

# The Convergence Theory on ICT And Psychosocial Life Environment

*Gunilla Bradley, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Sweden*

---

## ABSTRACT

*The convergence model illustrates ongoing changes in the Net Society. However the theoretical model goes back and synthesises the theoretical framework in the author's research on psychosocial work environment and computerization. Interdisciplinary research programs were initiated by the author in the 70s and then analyzed changes in society related to various periods in "the history" of ICT. The description of the convergence model is structured with reference to the concepts Globalization, ICT, Life Environment, Life Role, Effects on Humans. Both Convergence and Interactions are important features in the model as well as the four levels of analysis – individual, organisational, community, and societal.*

*Keywords: Convergence, Human Beings, ICT Society, Information Society, Psychosocial, Theory*

---

## INTRODUCTION

I met with Sangeeta Sharma on the Net many years ago; it was our mutual focus on Human Beings and ICT that brought us together. We exchanged thoughts and research experiences with passion. Sangeeta contributed with a chapter in a Festschrift in 2011 to honor my lifelong research in the field (Haftor & Mirijamdotter, 2011). She was preparing to join the great celebration event arranged by Linnaeus University in Sweden at the release of the Festschrift. About 70 invited guests from around the world had gathered and most of them being chapter authors in the great book. However unrest occurred at the University of Rajasthan which prohibited

Sangeeta's presence in Sweden, but words of wisdom from her hand was presented at the banquet. The first time for our personal meeting was at the IADIS conference on "ICT, Society, and Human Beings" in Rome in 2011. One of the highlights was a panel session on "ICT and Human Rights" where Sangeeta participated. It is a great pleasure to contribute in this special issue the International Journal of ICT in Human Development.

"Possibilities and Risks" at the introduction and use of ICT have been the topic of many conferences, books and articles. The risks are evident and the opportunities are unlimited and concern all levels of analysis. There are desirable efforts to build societal structures and ICT as well as the related internet infrastructures, to promote human rights. At the same time human

DOI: 10.4018/jicthd.2012070102

rights become threatened by the use of ICT e.g., surveillance and control.

A short “human manifest”: ICT should be used to deepen the humane qualities to promote what is often entitled “love,” to help us to meet others the way we want to be met ourselves might be one way to clarify that goal, “The Golden Rule,” (Confucius 551-479 B.C.). The utmost goal is to create prerequisites and structures that facilitate the personal growth towards maximizing the love, care, and empathy that exist in the human mind and soul.

The rationalization of working life – products and services – has gone so far in many countries so we can afford to have people in health care, child care and social work. The global matter is an allocation of resources, material and non-material.

The rest of this article is mainly built on my chapter “The Convergence Theory on ICT, Society and Human Beings: Towards the Good ICT society” (Bradley, 2010a) in the Festschrift.

## THE CONVERGENCE THEORY ON ICT, SOCIETY, AND HUMAN BEINGS

### Structures in Interaction with Human Beings

The Convergence Model could be seen as a synthesis or aggregation of my initial theoretical models. I have often given the convergence model the subtitle “ICT and the Psychosocial Life Environment.” The convergence model is primarily a graphical illustration of ongoing changes in the Net Society. However the theoretical model goes back and synthesises the theoretical framework in my research on psychosocial work environment and computerization, with roots back to the 1970s research and research programs during various phases of the *history* of computerization.

The convergence model is presented in detail in my book “Social and Community Informatics – Humans on the Net” (Bradley, 2006) in two chapters. The first focused on the emergence of the theoretical conceptual

framework and successive models in interaction between theory and empirical studies. The other chapter takes one step further and was entitled “From Theory to Actions – How to achieve the Good ICT Society – a Tree of Action.” An organic model – a tree with its trunk (the international and global level) and its branches and sub branches were applied for illustrating actions on structural changes on various levels of society including the Individual Level. Some comments to the model in Figure 1 will follow and the description is structured with reference to concepts in the outer circle in the figure: Globalization, ICT, Life Environment, Life Role, Effects on Humans (in the middle).

The present Network period is very much based on the convergence and integration of processes on various levels of analysis. Converging circles graphically reflect the ongoing processes. The converging technologies are: computer technology, tele-technology and media technology. The convergence process is enforced all the time by smaller, cheaper, and more powerful technical components. ICT is increasingly being used in almost every activity and embedded in more and more things (ubiquitous computing).

Both Convergence and Interactions are important features in the model. *Convergence* here means a move towards a common content. *Interaction* means that technology interacts with the social world with values and beliefs.

There is also an ongoing interaction between the “clusters of circles.” There are *four levels of analysis* – individual, organisational, communital, and societal. Structures impact on human beings but human beings also impact structures – this interaction is basic knowledge in most behaviour and social sciences. This is valid for economical, cultural, political structures on the societal level and for example organisational structures and ICT infrastructure on another level. But the process of interaction differs between authoritarian and democratic societies.

The circles in the model have become kind of life partners when I look at the world around me. Daily when reading the newspaper and listen to all kind of media, I often get some

12 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the product's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/article/convergence-theory-ict-psychosocial-life/69971?camid=4v1](http://www.igi-global.com/article/convergence-theory-ict-psychosocial-life/69971?camid=4v1)

This title is available in InfoSci-Journals, InfoSci-Journal Disciplines Communications and Social Science.

Recommend this product to your librarian:

[www.igi-global.com/e-resources/library-recommendation/?id=2](http://www.igi-global.com/e-resources/library-recommendation/?id=2)

## Related Content

---

### Empowerment of SMEs Through Open Innovation Strategies: Life Cycle of Technology Management

Hakikur Rahman and Isabel Ramos (2011). *International Journal of Information Communication Technologies and Human Development* (pp. 42-57).

[www.igi-global.com/article/empowerment-smes-through-open-innovation/55958?camid=4v1a](http://www.igi-global.com/article/empowerment-smes-through-open-innovation/55958?camid=4v1a)

### A Human Affect Recognition System for Socially Interactive Robots

Derek McColl and Goldie Nejat (2013). *Handbook of Research on Technoself: Identity in a Technological Society* (pp. 554-573).

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/human-affect-recognition-system-socially/70373?camid=4v1a](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/human-affect-recognition-system-socially/70373?camid=4v1a)

### The Many Sides of Human Resource Information Systems

Hilkka Poutanen and Vesa Puhakka (2010). *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction* (pp. 1-13).

[www.igi-global.com/article/many-sides-human-resource-information/46972?camid=4v1a](http://www.igi-global.com/article/many-sides-human-resource-information/46972?camid=4v1a)

## Conclusions and Implications

Shannon H. Schelin and G. David Garson (2004). *IT Solutions Series: Humanizing Information Technology: Advice from Experts* (pp. 44-54).

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/conclusions-implications/24770?camid=4v1a](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/conclusions-implications/24770?camid=4v1a)