

**The Challenge of the Digital Age:  
Hope or Hype?  
A Forum of Diverse Perspectives**

Unbeknownst to many Americans, the "digital age" begins on December 31, 2006. Soon thereafter, television and other systems of communication, ranging from computers to satellites, will change. The change to digital technology holds out the promise of greater diversity of communication than has ever before been possible. This is a critical juncture in communications for both public service and private opportunities.

The purpose of the proposed two-part international conference is to provide a forum for well-balanced dialogue among leading media and other industry executives, members of the creative community ("content providers"), community leaders, and scholars. The dialogue is intended to facilitate fair, mutual and public understandings of the interests and perspectives of these key players in the process.

The first meeting takes place on November 20, 1998, at the Sugarloaf Conference Center of Temple University in suburban Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia. It is a one-day round table of about 25 leaders in diverse areas of telecommunications. Issues for exploration and points of discussion arise from participants' own self-interest, as revealed in their responses to preliminary meeting materials. It will have both a substantive purpose resulting in a report for publication, and a planning function for the second meeting.

The second meeting will take place May 7-9, 1999 in New York, with expected attendance of 30. It is an international conference whose scope, programs and participants will assure high visibility.

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The conference is convened by George Gerbner, Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunications at Temple University. For more information, contact Victoria Tredinnick, Conference Coordinator, c/o George Gerbner, Department of Broadcasting, Telecommunications and Mass Media, School of Communications and Theater, Temple University, 218 Annenberg Hall, 2020 N. 13th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122

## **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 limitless information is reshaping the world around us. This new technology is changing the global landscape. It is changing forever how the world community communicates and interacts.

The purpose of the two-part international conference is to provide a forum for a well-balanced dialogue among leading media and other industry executives, members of the creative community ("content providers"), community leaders and scholars. The dialogue is intended to facilitate fair, mutual and public understanding of the interests and perspectives of these key players in the process,

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The second meeting will take place May 7-9, 1999 in New York. It will be a widely-publicized international conference of about 30 participants.

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The conference is convened by George Gerbner, Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunications at Temple University, in collaboration with Bell Atlantic - Pennsylvania and Temple University. For more information, contact Victoria Tredinnick, Conference Coordinator: c/o George Gerbner, Department of Broadcasting, Telecommunications and Mass Media, School of Communications and Theater, Temple University, 218 Annenberg Hall, 2020 N. 13th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122, 215-204-6434, 215-204-5823 (fax), [DigCon@astro.temple.edu](mailto:DigCon@astro.temple.edu), <http://astro.temple.edu/~DigCon>

# The Challenge of the Digital Age: Hope or Hype?

## A Forum of Diverse Perspectives

Unbeknownst to many Americans, the “digital age” begins on December 31, 2006. Soon thereafter, television and other systems of communication, ranging from computers to satellites, will change. The change to digital technology holds out the promise of greater diversity of sources and perspectives than has ever before been possible. Will it be fulfilled?

The two-part international conference will address that critical question. It will provide a forum for a well-balanced dialogue of leading media and other industry executives, members of the creative community (“content providers”), community leaders and scholars.

Part I of the conference takes place on November 20, 1998 at the Sugarloaf Conference Center of Temple University in suburban Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia. It is a one-day round table of 25 leaders in diverse areas of telecommunication. It will explore issues suggested in the responses to the invitation, issue a report for publication and prepare the agenda for Part II.

Part II will take place May 7-9, 1999 in New York. It will be a widely-publicized international conference of 30 participants.

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Bell Atlantic – Temple University Conference on Digital Communication

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The purpose of the two-part international conference is to provide a forum for a well-balanced dialogue among leading media and other industry executives, members of the creative community (“content providers”), community leaders and scholars. The dialogue is intended to facilitate fair, mutual and public understanding of the interests and perspectives of these key players in the process.

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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.

The conference will be convened by **George Gerbner**, Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunications at Temple University. Keynote speakers include **Patricia Beadling**, Vice President, External and Public Relations, Bell Atlantic – Pennsylvania; **Jeffrey Chester**, Executive Director, Center for Media Education; **Lawrence K. Grossman**, former president of NBC News and PBS; **Edward S. Herman**, Professor Emeritus of Finance, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania; and **Katherine C. Montgomery**, President, Center for Media Education.

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For more information, contact Linda Greenwood, conference coordinator, by e-mail <[greenwood@snip.net](mailto:greenwood@snip.net)> or phone (215) 204-8427. You may also send correspondence to the address below or visit the conference website at <<http://astro.temple.edu/~digcon>>

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