

Bell Atlantic – Temple University Conference on Digital Communication
A Prospectus:

“The Challenge of the Digital Age: A Forum of Diverse Perspectives”

The “digital age” is upon us. It is the ability to transform any information into computer file format and to access, store, manipulate and transport such information on demand. This new age of virtually unlimited access to unlimited information is reshaping the world around us and changing the global landscape. Digital technology is changing forever how the world community communicates and interacts. The rapid growth of this technology has provided policy makers, industry consultants, and social analysts with the challenge of regulating, charting, and understanding its development.

The demands of globalization have necessitated mergers, acquisitions and strategic alliances between media organizations and the technology industry. Network television and telephone companies are acquiring cable stations; computer hardware companies are developing digital communication hybrid devices; software companies are becoming Internet providers. Could the effects of this convergence and the demands of the new media marketplace be homogenization and sterilization of content, or could they result in greater diversity and increased access to information for every citizen? Is the new media environment more interactive and empowering, or is it just an easier way to deliver customers to the marketplace? How can we secure a future in which all citizens have equal access to information? These are a few of the important questions which this conference will address.

George Gerbner, Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunications at Temple University will convene the conference. **Jean Moore**, Associate Professor Emerita in Social Administration, Temple University, will moderate. Keynote speakers include **Patricia Beadling**, Vice President, External and Public Relations, Bell Atlantic – Pennsylvania; **Jeffrey Chester**, Executive Director, Center for Media Education; **Dirck Halstead**, Editor and Publisher, “The Digital Journalist”; **Edward S. Herman**, Professor Emeritus of Finance, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania; and **Richard Somerset-Ward**, Senior Fellow, Benton Foundation.
