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'SELL TO THE PEOPLE': PERSPECTIVES ON CHINESE COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

Giovanna Puppini, Ca' Foscari, Venice, Italy.

Mind-boggling Figures

With a total land area of more than 9.5 million square kilometres, a population which exceeds 1.3 billion citizens and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth which constantly hits new records, China is the biggest market in the world. Also the figures of commercial advertising are to be taken seriously: according to the Chinese Advertising Association (CAA) statistics, in 2006 the annual advertising revenue climbed to RMB157.3 billion (€15.73 billion), with an increase of 11.1% over 2005. This way, China managed to hold another supremacy: it became one of the world fastest-growing advertising markets.

Some history

Professor Hong Cheng at the Hong Kong Baptist University defines advertising in China as a phenomenon which 'is both old and new'. It is old because it has a very long history; it is new because it did not reappear until the year 1979.' Even though the most primitive forms of advertising were traced back to the Western Zhou dynasty, the concept of modern advertising entered China in the middle of the 19th century, thanks to the foreigners. In the beginning of the 20th century the first advertising agencies opened and in the '30s Chinese advertising reached its golden age before the revolution. The advertising activities concentrated in Shanghai and the most popular advertising images were the ones of *yuefenpai* (calendar posters), which depicted young Chinese beauties, in modern and westernized postures (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 - Beijing beer ad

Unfortunately this phase was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II and the civil war between Nationalists and Communists. Soon after the victory of the Communists and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, advertising was accused of being a result of capitalism and subsequently banned. This negation became particularly absolute during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), when other forms of communication - all highly ideologically developed: propaganda posters (Fig. 2), serial pictures and model operas.



Fig. 2 - Ardently celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC)

Among the most fashionable slogans in this period: 'Down with revisionism!' and 'Long live Chairman Mao!'

In 1979 the new policy initiated by Deng Xiaoping opened the door to advertising, which became fundamental in China's economic growth. The first print ad after the Cultural Revolution appeared on the pages of Tianjin Daily; soon afterwards advertisements were broadcasted on television, radio and gradually started to promote foreign products.

The Chinese advertising activities began to fully flourish only in the '90s, thanks to the spread of television. New slogans such as 'Development is the indisputable truth' and 'Let some people get rich first' made way for free market and consumerism. To improve the previous legislation in the advertising sector, the State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC), the Chinese regulatory body of industrial and commercial sectors, issued in 1994 the 'Advertising Law of the People's Republic of China.'

Good vs. Evil Ads

In the past, foreign advertising agencies were permitted only to establish joint-ventures through local partners and their ownership could not exceed 49%. Since December 2001, when China joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO), wholly foreign-owned enterprises (WFOEs) are gradually allowed to operate in advertising services. An opportunity too great to let slip away. In a situation evolving so quickly foreign multinationals still have to be cautious in order to avoid hurting Chinese consumers' sensibility and finding their way out from what professor Wang Jing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) referred to as the

'local-global paradox.' Let us take a look at two 'exemplary' ads.

In 2004 a Nike TV ad caused a great fuss. It was composed by five levels and the style was a mixture of a videogame and a martial-art movie from the '70s. The main character, the famous NBA player James LeBron, had to fight several enemies in order to have access to the next level. Unfortunately the evil character he defeated coincided with the most largely employed symbols of Chinese traditional culture: a *gongfu* master, some fascinating Apsaras and a pair of dragons (Fig. 3). This explains why, according to the State Administration for Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), the Chinese regulatory body of the audiovisual sectors, this ad violated regulations that mandate that 'all radio and TV ads should uphold national dignity and interest and respect the mother land's traditional culture.' The ad was defined blasphemous and therefore banned. Moreover Nike had to apologize publicly.

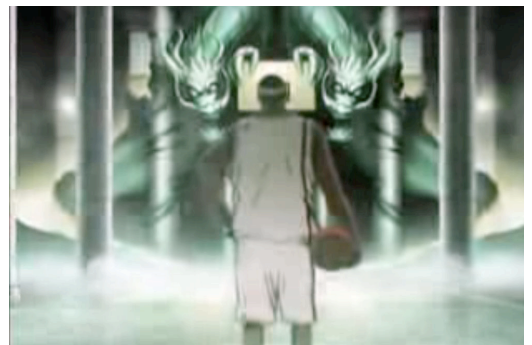


Fig. 3 - *Kongju doushi* (Chamber of Fear)

Coca Cola chose a completely different marketing strategy: 'think local, act local.' It turned out to be successful, as Chinese consumers prefer the emotional appeals pointing at *guoqing* (national sentiment) employed by the US giant rather than the nationalistic and patriotic styles used by its Chinese counterpart (*Feichang Kele*, Fu-

ture Cola, produced by Wahaha). A well-executed example is a TV ad, shot in 2005, which portrayed the Chinese athlete Liu Xiang walking down the streets of Paris, all alone on Chinese New Year's Eve. The atmosphere was sad: he had just phoned back home to tell his family he could not be there to celebrate the festival as he promised.

He entered a restaurant, in a desperate attempt to cheer himself up, but in front of a poor plate of *jiaozi* (dumplings) and an unhandy fork he felt even worse! Luckily he ordered a can of Coke: once he opened it, two cartoon-style children - *afu* and *axi*, some Chinese traditional auspicious symbols - magically appeared in order to bring him home (Fig. 4). Of course, the end was an happy one.



Fig. 4 - *Dai wo hui jia* (Bring Me Home)

As an ancient Chinese saying (*ruxiang suisu*) reminds us, when you are guest in a country you had better behave according to the local costumes.

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The New Frontier for the Mobile Telephony: the Value Added Services

Benedetta Prario, China Media Observatory.

In recent years the effects of the convergence between informatics, telecommunication and media industry are more and more evident. One of the results emerging from this convergence is the development of the so called mobile Value Added Services. A value-added service (VAS) is a term for non-core services or, in short, all services beyond standard voice calls and fax transmissions. On a conceptual level, they add value to the standard service supply, spurring the subscriber to use their phone more and allowing the telecom operator to drive up their Average Revenue Per User (ARPU).

Recently, the market of mobile communications has developed very fast in China. Mobile phone is affecting the way of people's life and correspondingly, mobile VAS increases also very fast. Both the amount of mobile users and the requirement of the users on different kinds of services ascend greatly. So far, about 80% of mobile phone subscribers use VAS. The revenue increase of mobile VAS has exceeded the increase of other telecommunication services. In 2006, the revenue of mobile VAS was RMB70 billion (€6.3 billion) and it is expected that in 2008 the market of mobile VAS can reach RMB126 billion (€11.4 billion). Referring to the mobile VAS supply, it is possible to individuate more than 70,000 types. These services can be divided into mobile Internet content/application services, mobile Internet access services and mobile value added voice services. According to the platform, mobile VAS can be classified into five categories at present in the Chinese market. They are SMS, MMS, WAP, JAVA/BREW, IVR (Individualized Ringing) and CRBT (Colour Ring Back Tone) and streaming media (mo-

bile TV). According to the contents and applications, the services can be classified into communications, business and trading, information support and entertainment. To better understand the penetration and success of the mobile VAS, it is important to introduce the economic and political environment in China from the perspective of telecommunication industries analyzing their possible influence on mobile VAS in China. Since 2003, the economic development has led to a significant improvement of the living standard of Chinese people. Demand on housing, car manufactures and telecommunications is increasing strongly. This enlarges the Chinese telecommunication market, and provides also an economic guarantee for the development of the telecommunication services. Therefore, the economic development affects not only the total amount of the telecommunication requirements, but also the trend of the content changes. After some basic telecommunication requirements have been satisfied, people want more and more comfortable, intelligent, individual and entertainment services. How to provide more value added services and keep the increase of the revenue has become the focus for the telecommunication enterprises in China. Receiving/sending Email and network browsing are widely required and used. In addition, the individual services, such as downloading from the networks are also currently welcome. Moreover, users from different cities display also great interest in online games. Other inquiries have also revealed that the customs who have not used VAS show low interest for the existing services, nevertheless, they are interested in some new emerging services, such as online

translation, pictures upload etc.

Furthermore, the political environment affects also the development of the telecommunications and the market of mobile VAS. The major points regarding the regulation of the Chinese national telecommunication market are summarized as follows.

- In December 1993, the State Council authorized the construction of China Unicom Corporation Limited, and defined the concept of basic telecommunication services and value-added services for the first time.

- According to the "Telecommunication Regulation of the People's Republic of China" issued by the State Council in September 2000, VAS includes 9 services: E-mail, voice mail box, online information storing and searching, electronic data exchange, online data and trade processing, value-added fax, Internet access services, Internet information services, video conferencing.

- On December 8th, 2003, the Committee of the Internet News and Information Service of the Chinese Internet Association was founded. More than 30 Internet news and information services companies, such as People's Net, Xinhua Net, China Net, Sina, Sohu and Wangyi etc. signed together the "Common Agreement of Internet News and Information Services". Under this agreement, these companies promised to accept the government administration and public supervision.

- Depending on the "Reference Process for Telecommunication Opening" signed when China joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the stock of value-added telecommunication services held by the foreign capitalists should not exceed 50%. At the same time, China would cancel the region restriction of VAS completely. The opening range of mobile voice and data services will expand to 14 cities. Foreign capital may reach 49%

in a joint-venture company.

It is now important to notice that the pricing strategies of the VAS services depend on the different operators: China Mobile, China Unicom, China Netcom and China Telecom. The price structure consists of two parts: communication fees and service provider fees (content, application). Without going further into detail of the different supplies it is relevant to note that all price levels are government controlled and that the VAS pricing strategy may change according to the market condition and business strategy of the operators.

Nowadays, the market of mobile VAS is not controlled only by the national tlc operators, because foreign candidate companies can provide VAS in the Chinese mobile communication market, as well. To offer mobile VAS in China the foreign operators have to pass 3 phases:

1. Partnering with a Chinese company
2. Applying for a license as a service provider
3. Cooperating with a mobile operator

These steps are mandatory due to WTO and Chinese market regulations. The opening of the Chinese VAS market to foreign players as agreed upon when joining WTO in 2001 took place but market entry was difficult for foreign companies in the past. As a consequence of the past situation until now about 16,000 Chinese companies and only 5 foreign invested enterprises got service provider licenses granted. Some more foreign invested telecoms enterprises (FITE) applications are currently processed. This could change as the Ministry of Information Industry is changing policies towards an easier market entry for FITEs: while in the beginning MII required that only newly founded FITEs could apply for a license now the existing FITEs are allowed to apply for licenses.

CHINESE MEDIA AT A GLANCE: NEWS FROM CHINA

China Media Observatory, Lugano.

SARFT Releases List of Approved Foreign Satellite Channels 2008

The State Administration of Radio, Film and TV (SARFT) has approved 33 channels for broadcasting in foreign compounds and hotels with three-star ratings or higher in 2008. The list includes four more channels than last year, notably ESPN (the American Entertainment and Sports Programming Network) and Star Sports (ESPN STAR Sports, or ESS is a joint venture based in Singapore between ESPN and STAR TV), which were dropped from the list SARFT issued at the start of 2007 and quietly reinstated later in the year. The other two new entrants include KBS World (officially launched in 2003, it is the satellite window of the public Korean broadcaster) and CubaVision (the Cuban satellite television broadcaster).

Foreign channels in China are relegated to broadcast in hotels and "foreign compounds" only and must pay for transponder space on Sinosat, one of China's domestic satellites even if they already have satellite coverage over China. Distribution is controlled by CCTV (China Central Television) subsidiary China International TV Corporation (CITVC) which takes the lion's share of revenue for acting as an agent.

Table 1 - The 33 foreign TV channels approved to broadcast in China in 2008

Foreign Channels	Foreign Channels
AXN Asia	BBC World
Bloomberg TV	CNN International Asia Pacific
Celestial Movie Channel	Channel News Asia
Channel [V]	China Entertainment TV (CETV)
Cinemax	CNBC Asia

Cubavision International	Discovery Networks ASIA
ESPN Asia	Eurosports News
Hallmark Channel	HBO Asia
Horizon Channel	KBS World
Xing Kong	MTV Networks Asia Pacific
Macao Asia Satel-lite TV	NHK World Pre-mium
National Geographic Channel Asia	Phoenix Chinese Channel
NOW TV (Hong Kong)	Phoenix Movie Channel
Phoenix Infonews Channel	Star Sports
STAR Movies	TV5Monde Asie
Sun TV	TVB 8
TVB Xing He Channel	

Source: CMM Intelligence – March 2008

SARFT Extends Primetime Ban on Foreign Animation

TV stations will be banned from airing foreign animation - including shows with puppets - between the "golden hours" of 5 pm and 9 pm from May 1, 2008. SARFT released a new regulation extending the current ban on foreign animation during prime time TV by one hour, according to the industry regulator the move is designed to "spur the domestic cartoon industry".

Under the regulations, TV stations may only broadcast domestic cartoons approved by SARFT or provincial broadcasting authorities during children's primetime. Broadcasters need to seek approval from SARFT before airing Sino-foreign co-productions during these hours. They need to broadcast at least 7 hours of domestic animation for every 3 hours of foreign animation overall.

The regulations warned TV stations they must not buy or re-broadcast unauthorized programs,

and expressly forbade them from broadcasting pirated or prohibited foreign animation. SARFT said they will be punished severely for violating these regulations.

Domestic animation was the fastest growing sector in China's TV industry in 2007, with output growing by more than 92% per annum to 82,300 minutes of new content.

Source: China Daily – February 28, 2008

TV Animation Production Up in 2007

Preferential government policies helped make animation one of the fastest growing segments of the TV content production industry in China in 2007. To encourage growth, the government established a number of national animation industry bases that enjoy a number of preferential policies. The output from these national animation industry bases grew 58% year-on-year to 132 cartoon series in 2007. Altogether, the main cities like Hunan, Guangdong, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Beijing and Shandong accounted for 79% of the total official output in China.

Source: CMM Intelligence - March 2008

New Digital TV Policy Promotes Three Networks' Convergence

Promoting the convergence of the "Three Networks" – namely the internet, digital TV and telecommunications networks – is one of the major aims of the new Chinese policy to encourage the development of the digital television industry.

The policy, released by the State Council on January 1, 2008, sets out a number of goals and measures designed to speed up the digital TV development in China over the next 10 years. Six government ministries formulated the policy and pledged to work together to speed up the roll-out of digital TV services, and promote the construction information infrastructure such as broadband, digital TV and the third-generation (3G) mobile

networks. The ministries involved are the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Information Industry, State Taxation Administration and the State Administration of Radio, Film and TV.

In 2008, the country will broadcast the 2008 Beijing Olympics to the world in high-definition TV format. By 2010, the existing cable TV networks in all cities above county level in eastern and central provinces of China will be digitalized. The switch-off has been set in 2015.

Industry insiders say the policy has broken with the previous government policy, which required telecom and television network operators to conduct their businesses separately. By doing so, it has paved the way for the development of value-added services by TV sector firms and IPTV (Internet Protocol TV) services by telecom operators. The Ministry of Information Industries also helped establish a new digital TV common interface conditional access (CA) separation standard in February 2007, paving the way for future cooperation between telecom and television network operators.

Source: CMM Intelligence – March 2008

China Produces 40 Episodes of TV Drama Every Day

TV dramas are getting more and more popular in China. Most Chinese people spend at least one hour a day watching TV dramas. Meanwhile, the number of production studios has surged from 432 in 2001 to 2,511 in 2007. In terms of content, 2007 saw a growing trend towards TV dramas based on real life stories. Two TV dramas based on the life of the young Chairman Mao and Chinese immigrants living in the Gobi desert were among the ten highest rated programs aired by CCTV last year. Altogether

er, 388 "real life" TV dramas were produced in 2007, accounting for around 73% of national output. TV dramas are a significant source of income for the bulk of Chinese TV channels, because they generate more than half the advertising revenues reported by around 89.4% of TV channels in China.

Source: CMM Intelligence - March 2008

Advertising Sector Growth Slows To Below GDP in 2007

China's advertising market grew by just 9% in 2007, compared to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 11.4%, according to a new report from CTR Market Research, a leading market research company in China. It was the first year the advertising market grew at a slower rate than GDP.

Tian Tao, vice president of CTR Market Research, said total ad revenues in China were RMB312 billion (€29.95 billion), excluding the Internet and new media ad revenues. The internet and new media markets maintained steady growth, despite the apparent slowdown in other sectors, such as print. Internet ad revenues increased 48% year-on-year to a total of RMB11.6 billion (€1.11 billion), making it the fourth most profitable advertising sector after outdoor advertising. TV continued to dominate the traditional media with ad revenue growth of 12%. In contrast, ad revenue growth reported by the print sector slowed significantly.

In 2008, Tian Tao forecasts the Olympics will drive the TV's share of the total ad spend up rapidly, leaving the print sector with an even smaller slice of the pie. The up-and-coming Internet and LCD (Liquid Chrystal Display) advertising sectors will continue to expand, starting the real battle for advertising dollars against traditional media.

Source: CMM Intelligence - March 2008

Online In-Game Advertising to Reach RMB250 Million in 2008

Online in-game advertising revenues are expected to hit RMB250 million (€24 million) in 2008 after reaching RMB120 million (€11.52 million) in 2007, according to a new report from iResearch, a research firm in China. More and more game companies are expected to focus on in-game advertising in the future and it is estimated that the market will continue to grow to more than RMB1 billion (€95.99 million) in 2011.

Source: CMM Intelligence - March 2008

DAB Roll Out in China

Commercial Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) services have been on air in four cities throughout China following governmental approval by the State Administration of Radio, Film and TV (SARFT). The Chinese government has standardized DAB in September 2006. To date this is the only European digital broadcasting standard to be adopted in China. The current licenses, which have been awarded to five regions, Beijing, Shanghai, Dailian and Guangdong and Yunnan, put a limit on the amount of data/video services that can be used on a multiplex. Radio Beijing Corporation has been one of the key industrial drivers for the quick roll out of DAB in China. In November 2006, Radio Beijing Corporation launched ten digital audio and two mobile video programs. The services have since been increased to 15 DAB digital radio and 6 Digital Multimedia Broadcasting (DMB) services using a free-to-air business model. By the first quarter of 2008, 4 more transmitter sites will be completed which will allow for 86% coverage of the city. By June 2008, Radio Beijing Corporation will offer 20 DAB, 6 DMB and 3 Data programmes as well as ensuring Olympic stadium coverage. In

fact, Beijing will be the first city in the world to broadcast the Olympic Games via DAB/DMB to international visitors.

Sources: Radio Beijing Corporation, SARFT - April 2008

China's New Information Super-Ministry to Streamline Telecoms

As part of a major ministerial reorganization in China, the ministry that governs telecommunications and the Information Technology industry will enjoy expanded powers. Under the plan, which will create five new super-ministries in an attempt to streamline China's huge bureaucracy, the Ministry of Information Industry (MII) will take over some administrative oversight and decision-making functions previously enjoyed by the National Development and Reform Council (NDRC). The MII will also incorporate the State Council Informatization Office (SCITO) and the military IT research arm Commission of Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (COSTIND). MII, which will be known as the Ministry of Industry and Information, regulates telecom carriers, sets IT industry standards, and oversees electronics manufacturing. Though, the implementation timeline is unclear, at the moment.

One of top priorities for the new super ministry is the long-awaited reorganization of China's telecommunications carriers. The existing companies are expected to be re-apportioned into three entities, each providing fixed-line and mobile offerings. The country's largest mobile operator, China Mobile, is expected to be combined with China Railway Communications, a small fixed-line provider set up by the Ministry of Railways. The other mobile operator, China United Communications will be split into two parts. The operator's GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) mobile network

will go to fixed-line carrier China Network Communications Group (China Netcom), which will likely change its name to China Unicom. China Unicom's CDMA (Code Division Multiple Access) network will be merged with China Telecommunications Group (China Telecom), another fixed-line operator.

Source: Washington Post - March 2008

BBC Launches "Beautiful China" Documentary Serie

Beautiful China, a television documentary series featuring never-filmed-before wildlife and natural landscapes, was officially launched on May 10, 2008. The series was co-produced by the BBC Natural History Unit and China Television Media, the production arm of China Central Television (CCTV), making it the first cooperation of its kind between the BBC and a Chinese television channel.

Shot entirely in High Definition format over five years, *Beautiful China* is one of the most expensive documentaries to be produced in recent years with a total budget of RMB68.79 million (€6.4 million). The six episodes in the series take viewers on a journey through China's natural and cultural heritage, exploring famous landmarks like the Great Wall, the Yellow River, Mount Everest and the Yangtze River.

The BBC has already licensed the series in more than 25 countries, including Australia, France, Germany, Canada and Russia, with more agreements expected to follow. CCTV has announced it will air the series soon. John Smith, CEO of BBC Worldwide, said he believes people around the world want to learn more about China's wildlife, history and landscape right now, as the upcoming Olympics have focused the world's attention on the country.

Source: CMM Intelligence - April 2008

Waiting for 08-08-08.



China Daily and Sohu.com Signed Strategic Partnership for Beijing 2008

China Daily, the official English language newspaper in China and elected as the official publishing journal for Beijing 2008, and Sohu.com, one of the leading Chinese traditional portals and elected as the official Internet content service sponsor for the Olympic Games, signed an agreement for a strategic partnership on last 18 April in view of the coming Olympic Games.

China Daily is distributed in more than 150 countries in the world. Sohu.com will report to the world all the events and competitions of the Games in five languages – Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Arabic. Beyond the joint report for Beijing 2008, according to the agreement, both partners will cooperate in the areas of cross-media interactive platforms more deeply. China Daily will provide Sohu.com everyday with exclusive English contents, while Sohu.com will daily select exclusive contents and blogs that will be translated into English for China Daily to reprint.

Source: China Youth Daily - April 19, 2008

3G mobile service available for Beijing Olympics

The third-generation (3G) mobile phone service is ready for use

in the upcoming Beijing Olympics as the high-speed wireless connection service and related products were formally delivered on April 28, 2008. China Mobile, China's top wireless operator, and South Korean cell phone producer Samsung presented 15,000 3G handsets, plus data cards and nearly RMB3 million (€279,300) of calling fees, to the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 29th Olympic Games here on April 28.

With the offer, work staff and volunteers of the Games can enjoy high-speed data transmissions, which allow them to watch televised games, play videos, and surf the Internet on cell phones.

The service is based on the Chinese 3G standard, known as TD-SCDMA (Time Division Synchronous Code Division Multiple Access). China Mobile has basically finished construction of the TD-SCDMA network in eight cities, five of which are to host events for the Beijing Olympics in August, including Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, said the company. China has promised to provide 3G service for the Games.

China Mobile is the sole cooperative partner for the Beijing Olympics in mobile communications services while Samsung is the only one in mobile terminal supply. China Mobile started the commercial trials of 3G services in the country on last April 1.

The International Telecommunication Union recognized TD-SCDMA as one of the world's three official 3G standards in 2000. The other two are Europe's WCDMA and North America's CDMA 2000.

Source: China Daily Online - April 29, 2008

Project "Communications in the Olympics"

Taking the Beijing 2008 Olympics as a fresh case in communications, this project aims, on the one

hand, to create a cross-cultural approach between East and West in the contemporary "Olympics Communication Complex", and on the other hand, it attempts to investigate the role of communication, especially the mass media, in construction of the social value of the Olympics, with a reflection on the change of paradigm occurring with the advent of the Internet and the need to develop new regulations in the communication framework of the Olympics.

The project is promoted by the Information Office of the State Council and the International Olympic Committee and organized by the Asia Media Research Centre at the Communication University of China in Beijing and co-organized by the Olympic Studies Center at the Autonomous University of Barcelona in Spain, the China Media Observatory at the University of Lugano in Switzerland and the Global Key Visual Network at the Jacobs University of Bremen in Germany.

The study will mainly focus on the most representative audiovisual communication of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. With the cooperation of 10 research centers and agencies around the world, 10 supervision centers will be set up to complete worldwide research and investigation into the audiovisual communication analysis of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

First of all, a comparative content analysis surrounding the main 2008 Beijing Olympic events will take place in the 10 correspondent countries, in order to identify how Beijing (as host city) and Chinese national culture were represented in each particular context and the type of narratives adopted by broadcasters.

The difference between these inter-broadcasters on the basis of officially provided statements will have reference to the elements of Olympic protocol, national representation and the communication of host identity, as well as spec-

tacle and entertainment. This content will be determined through a process of negotiation between different stakeholders at the local and international levels with different political, economic, social and cultural aims.

Secondly, a questionnaire survey investigation will help to get a deep insight into the international public. The questionnaire will involve the roles of four types of mass media (TV, radio, press and new media like internet and mobile). Through the content analysis and questionnaire, it is possible to identify how the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games are reinterpreted by different types of media from different countries; how people from different regions relate to and with the Olympic Games; what kind of changes will take place in terms of the international image of Beijing and China before and after the 2008 Olympic Games.

The conclusion will reflect on the challenges facing the ceremonies' organizers for Beijing 2008 and how threats to intercultural understanding may be tackled afterwards.

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EVENTS, CONFERENCES and BOOKS ABOUT CHINA

China Media Observatory, Lugano.

■ International Conference on Communications (ICC 2008)

Kunming, China, May 19-23.

The 2008 IEEE International Conference on Communications (ICC 2008) will be held in Beijing, with the theme "Communications: Faster-Higher-Stronger". This symposium is hosted by the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) and sponsored by the Norwegian Research Council, Programme of Cultural Studies KULFO. For more information, visit: <http://www.shuoshu.org/>

■ Changes and Challenges: China's Media Today

University of Westminster, UK, June 12.

Continuing rapid changes in China mean that the media are confronted everyday with new problems and new challenges: eventual changes in the ownership of Chinese media and the 2008 Olympic Games in China versus restrictions on domestic reporting. The way the media, both inside and outside China, report on the economy and society is changing all the time. This one-day conference aims to discuss the current situation both in the Chinese media and foreign reporting of China. A main focus will be on the investigative journalism in China. For further information, visit: <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/mad/page-1264>

■ 2008 Global Communication Forum

Shanghai, China, June 21-22.

The 2008 Global Communication Forum, organized by Shanghai Jiaotong University in collaboration with the Global Communication Research Institute and the School of Media and Design at Shanghai Jiaotong University, the Faculty of Communication and School of Literature at Purdue University and the International Communication Association (ICA), is divided into the academic and professional sections. The theme of the 2008 Forum is dedicated to "New Media and Social Transformation". The Forum will be held both in English and Chinese. For more information please visit <http://smd.sjtu.edu.cn/log.jsp?id=32>

New & Notable Books

PENG Lan, ***Zhongguo wanlu meiti de di yi ge shi nian [The First Decade of Internet in China]***, University of Tsinghua Publishing House, 2006.

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of the development of Internet in China from 1994-1995 to 2003 by examining its main waves. From a kind of laboratory experience in the beginning, Internet has become a more and more popular tool over years: from the websites established by the mainstream newspapers (e.g. People's Daily Online) and some of the leading Chinese online news portals (e.g. Sina.com), to the increasing number of Internet providers and in recent years, to the explosion of new forms of communication, in particular blogging and podcasting. As medium, Internet has become part of the national strategy of economic development. On the one hand it spurs online advertising: for instance, the ad resources of a leading portal, Sohu.com, grow from \$5,8 million in 2000 to \$29,5 million in 2003. On the other hand, with the advent of Internet new economic sectors such as short and instant messaging, pay per view services, online games and e-commerce have flourished.

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