



PRESS RELEASE

2060: WHAT WILL BE THE SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF OUR TIMES?

A comparison of techniques, practices and social sciences

On Thursday, April 8th, and Friday, April 9th, 2010, a convention is to be held at the Polytechnic of Turin, promoted by Telecom Italia Foundation with the Polytechnic of Turin, the Italian Sociology Association, SISSCO – the Italian Society for the Study of Contemporary History and Cliomedia Officina.

On April 8th and 9th, 2010, in Turin, an academic convention is to be held, entitled “2060: what will be the sources for the history of our time? A comparison of techniques, practices and social sciences,” promoted by Telecom Italia Foundation with the Polytechnic of Turin, the Italian Sociology Association, SISSCO – the Italian Society for the Study of Contemporary History and Cliomedia Officina.

Imagine that in 2060 someone wants to find out about today’s world. The enormous quantity of information that is produced today in digital format, or is recorded on analogue media and put on the web, represents precious evidence of our epoch. But what will remain of all this digital material, as extensive as it is transitory, in 50 years, given the rapid obsolescence of the technologies? What sources will the scholars of 2060 draw on, and by what means?

To answer these and other questions, **Telecom Italia Foundation** with the **Polytechnic of Turin**, the **Italian Sociology Association**, the **Italian Society for the Study of Contemporary History**, and **Cliomedia Officina** issued a challenge, through a public announcement, to which experts, historians, sociologists and even young researchers responded enthusiastically. This challenge will culminate in the convention of April 8th and 9th, during which the protagonists will take to the field to contest their points of view, present their evidence, discuss and try to supply answers to the many, stimulating questions that arise.

The reflections that the convention intends to stimulate concern both what we intend to leave to posterity as “worth remembering,” but also what we leave unknowingly. Thinking about what might constitute a source for sociological and historical research in fifty years obliges us to question ourselves about the way we live, our attitudes to memory and the future, as well as the practices and methods used today in the world of innovation and the economy, scientific research and the social sciences.

“Among the many starting points for reflection, the importance of the historical archives of business to the conservation of memory stands out,” declared **Fabio Di Spirito, General Secretary of Telecom Italia Foundation**. “The Telecom Italia Historical Archive, in particular, whose enhancement is one of the institutional tasks of the Telecom Italia Foundation, records the history of telecommunications and the modernisation of our country. It was this that prompted the idea of organising the convention, as the first step of a project aimed at making the Telecom Italia Historical Archive a centre of cultural attraction, and a place for meeting and reflection on the history and sociology of communication, so vital in the modern world.”

Opening the convention will be a comparison of international best practises with **Inge Angevaere**, coordinator of the Dutch project, the Netherlands Coalition for Digital Preservation, which aims to provide a shared technological and organisational platform for the conservation of public information. The Italian response will be given by **Stefano Vitali**, the Director of Archive Superintendence for Emilia Romagna, while **Serge Noiret** and **Luca De Biase** will discuss some of the most significant examples of digital archives in Europe and America.

The work groups will be broken down into **five subject areas**:

1. Digital documents: what to conserve, where and how?
2. New sources for investigating the imagination.
3. Personal memories. Facebook and other social networks.
4. Current theory and practice : new methodologies and instruments.
5. Future archeology: technological artefacts, objects, refuse.

The discussions will range over the rich heritage of the archives of businesses and institutions, valuable testimony regarding the history of our country, the success of **Facebook** and social networks, “traces” of personal memories and online science fiction as the “imagination of the future.” Nor will reflection on the consumerism of our times be neglected, with consideration given to **garbology**, the science of studying the refuse, tangible and intangible, that is produced by society, extracting from it information in order to reconstruct cultural, social and material environments.

“Personal memories, web businesses and cultural projects” is the title of the second session, which will be conducted by the sociologist **Paolo Jedlowski** and the historian **Gabriella Gribaudo**, dedicated to three entirely Italian cultural initiatives: the **Memory Bank** of Luca Novarino, a special history of Italy on the web, related by the words and faces of our “grandparents,” the **National Diary Archive**, founded by Saverio Tutino, and the **University of Autobiography** of Duccio Demetrio.

On April 9th, the session will open with an evocative account, from prehistory to the present day, of the main instruments to which man has entrusted the conservation of his memories, from the early graffiti of 35,000 years ago, to the personal computer and the Internet. This is the theme of the lecture by **Vittorio Marchis**, Professor of the Polytechnic of Turin and well-known as a scientific populariser through his “autopsies on machines,” which explain, in a simple, intuitive way, the “mysteries” of technology.

The convention will close with a debate among some of the most authoritative Italian experts in social sciences: the historian, **Tommaso Detti**, the sociologist, **Antonio De Lillo**, and the Turin philosopher, **Maurizio Ferraris**.

The **Scientific Committee** of the convention will be composed of **Fabio Di Spirito**, General Secretary of Telecom Italia Foundation, **Luca De Biase**, editor-in-chief of Nova-Il Sole 24 Ore, **Tommaso Detti**, Professor of Contemporary History of the University of Siena, **Paolo Jedlovski**, Professor of General Sociology of the University of Calabria, **Vittorio Marchis**, Professor of the History of Science and Technology at the Polytechnic of Turin, **Serge Noiret**, History Information Specialist, European University Institute of Florence and **Chiara Ottaviano**, Cliomedia Officina of Turin. For information: www.fondazionetelecomitalia.com.

Telecom Italian Foundation is one of the manifestations of the strategy of Corporate Social Responsibility of the Telecom Italia Group. It was established in December, 2008, to reinforce the Group's commitment to support the community in which it operates, promoting ideas and projects aimed at improving people's quality of life. Telecom Italia Foundation operates in the social field; in education, training and scientific research; in the protection and enhancement of the historical and artistic heritage and the environment. The Foundation's tasks include the enhancement of the Telecom Italia Historical Archive.

For 150 years, the Polytechnic of Turin has been one of the most prestigious public institutions in Italian polytechnic education and a centre of excellence in training and research in Europe, with close ties and collaborations with the economic and social system. To its traditional missions of higher education and research, it has added the diffusion of technology and services to the territory. It is a decidedly international University with a multi-ethnic and multicultural campus of around 28,000 students, of whom around 40% come from outside the Region. Of these, 12% are foreigners from around 100 countries, with a predominance of Chinese students (around 20%).

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