The Potential Role of New Media in the Creation of Communities

Abstract. This paper focuses on the problem of creation of communities through New Media. After having done a survey of New Media challenges and of some contemporary discussions on the concept of community, I concentrate on the framework for theorising the virtual communities. Some authors adopt a positive and optimistic view about the potential of New Media in creating communities (coined utopians), while others have serious doubts (dystopians). In this context, I approach a few controversial themes such as distributed communities, diluted communities, functional communities, normalization or the idea that the Internet is a valuable resource for overcoming the fear of public exposure and diminishing or erasing the physical distances among individuals.

Key words: virtual communities, new media, social interactions and networking, cyberspace, community commitment