2021 Annual Conference of the European Media Management Association (emma)

Media management and sustainability

Jönköping, 27-29 October 2021

Hosted by

Media, Management and Transformation Center (MMTC), Jönköping International Business School, Jönköping University, Sweden

Venue

Jönköping International Business School, Jönköping, Sweden and online. Details about the modality of the conference will be announced in reasonable time beforehand.

Theme: Media management and sustainability

> *It is very hard to be against sustainability. In fact, the less you know about it, the better it sounds… The questions connected with sustainability are genuine and deeply felt and very complex. The combination of deep feeling and complexity breeds buzzwords, and sustainability has certainly become a buzzword (Solow, 1991).*

In the last 30 years, sustainability has moved beyond its buzzword status. In 2015, all United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, setting a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future". The agenda recognizes "that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests" (GA UN, 2015). In management, notions like corporate social responsibility (Carroll, 1999; Garriga & Mele, 2004) or the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1998; Norman & MacDonald, 2004) have gained currency, helping to illuminate sustainability issues and drive social and environmental reporting and performance in organizations and their interactions with financial outcomes.

The concept of sustainability centers on the capacity of a system to adapt and survive into the long-term future (Costanza & Patten, 1995): a sustainable system is one which survives or persists. Sustainability requires complex and dynamic equilibria among economic, social, and ecological aspects, and the short-, long- and longer-term perspectives (Lozano, 2008). Recently, the notion of sustainability, in a context of digitally transformed consumer behavior and financially struggling organizations, has also entered scholarly discussions on media. Societal, cultural, environmental, legal, technological, market and other macro-level interdependencies influence the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the dominant means of mass communication (broadcasting, publishing, and the Internet). At the organizational level, the economic sustainability of media players – i.e., their capacity to remain in the market for long time – may depend on efforts and activities as diverse as innovation and technology, collaboration, knowledge management, processes, purchase and sustainability reporting and communication (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2010). Similarly, media organizations' social sustainability – anchored on their positive influence on present and future relationships and stakeholders, such

as their value chains or their local communities (Figge et al.; 2002) – will hang on critical organizational strategies in human capital development, corporate governance, internal motivation and incentives, ethical behavior, or corporate citizenship. And finally, media organizations' use of resources, emissions, or waste also carry a significant impact on ecological sustainability not always addressed.

Scholars have started to provide insights and overviews on how sustainability has been applied and explored in the world of media firms (e.g., Berglez et al., 2017). However, media management research has still to provide greater understanding on how media organizations respond to the imperative of sustainability (Lubin & Esty, 2010) and how economic, social, and environmental performance interact. Importantly, media management scholars also have a significant–but yet unfulfilled–role in asking questions and helping to make collective decisions related to what media systems, subsystems, and characteristics of them, we should be interested in sustaining (Costanza & Patten, 1995).

We welcome all topics related to sustainability issues relevant for media management research to the upcoming emma conference. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Sustainability in media's business, social and environmental performance, such as:
  - The relation between media ownership and market structures with media sustainability.
  - The role of government in serving – through actions, taxes, subsidies, and regulations – media sustainability.
  - Sustainability as a source of competitive advantage and innovation in media.
  - How media companies perceive, define, and manage sustainability and how they deal with contradictions different dimensions of sustainability may create.
  - Gender equality in media organizations.
  - Social sustainability of offline media in a digital world.
  - The effects of Press freedom, ethics, democratization, and other conditions for independent media on media sustainability.
  - The role of the media in communicating the science on sustainability issues.
  - The impact of media ownership and management on how sustainability issues are covered.
- The intersection between sustainability initiatives and media activity, such as:
  - The role of communication technologies in companies' sustainability.
  - The use of media to address sustainability issues by educators, corporations, and organizations' stakeholders.
  - The use of media as a legitimation tool for sustainability reporting.
  - The topic of sustainability as challenge for media and journalism.

Depending on the context and perspective, sustainability can appear an evolving concept whose meaning is dependent on the situation. As ideology, it may seem, at times, political and negotiated and, often, normative, ethical, and moral beyond questioning. On some occasions, it may take the form of a vision to work towards, perhaps a potential catalyst for change. Rather than as a major conceptual impediment, we see the vague and ambivalent nature of the concept of sustainability – in its "enormous canvassing and heuristic capacity" (Wals & Jickling, 2002) – as a great starting point to exchange views and ideas, providing a convenient steppingstone in the evolution of media management scholarship.

emma welcomes both paper and poster proposals that address either the specific conference theme or other issues regarding the management of media organizations.

Call for papers

Submissions for the emma conference are invited as paper proposals in the form of abstracts (500-750 words) followed by a full paper (6000 words maximum), if the abstract is accepted. The abstract should address the following evaluation criteria:

– problematization, research purpose, anchoring in previous research, and relevance to the academic field of media management,

– research methodology,

– summary of (expected) results/findings,

– intended contributions to the field's knowledge,

– practical implications (for business and/or policy).

All submissions will go through the process of double peer review by experts nominated to the conference's Scientific Committee.

Full papers can be considered for the emma2021 Best Paper Award (€300) only if they are submitted before 30 July 2021.

Submit paper abstract online at **emma2021**. Deadline: 30 April 2021

Call for posters

Similar to the Call for Papers, we welcome poster proposals that address either the specific conference theme or other topics relevant to the field of media management. Different from the papers (which participants will present orally), posters should introduce on-going and future research projects. The focus is less on the results of such projects than the research question(s) and methodology. Ideally, participants will look for cooperation partners through such posters. The posters will be exhibited in a prominent place at the conference venue throughout the conference. Whoever is interested in presenting a poster, should submit an abstract (500–750 words) that addresses the following evaluation criteria:

– relevance of research gap,

– goals of the ongoing or intended research project,

– research questions, working hypotheses, propositions,

– research methodology and description of the empirical data used,

– description of the project team and collaboration partners,

– intention: why I want to present my project at the emma conference,

– expected outcomes: what I want to gain from this presentation at the emma conference.

If their poster proposal is accepted, participants will receive clear guidance in terms of poster size, format, etc.

Submit poster abstract online at **emma2021**. Deadline: 30 April 2021

Important dates

30 April 2021	Deadline for abstract submissions (papers and posters)
31 May 2021	Notification of acceptance (papers and posters). Opening of conference registration. Opening of full paper submissions
30 July 2021	Deadline for full paper submissions to be considered for the emma 2021 Best Paper Award
19 October 2021	Closing of conference registration
27-29 October 2021	emma 2021 Annual Conference

emma conference grant

Early career researchers who wish to apply for an emma conference grant (up to €1000) are referred to the Call for Applications published on the emma website.

References

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