



# EUROPÄISCHE AKADEMIE

zur Erforschung von Folgen wissenschaftlich-technischer Entwicklungen  
Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler GmbH

Direktor: Professor Dr. Dr.h.c. Carl Friedrich Gethmann

## NEWSLETTER

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### EDITORIAL

■ As already reported in issue 92/2009 of this Newsletter, the second evaluation of the Europäische Akademie GmbH took place in May 2009 at the instigation of the partners of the Europäische Akademie – the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate and the German Aerospace Center. In the meantime the experts' report has been submitted to the partners.

The group of experts found the hitherto accomplished work of the academy to be very good. Thus, the Europäische Akademie has achieved its goals and objectives to establish itself as an institution to study the consequences of scientific technical advances in an excellent way. With comparably little means it has achieved a remarkable extent of visibility at home and abroad. That is why the group of experts has come to the result that, as far as the academy's structure, composition or mode of operation are concerned, no drastic changes are required. The recommendations made by the experts' group include the further improvement of the academy's visibility in the research world, the maintenance of its mission as a research institution, the increased publication of its working results in international scientific journals, and an increased co-operation with regional universities. The partners have appointed a working group consisting of six members whose task is to implement the recommendations made by the group of experts into concrete measures.

The realisation of the evaluation will be reported on in the Newsletter following the next meeting of the Partners' Assembly.

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### FOCUS

#### Web 2.0 and Academia

Michael Nentwich, Vienna

In 2003, when the study *Cyberscience: Research in the Age of the Internet* (Nentwich 2003) appeared in print, Web 2.0 was still in its infancy. Today, it is ubiquitous: hundred thousands of people all over the world, including many scientists, have become part of the rapidly growing social networks that are fostering the development of the new services. Elements of some of the phenomena we would subsume today under the blanket term "Web 2.0" were already visible in 2003. For instance, some academic journals were experimenting with "open peer review" (Nentwich 2005; 2009). There was also discussion of the possibility that the knowledge accumulated by the sciences could be stored in new kinds of hyper-databanks which would be collectively maintained and updated. Even at that time, there was extensive discussion of the way in which readers could also become, to a certain extent, authors, or "wreaders" which meant there would be an increase in multiple co-authorship and/or a situation in which texts could no longer be attributed to any particular authors. And one could already see that (as it were) the new media had the potential to open new windows in the ivory tower of science and to contribute to the removal of the traditional, strict distinction between communication within academia and communication between academia and the outside world. In 2003, these considerations were still largely speculative. Now that Web 2.0 services do exist, they have become much more immediate topics of discussion. This gives us a good opportunity to ask what (new) potential and what (specific) influence the new Web 2.0 services will have for and on science.

The term Web 2.0 seems to have been used for the first time at the end of 2003. It originally referred to a new software model (web services and outsourcing), and by extension to an economic model. In this model the software is no longer tested at considerable expense in closed user groups before being commercially released, but remains in a kind of permanent beta status and is constantly being improved by active users and on the basis of the feedback they provide. These innovations and groupings of services have been hyped as a new phase of the Internet; the decimal term 2.0 is taken from software jargon in the case of which it is used to refer to a new, significantly revised version. The

most important characteristic in the present context relates to the culture of "produsage" (Bruns 2008). This means that contributions are made in a decentralized way, both in relation to technical programming and by the users; the users themselves create content and develop it further – the term used here is "user generated content".

Here are a few examples of typical Web 2.0 applications: New kinds of social networks are coming into existence on special platforms (like *Facebook* or *Xing*). No one initiates these networks from the top down, and nobody administers them or keeps them together; they come into existence more or less spontaneously from the bottom up. Internet users with shared

interests can use this very simple mechanism to present themselves in the web and to set up networks with others. There are also Web 2.0 applications which make it possible for users to become authors themselves in an uncomplicated way, in particular web diaries or *weblogs* (“blogs” for short). Microblogging services (like *Twitter*) enable users to send short messages that resemble diary entries, and there are various kinds of *Wikis*, i.e. simple Internet-based writing environments which are collaborative and, unlike earlier groupware applications (i.e. software platforms that allowed dispersed groups to meet virtually, share files and co-edit texts), public fora in which written contributions can be posted. The best known example is *Wikipedia*, a global, free encyclopedia compiled, potentially, by all its users. Another group of typical Web 2.0 tools which also serves as a way of sharing knowledge without creating primary content is *social bookmarking* which is the collection of links to websites and online publications on related themes. *Podcasts*, series of audio or video data made available online, are also counted as part of Web 2.0 to the extent that they are not produced by professional media companies. Virtual worlds are another area of Web 2.0, and are also shaped and characterized by their users and the online behaviour of those users.

What does Web 2.0 offer science? If one looks at these new phenomena, it rapidly becomes clear that the changes set in motion by e-mail, discussion lists, video conferences, groupware etc. which made us to speak of cyberscience, are now being strengthened or are providing, for the first time, the means by which this new form of science can enjoy lasting success.

It is quite clear that the setting up of collaborative knowledge resources or net-based collaborative writing (like *Wikis* or *Google Wave*) is a development with great potential for use in academia. This is emphasised by the fact that scientists do already show great interest in it. Virtual worlds (like *Second Life*) could enrich distance communication in science which up to now has largely been based on written texts, and it could even be the breakthrough that will make it possible to organise electronic conferences. Simultaneously, completely new forms of micro-publication (like blogging and microblogging) are coming into existence – so far there has been very little investigation of the effects these might have on formal and informal communication between scientists. Finally, the tools that make it easier to share information (like *Zotero*, *Delicious*, or *Slideshare*) are also of interest for the scientific enterprise relying on cooperation and the availability of information and the building blocks of knowledge, both in its overall constitution and within smaller working groups. Finally, also social network-

ing sites are potentially attractive for researchers as they frequently need to match interests, establish co-operations etc. In a recent working paper (Nentwich 2009), some of these applications were examined more closely.

In view of the new Web 2.0 services one can ask once again how many of these new possibilities will be functional for science and how many will become part of day-to-day practice. The overwhelming majority of scientists is familiar with the use of cyberscience tools in their everyday professional work, but they are not yet familiar with Web 2.0. The most frequent reaction one is likely to hear from these scientists is that they do not expect Web 2.0 to be very useful. As they familiarise themselves with the new possibilities their responses sometimes become more nuanced, but the question about added value is certainly justified. The following considerations are likely to play a role: lack of time; information overload; incentives to participate and benefit expectations; quality of Web 2.0 content; the need to being constantly online; considerations of competition between scientists; and attribution of authorship to collaborative content.

The answers to these questions lead to the even more interesting question of what this would mean – in other words, what the qualitative consequences of the widespread and everyday use of Web 2.0 might be for science. One can identify at least the following potential consequences which are already being discussed: a change in the quality control system for publications; a blurring of the boundaries between internal and external scientific communication; the possible integration of publication and conversation media; the worldwide digital integration via networks; the issue of “democratisation” of academia; and issues of privacy (for a preliminary discussion of these issues, see Nentwich 2009; with a view to microblogging in more detail, see Herwig et al. 2009).

Looking at this preliminary list of effects Web 2.0 could have on science from the perspective of existing cyberscience technology assessment, one can see that no genuinely new issues arise – with the possible exception of some privacy issues. The services that have become known under the label of Web 2.0 now spreading fairly dynamically through the scientific community seem likely to *intensify* trends located already in 2003. There is no doubt that the tools have improved in quality, and scientists are now better equipped to carry on pursuing their original goals. Take, for example, integration via networks. It was and is quite possible to contact people quickly, without any problems, and informally via e-mail, and the webmail services offered by social media platforms are not really necessary. It seems likely that it will become easier to find suitable collaborators by using

the members’ profiles provided on this kind of platform, but an Internet search of the various, dispersed personal homepages has already been possible for some time. Nevertheless, one can distinguish the Web 2.0 applications from their predecessors in technical and organisation terms: in a way, Internet has also “matured” in respect of the way scientists use it. In the light of these considerations, the term “Cyberscience 2.0” seems to me to promise too much at the present moment in time. To use software jargon, what we can expect from Web 2.0 is more a case of “Update to Cyberscience 1.2” than a “New Release of Cyberscience 2.0”.

*Cited literature can be found here:*

<http://snurl.com/tptj7> and  
<http://snurl.com/tptjt>

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*Univ.-Doz. Dr. Michael Nentwich is Director of the Institute of Technology Assessment at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna. His research focuses on the area of science and technology studies, especially on modern information and communication technologies.*  
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## PROJECT GROUPS

### Third Meeting of the Project Group “Clinical Research in Vulnerable Populations”

■ The third meeting of the project group took place at the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (BBAW), Berlin, on 7 and 8 December 2009. As guest speaker Ulrich Gassner, Professor for Public Law at the Universität Augsburg, gave a talk on the international and national regulation of clinical research in vulnerable populations and the legal assessment of proposals on the mitigation of the lack of probands. He pointed out that on the international level the regulations still remain rather general.

During this meeting Kalle Hoppu, M.D., Ph.D., commented the project from the perspective of a paediatric clinical pharmacologist. He is Director of the Poison Information Centre at Helsinki University Central Hospital and Associate Professor of Paediatric Clinical Pharmacology, University of Helsinki, Finland. Hoppu became new member of the group.

In a third talk project group member Priv.-Doz. Dr. Felix Thiele analyzed moral arguments for and against clinical research in vulnerable populations.

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## CONFERENCES

**Workshop on the “Future of spaces”**

■ From 19 to 20 November 2009 a workshop on the “Future of Spaces” discussed the societal questions on the track towards ambient intelligence. The discussions centred on the merger of physical and virtual realities and on the assessment of corresponding technologies and visions. Participants were Christian Bodenstein (Freiburg), Dr. Jessica Heesen (Freiburg), Stefan Höffken (Berlin), Dr. Stephan Lingner (Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler), Professor Dr. Bernd Lutterbeck (Berlin), Dr. Frank Pallas (Berlin) and Professor Dr. Karsten Weber (Opole/Poland). The proceedings of this workshop will be published in the book series “Graue Reihe” of the Europäische Akademie.

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**European identity through space**

■ From 12 to 13 November 2009 representatives from cultural sciences and the arts as well as experts from various relevant areas discussed theoretical approaches and practical perspectives of spaceflight for shaping the European identity. The conference investigated into the effect space activities have already had on building a common European spirit by joint missions to space as well as on corresponding further, yet unused potentials within this highly visible branch. The conference was held under the auspices of the Swedish EU Council Presidency. The Europäische Akademie contributed to the results with a lecture by Dr. Stephan Lingner which will be published in the Springer series “Studies in Space Policy”.

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## NEWS

**Is there a free will? Lecture of the Kreissparkasse 2009 on neuropsychological phenomena**

■ The 16<sup>th</sup> Lecture of the Kreissparkasse 2009 organised by the Europäische Akademie in cooperation with the Kreissparkasse Ahrweiler dealt with the human brain and its possibilities of behavioural control. Professor Dr. rer. nat. Lutz Jäncke from the Institute for Psychology, Universität Zürich, stated that the possibilities of control by the human brain were used unconsciously in most cases and are guided by learned information. Apart from latest neuroscientific findings he also presented cognition-

psychological findings and explained their importance for human decision-making.

Thus, Jäncke said that the unprofessional philosophical view of the world was dominated by a more or less absolute concept of reason: Either one is “reasonable” or not. However, the psychological and neuro-scientific research reveals that in respect of the human decision-making there are hardly any constant and, hence, absolute values. Therefore, very often our perceptions and decision-findings are relative and determined or at least influenced by unconscious processes.

In connection with this interactive structure of unconscious, “unreasonable” and subjective processes two other phenomena which would be regarded as non-existent by many representatives of neuro-scientific research are of great importance, for example *free will* and *consciousness*, Jäncke said. As it were, the consciousness and the free will are the “last control bodies” which the human being has in order to find his way, if necessary, in the “bushwhack of unreasonableness and subjectivity”. In his lecture Jäncke presented the partly strange phenomena demonstrating the unreasonableness of the human being and set them in relation with evolutionary principles.

For the first time the Lecture of the Kreissparkasse took place in the Bahnhof Rolandseck, Remagen. The subsequent discussion was moderated by Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Carl Friedrich Gethmann, Director of the Europäische Akademie GmbH.

**Gethmann appointed as honorary professor**

■ On 7 December 2009 Professor Dr. phil. Dr. phil. h.c. Carl Friedrich Gethmann, Director of the Europäische Akademie and full professor of philosophy at the Universität Duisburg-Essen, was presented the letter of appointment as honorary professor of the faculty of philosophy by Professor Dr. Horst M. Schellhaaf, Vice-Rector of the Universität zu Köln. Within the scope of his honorary professorship Gethmann will deal above all with phenomenological research and its importance for modern sciences in co-operation with the Husserl-Archiv of the Universität zu Köln.

**Medical Ethics Working Group Lecture**

■ On 11 November 2009, Dr. jur. Stephanie Wiesner-Berg, currently passing legal internship in Berlin, spoke on “Baby drop-off boxes and anonymous births: Protection of life by anonymity? The anonymous drop-off of children in conflict with the rights of children, mothers and fathers”. Wiesner-Berg was employed with Professor Dr. jur. Brigitte Tag at the Rechtswissenschaftliches Institut, Universität Zürich and dealt with this topic in her Ph.D. thesis. Everybody can offer a baby drop-off box with-

out any conditions. Baby drop-off boxes are a problematic issue as there are no legal regulations. Wiesner-Berg discussed the possibility and the necessity to enact a law for baby drop-off boxes and anonymous drop-off of children.

In later years children who are put into a baby drop-off box might have some difficulties, since their parents are unknown. They will probably never have the chance to get to know them, and some children show mental health problems. Therefore, Wiesner-Berg pleaded not to enact a law and to abolish baby drop-off boxes.

**Ahrtal Talk 2009: Was it really greed? The market, the crisis and the morality**

■ On 18 November 2009 the fifth Ahrtal Talk took place which was organised by the Sponsors’ Club of the Europäische Akademie and the city of Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler. The topic was the subject of business ethics: “Was it really greed? The market, the crisis and the morality”. The mayor of Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, Dr. Hans-Ulrich Tappe, welcomed about 80 guests in the Town Hall, before Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Carl Friedrich Gethmann, Director of the Europäische Akademie, introduced into the talk.

In view of the present economic situation it was this crisis which was dealt with and discussed by two speakers: The economist and Professor of Christian societal ethics, Professor Dr. rer. oec. Friedhelm Hengsbach SJ, as well as the economist and Rector of the International Graduate School Zittau (Internationales Hochschulinstitut Zittau), Professor Dr. rer. pol. Albert Löhr, since 2001 chairman of the board of management of the German Network for Business Ethics (Deutsches Netzwerk für Wirtschaftsethik), presented their views in a small talk followed by a discussion with the audience. The moderator of the evening was Gethmann.

As early as in his introductory remarks Gethmann pointed out that individual recriminations could not be blamed for the crisis and that the call for “more ethics in economy” could not overcome the crisis. As far as philosophical ethics were concerned, individual profit seeking was not to be denounced, even if high figures mattered. Not a lacking morality of managers but rather the existing incentives they were aiming their action at were to be criticized. However, changing the systems of incentives was a societal and political task.

In his talk Löhr agreed with this by not criticizing richness as such, but he regarded many a way to richness as problematic. However, a moral rethinking could not be ordained from above: “A new moral fundamental consensus can only be developed from below, from economy and society.”

Hengsbach, too, rejected the reproach of greed as “subjectivistic”. “I cannot hear the word *greed* any longer”, he quoted – in a consciously

provoking way – the former Director of the managing board of the Deutsche Bank Hilmar Kopper. In contrast to this, he presented a number of systematic mistakes in his analysis of the economic crisis. These were, for example, the operating mode of the capital markets influenced by an arbitrary increase (and not by a decrease), the high degree of debts caused by great promises of yield returns as well as the far-reaching limitation of liabilities of corporate enterprises.

The crisis had caused a jerky change in the thinking system which might lead to a political new start inspired by the “Rheinish capitalism” which means that capitalism would have to be made capable of supporting democracy. Each person who made a contribution to value creation in society would have to benefit from this. However, the precondition for this would be a correction of the existing capitalistic allocation rules.

In the second part of this event the audience had the chance to take an active part in the discussion. For example, questions regarding the long-term responsibility of managers in connection with the bonus premium, the neglect of medium-sized enterprises by politicians and the considerable differences between limited-liability companies on the one hand and enterprises with proprietor entrepreneurs on the other were discussed.

## PUBLICATIONS

### Margret Engelhard/Kristin Hagen/

#### Felix Thiele

■ R. Pardo, M. Engelhard, K. Hagen, R. B. Jørgensen, E. Rehlinger, A. Schnieke, M. Szmulewicz, F. Thiele, “The role of means and goals in technology acceptance. A differentiated landscape of public perceptions of pharming”, *EMBO reports*, Vol 10(10), 2009, pp 1069–75, Epub 2009 Sep 18

### Felix Thiele

■ Review “Reinhard Merkel, Willensfreiheit und rechtliche Schuld”, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 12/2009, pp 575–576

## LECTURES

### Thorsten Galert

2/12/2009

■ “Hirndoping für alle? Auf dem Weg zur grenzenlosen Leistungsgesellschaft”

Series of lectures at Haus der Wissenschaft: “Tatsachen? Forschung unter der Lupe”, Helmholtz-Zentrum für Infektionsforschung, Braunschweig

### Carl Friedrich Gethmann

28/1/2010

■ “Klimaforschung und Klimapolitik”

Conference “Energy – Climate – Market Economy”, University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf

### Felix Thiele

15/10/2009

■ “Introductory Comments on Human Dignity in Bioethics”

Opening Conference of the Research Group “Challenges to the Image of Humanity and Human Dignity by New Developments in Medical Technology” (Thiele is co-organiser of the group), 15–17/10/2009, ZiF, Bielefeld

8/12/2009

■ “Clinical Research in Vulnerable Populations. Moral Considerations”

Academy Project Group “Clinical Research in Vulnerable Populations”, 7–8/12/2009, Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin

12/1/2010

■ “The Function of Dignity in Bioethics Discourse”, ZiF, Bielefeld

## PERSONALITIES



■ Günter Stock is Professor of Physiology and currently President of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

During his research work at the University of Heidelberg, where he also taught until 1983, he was interested in the physiology and biochemistry of the limbic system, namely the nucleus amygdala and also in the biochemistry of dopamine as a neuronal transmitter. He then joined the pharmaceutical company Schering AG (Berlin) in 1983 and, in 1989, he became member of the Board of Directors responsible for research and development.

In December 2005, he left the company to become President of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (formerly Prussian Academy of Sciences).

Stock is member of the Board of the Schering Foundation, the “Universitätsklinikum Würzburg”, the “Universitätsklinikum des Saarlandes” and since 2006 he has also been member of the Supervisory Board of the Charité, University Medicine Berlin. Stock serves as Vice-President of the Max Planck Society. He is member of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, the Academia Europaea, the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, and member of the Medical Board of the Austrian Science Council.

In January 2008, Stock became President of the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities. He was awarded the “Verdienstkreuz Erster Klasse des Verdienstordens der Bundesrepublik Deutschland” and the “Verdienstorden des Landes Berlin”.

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*Professor Dr. med. Dr. h.c. Günter Stock is President of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften and member of the project group “Clinical research on vulnerable populations” (duration 12/08–6/11) of the Europäische Akademie GmbH.*  
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