasi-) religious ideas and which ethical codes resulting from them guide our actions in passively accepting or actively creating a world characterized by IT?

➤ **Norbert Elias (1897 – 1990)**

Considering the interdependence [interaction?] of social structures, the development of standards of behaviour and the development of personality structures, how far can the mandate to create and influence IT be described as a mandate to civilize? I.e. how far can obviously insufficient "external pressure" be converted to "internal pressure"?

- Introduction
- IT – Signs of a new era?
- Update of the classics
- Karl Marx – in memoriam
- Max Weber – in memoriam
- Norbert Elias – in memoriam
- Surmounting the "new ..."
- Outlines of a media- ...
- Media-philosophical ...
- Knowledge in the age of IT
- CSSL – ...

# 4 Karl Marx – in memoriam

**From the industrial society to the knowledge society –  
demanding too much from politics and state?  
(in adaptation of Helmut Willke)**

## Potential

Replacing of differences in class and social strata caused by the unequal distribution of capital with differences in education and experience

## Dangers

Development of social dynamite through a three-part division of society

- "losers of modernisation"
- those socially mobile in both directions (de-leveling of the middle class)
- globally operating elites

## Challenges facing the state and politicians acting as supervisors

- Equal consideration for general and individual interests
- Cost-efficient general availability of knowledge
- Guarantee of legal security, equality of competition and contractual freedom

Introduction

IT – Signs of a new era?

Update of the classics

**Karl Marx – in memoriam**

Max Weber – in memoriam

Norbert Elias – in memoriam

Surmounting the "new ..."

Outlines of a media- ...

Media-philosophical ...

Knowledge in the age of IT

CSCL – ...

Home Page

Title Page



Page 5 of 15

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 5 Max Weber – in memoriam

"What follows postmodernism?"

"Enlightenment, of course – what else?"

**Bonmot among German philosophers**

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Tendencies in the current intellectual grappling with IT

- ⇒ The great meaning-constituting tale (Neil Postman) versus Postmodernism and deconstructivism (among others, Jean Baudrillard)
- ⇒ Agreement on the indispensability of a master tale in the educational sector – in spite of the potential for abuse
- ⇒ Critical and constructive analysis of the traditional concept of "education" in the sense of a second Enlightenment?



Introduction

IT – Signs of a new era?

Update of the classics

Karl Marx – in memoriam

Max Weber – in memoriam

Norbert Elias – in memoriam

Surmounting the "new ..."

Outlines of a media-...

Media-philosophical ...

Knowledge in the age of IT

CSCL – ...

Home Page

Title Page



Page 6 of 15

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 6 Norbert Elias – in memoriam

**"Civilisation is not complete. It is still evolving."**

Current characteristics of IT under the aspect of the development of civilisation

- Monopolisation (or rather de-monopolisation), competition and interdependence as factors influencing the development's dynamics
- Changes in the basic human orientation regarding time and place, complemented by a symbolic dimension in the passing on of means of orientation. De-nationalisation and identification with broader [more comprehensive?] groups
- Contrary to Elias' findings of manifest violence, establishment of increasing possibilities of observation and distance surveillance through means of telecommunication; simultaneously, the mode of observation changes: the observed becomes the observer at the same time

Perhaps etiquette books, the basis of Elias' studies on the internalisation of external pressures to become internal pressures, will be replaced in the studies of future historians by netiquette and the resulting codes of behaviour.



Introduction

IT – Signs of a new era?

Update of the classics

Karl Marx – in memoriam

Max Weber – in memoriam

**Norbert Elias – in memoriam**

Surmounting the "new ..."

Outlines of a media- ...

Media-philosophical ...

Knowledge in the age of IT

CSSL – ...

Home Page

Title Page



Page 7 of 15

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 7 Surmounting the "new confusion"

## Concepts in media-pedagogy – wrong turns, detours, solutions?

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- ➔ The attempt to maintain and preserve
  - Moral/aesthetic goals and presumptions

Criticism: frequent lack of agreement as to what constitutes smut

- ➔ The ideology-critical concept
  - Political goals and presumptions

Criticism: high theoretical demands, danger of dogmatic fixation, elitist disdain for pleasure

- ➔ The action-oriented concept
  - Individual, subjective goals and presumptions

Criticism: no uniform scientific foundation, borrowing from the Critical Theory, system theory and pragmatism – Independence presupposes orientation



Introduction

IT – Signs of a new era?

Update of the classics

Karl Marx – in memoriam

Max Weber – in memoriam

Norbert Elias – in memoriam

Surmounting the "new ..."

Outlines of a media-...

Media-philosophical ...

Knowledge in the age of IT

CSCL – ...

Home Page

Title Page



Page 8 of 15

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 8 Outlines of a media-pedagogical concept in teacher training

Example:  
Studienseminar Sek II in Hamm

The four media-pedagogical pillars

- Development and use of an (official) communication structure
- CSCL – an alternative to the traditional teacher training seminar
- Subject-specific and interdisciplinary reorganisation of teacher training
- Development of a general body of knowledge for orientation through media-philosophical discourse



Introduction

IT – Signs of a new era?

Update of the classics

Karl Marx – in memoriam

Max Weber – in memoriam

Norbert Elias – in memoriam

Surmounting the "new ..."

Outlines of a media- ...

Media-philosophical ...

Knowledge in the age of IT

CSCL – ...

Home Page

Title Page



Page 9 of 15

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 9 Media-philosophical discourse

In adaptation of Willi Oelmueller

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- ➔ Media-philosophical discourse is possible and necessary where media question those things taken for granted, and where people confronted with negative or positive experiences with the media attempt to examine their motives for accepting, changing or rejecting them.



Introduction

IT – Signs of a new era?

Update of the classics

Karl Marx – in memoriam

Max Weber – in memoriam

Norbert Elias – in memoriam

Surmounting the "new ..."

Outlines of a media- ...

Media-philosophical ...

Knowledge in the age of IT

CSCL – ...

Home Page

Title Page



Page 10 of 15

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 10 Knowledge in the age of IT

## The generation, presentation, communication and application of knowledge

- The conventional division of labour between the creator and the user of knowledge is gradually being enhanced and partially replaced by new possibilities of cooperation both when generating and applying knowledge.
- This leads to a broader differentiation and pluralisation of the available forms of knowledge; apart from the expert knowledge of the scientific community, new and varied forms of knowledge are evolving rapidly in almost all areas of society. The creators of knowledge are frequently its users at the same time.
- These possible developments are viewed as ambivalent. Aside from the potential practical gains, concerns about IT are voiced by two groups: on the one hand, there are those who are uneasy about the dramatically increased possibilities of control and surveillance of their intellectual work, whereas on the other hand, conventional, inflexible authorities such as bureaucracies fear a loss of their power.



Introduction

IT – Signs of a new era?

Update of the classics

Karl Marx – in memoriam

Max Weber – in memoriam

Norbert Elias – in memoriam

Surmounting the "new..."

Outlines of a media-...

Media-philosophical...

Knowledge in the age of IT

CSSL – ...

Home Page

Title Page



Page 11 of 15

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# 11 CSCL –

# Computer Supported Collaborative Learning

## A new social form of work and a research paradigm

- CSCL opens up new areas and methods of learning and working to the individual; it allows asynchronous and polylocal forms of working within a network, as well as exchange with the individual's (social) milieu
- Therefore, the topic of CSCL corresponds to the characteristics outlined above for a research paradigm, in that it allows the examination not only of the core of a social group centered around IT possibilities, but also the individual and society as a whole.

### Outlook

There remains the interesting and open question of where the development regarding the interplay of individual, social group and society in the IT age will lead. What is certain is the necessity of new forms of cooperation. And speaking of cooperation: Was it not the novel interplay of philosophy, crafts and the arts that led to the "birth" of modern science at the beginning of the modern age? Regards from Edgar Zisel!



- Introduction
- IT – Signs of a new era?
- Update of the classics
- Karl Marx – in memoriam
- Max Weber – in memoriam
- Norbert Elias – in memoriam
- Surmounting the "new ..."
- Outlines of a media- ...
- Media-philosophical ...
- Knowledge in the age of IT
- CSCL – ...

Home Page

Title Page

◀ ▶

◀ ▶

Page 12 of 15

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit

# Thank you!

# Questions?



*Introduction*

*IT – Signs of a new era?*

*Update of the classics*

*Karl Marx – in memoriam*

*Max Weber – in memoriam*

*Norbert Elias – in memoriam*

*Surmounting the "new..."*

*Outlines of a media-...*

*Media-philosophical...*

*Knowledge in the age of IT*

*CSCL – ...*

*Home Page*

*Title Page*



*Page 13 of 15*

*Go Back*

*Full Screen*

*Close*

*Quit*

# Hints

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Introduction

IT – Signs of a new era?

Update of the classics

Karl Marx – in memoriam

Max Weber – in memoriam

Norbert Elias – in memoriam

Surmounting the "new..."

Outlines of a media-...

Media-philosophical...

Knowledge in the age of IT

CSCL – ...

Home Page

Title Page



Page 14 of 15

Go Back

Full Screen

Close

Quit



*Introduction*

*IT – Signs of a new era?*

*Update of the classics*

*Karl Marx – in memoriam*

*Max Weber – in memoriam*

*Norbert Elias – in memoriam*

*Surmounting the "new ..."*

*Outlines of a media-...*

*Media-philosophical ...*

*Knowledge in the age of IT*

*CSCL – ...*

*Home Page*

*Title Page*



*Page 15 of 15*

*Go Back*

*Full Screen*

*Close*

*Quit*