Editorial

Gijs Mom, Georgine Clarsen, Peter Merriman,
Cotten Seiler, Mimi Sheller, and Heike Weber

In the middle of last year, a large survey in the Netherlands revealed that the average Dutch person dedicates seven hours per day to “media consumption.”¹ That is the gross value, the surveyors assure us. The net value is 5.5, meaning that 1.5 hours are spent multitasking, such as watching TV and surfing on the net, or “tweeting” (on Twitter) during a football match. Remarkably, using the cell phone while driving would not qualify as multitasking as the car is not considered to be a medium. Users know better, as we will see in this issue, and mobility researchers are devising conceptual frameworks that are adequate to the complex and multiple relations between diverse media.

With this issue, the first of the third volume, we enter the inextricably merged worlds of mobility and communication histories. As a sequel to the programmatic article by historian of technology Heike Weber, which we published in our first issue two years ago, we present a Special Section on Media and Mobility. For this Section, Heike Weber teamed up with media historian Dorit Müller to bring together a set of programmatic articles, with which we intend to open up a new subfield of mobility studies. The articles constitute a step toward re-joining what had been split up more than a century ago, when historians of transport and communications decided to put scholarship on the railways into a separate box from scholarship on the telegraph. Now we find ourselves re-integrating the histories of mobility and communication as a result of the burgeoning practices of mobile social networking, locative mobile media and gaming, augmented reality, and a plethora of networked devices (phones, cars, homes, workplaces). The special section in this issue is the start of a regular strand in our journal, which will be dedicated to teasing out the interactions between physical movement and communicational media.

Acknowledging Heike Weber’s pivotal role in this new strand, the Editorial Team decided to invite her to join us during our last meeting in Wales and we are delighted that Heike accepted our invitation, as have sociologist Mimi Sheller and cultural geographer Peter Merriman. Together, Heike, Peter and Mimi will deepen our multidisciplinary approach to mobilities, and help us to bring into conversation perspectives from both the humanities and the social sciences. Cotten Seiler, who has

been so central to our work over the first two years, will step back from our team due to other professional demands.

We have more mutations in our editorial team to announce. First of all we expanded our book review editors' team considerably: Matilde Cordoba Azcarate, Chandra Bhimull, Giuseppina Pellegrino, and veteran Frances Steel, all led by the new book review editor Liz Millward. This team has a wide thematic and geographic spread, bringing expertise in globalization, sustainability, tourism, maritime mobility and aeromobility, gender, and communications, as well as India, the Caribbean, the African diaspora, New Zealand, Australia, the Pacific Islands, Europe, and North America. In addition, Sunny Stalter-Pace joins Dorit Müller as editor of our movie section.

On the basis of our discussion in Wales, let us now define where we stand as an editorial team, also as expressed in our new mission statement, which can be found on the inside front cover of the journal and on the website. Whereas in our programmatic editorial in our very first issue we defined our new field in negative terms (as the decentering of the car, of mobility, of history), we are now able to use a more positive terminology. Thus, we are especially interested in historically-grounded analyses of past and present experiences of various *mobile subjects* such as vehicle drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and cyclists, but also migrants, refugees or the hyper-mobile elite. Furthermore, we hold that a thorough understanding of mobilities also should involve accounts of the arrival and transformation of *mobility infrastructures* and systems in different nations and locales, as these have unfolded in specific ways. And, finally, we also seek investigations into the *kinetic processes* of a wide range of other kinds of non-human actants, including global capital, technology, chemical and biological substances, images, narratives, sounds, sensibilities and ideas. With this expanded editorial policy, we especially encourage contributions that 'rethink mobility' through a *transnational, multimodal, or transdisciplinary* perspective, in other words taking mobility studies beyond the developed urban world, beyond motorized transport, and beyond traditional disciplinary approaches. This also entails dealing with subversive (non-hegemonic) and subaltern (non-Eurocentric) mobilities, including a focus on the spaces, infrastructures, practices and affects of mobility that contribute to the production of uneven forms of access.

On the basis of these insights we also decided to reorganize our Editorial Board, from now on making a distinction between a more active group involved in refereeing and book reviewing, and a new Advisory Board of senior scholars, at somewhat more distance from our daily work, whose sheer presence should indicate the scholarship we seek to those who don't yet know our journal very well.

In this issue we have tried to live up to our own reformulated ambitions by offering you a wide array of topics and approaches. First, we have Mikkel Thelle, who introduces us to a subversive aspect of mobility by revealing a little known episode of Danish history, when inhabitants of Copenhagen transformed a traditional public celebration into a mobility-related riot. In his “Subversive mobilities: The Copenhagen riots 1900–1919”, Thelle affirms the need to theorize particular spaces, especially public ones, as sites for both domination and resistance, where people’s mobilities can be both shaped and liberated.

Then, we have Colin Pooley’s “Uncertain mobilities: a view from the past.” Pooley is a geographer with an interest in long-term patterns of mobility and migration, which he showed in his oral history research on twentieth-century travel experiences, and in the article here, based on diaries and life histories. His scholarship is a fine example of what our team is after: fruitful combinations of historical scrutiny and current-day policy concerns.

We also bring Chandra Bhimull’s analysis of how commercial airline travel reshaped colonial interactions in her “Reshaping Empire and Repositioning Race: Airline Travelers and Colonial Encounters in the 1930s.” She uses an interdisciplinary methodology, “anthrohistory”, to trace how the vertically distanced and distancing encounters afforded by air travel worked to produce new imperial subjectivities and gave rise to new expressions of racism.

And then, as already announced, we have our special section: three articles on the potential methodologies of mobility-cum-media scholarship, introduced by Heike Weber and Dorit Müller and followed by an invited comment from Patricia Mokhtarian. The former’s original call for papers was so successful that we think we have opened a seam of new scholarly creativity so we are now preparing several other, more empirical papers as sequels to be published during the coming year. If you feel inspired, why don’t you send us a submission exploring this domain? Mokhtarian’s comments, which introduce the perspective of a travel behavior researcher, realizes our desire to invite members of other disciplines and from other perspectives to help us rethink mobility. She offers a meditation on her own scholarship at the crossroads of mobility and communications research to illuminate some of the paradoxes in the symbiotic relationships between telecommunications and travel, which have been analyzed by the historians in our special section. As to the fully peer-reviewed contributions to this section: in “Mobilizing Transport: Media, Actor-worlds, and Infrastructures,” Gabriele Schabacher describes infrastructures—the backbone of any communication and transport—as unfixed, mobile entities. Applying Actor-Network Theory, she shows their need of constant maintenance and movement to operate. Hence, instead

of talking of fixed “structures” she asks us to think about “infrastructuring” to include the many mediations and transformations that have to happen before we can communicate or travel. Regine Buschauer, in her article “The ‘ambulant’ in-between: Media histories of mobile communication,” enlarges this perspective and looks back into twentieth-century history. For radio communication, she demonstrates that media have always been in transition and she discusses how far previous technologies such as telegraphy or citizens’ band radio already shared the “unfixed”, “ambulant” status of today’s mobile communication. “‘All Transportation is Local’: Mobile-Digital-Networked-Technologies and Networked Orientations” is Joseph Turcotte and Len Ball’s contribution to this Special Section. They examine how mobile, digital and networked technologies (MDNTs) have given rise to new ontologies and subjectivities, as individuals reorient themselves to their environments, as boundaries between public and private space are altered, and as we move through and reach across the world in new kinds of ways.

This issue also contains our regular sections, realized by our re-organized editorial team. Daito Manabe and Motoi Ishibashi present their art installation “Particles,” while our new movie review editor Sunny Stalter-Pace reviews *Premium Rush*, and Rodrigo Booth introduces us to his country’s Air Transport Museum. Liz Millward and her new team provide us with eleven book reviews. Their shape is now more uniform in length and style and the books to be reviewed have been carefully targeted to represent our mission more closely. Finally, Peter Merriman offers a transcription of a panel discussion which formed part of a one-day symposium he organized with Rhys Jones at Aberystwyth University in Wales in September 2012. In this piece, five leading mobility scholars—Tim Cresswell, Colin Divall, Gijs Mom, Mimi Sheller and John Urry—reflect on the development of mobility studies over the past decade or so, speculating on the future direction of mobilities research. This workshop provided the opportunity for our Editorial Team to convene in Wales.

Finally, we begin this new volume as we began our two previous volumes: with something unexpected that nonetheless expresses our new élan and our determination to make this journal one of the central platforms to rethink mobility and its history. By publishing a poem by Tim Cresswell (who has a collection of poetry forthcoming) we hope that we can convince you, reader, to work with us in defining a common program of research, discussion, and perhaps activism related to the challenges of mobility and its study in the coming decades. We need new scholarship, open to and inspired by interdisciplinarity, new sensibilities and new practices to deal with our mobile future. We would encourage you as readers to introduce others to the journal and to help expand its readership

through your university libraries. We want the content of *Transfers* to reach the largest possible audience.

Notes

1. Jan Benjamin, "Ons mediagebruik: minder tijd, meer schermen," *NRC Handelsblad* (June 19, 2012), 32–33.