On Thursday I spoke at a [blogging/Web 2.0 event](#) that took place at [ZKM in Karlsruhe](#) (Germany), the institution known for its baroque new media art installations. Ever since its inception in the early nineties the hierarchical ZKM, preoccupied with high art 3D interfaces, has had a problematic relation with the decentralized and ugly, txt-based Internet with its unruly users. Fifteen years later this deliberate inability, unfortunately, hasn't changed. Peter Weibel might have thematically interesting approaches and collaborations (for instance with Bruno Latour), but when it comes to Internet culture, he fails to initiate or support interesting initiatives.

The agenda of "Ich, Wir und die Anderen" (Me, You and the Others) event was unclear and mixed up blogging with social networking sites. Even if it was a bloggers event (looking at the CVs of the speakers), it did not deal with blog theory or critical Internet research. The event did not celebrate blogging either. It is important in this context to know that Germans hardly blog, and this statistical fact made it a difficult topic to talk about. Ich, Wir und die Anderen was not a bar camp and had a pseudo-critical, typical continental-European 'pessimism' and showed that ZKM was neither informed nor really engaged in the topic. This was demonstrated by the fact that the main speaker at the opening evening, German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, did not show up and ZKM director Peter Weibel did not even bother to come down from his office.

Similar to other events it proved difficult to solely depend on (famous) blogger who do their spiel. Outside of German institutional politics and tribal differences there are also a number of general reasons why it is hard to organize intellectually challenging blog conferences. I am certainly not the first to list them:

– Blogging seems primarily a national, inward-looking activity. There is hardly a global bloggers scene (with the exception of sites such as [Global Voices](#)), perhaps outside of those that blog in English, but even there I doubt the networks go beyond the known Anglo-Saxon context (with a few Scandinavians, Dutch and so on).

– After a euphoric phase the 'A-list' group of leading bloggers scene is about to fall apart in Germany, or already has, such as in other countries like the USA.

– Technologically, blogs are not further developing. There may be new widgets and even better ways to integrate audio and video, and even finer

ways to measure traffic and ranking, but that's it. As an easy-to-use Internet publishing platform blogs will no longer appeal to the techno-imagination (if they ever did in the first place…).

– Blogging is going still going through a high growth phase, but this time without leaders/best practices that appeal to the (national) blogospheres as a whole. Related to this is 'genre question': is the blogosphere about to fall apart in a thousand a one distinct genre that have nothing in common?

– On the user level there is a growing competition between reading and writing blogs and the participating in social networking sites such as MySpace, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn or Hyves (the Dutch site). Where will people hang out if they have a limited time online? If social networking sites are forbidden at work, it might be the case that blogs are used during work hours. This fact alone changes the way how people relate to blogs, in that they are likely to respond and merely read, leaving their interactive time to email, their cell phone, social networking sites–and perhaps friends in real life.

At some later stage I will discussion the expropriation of Google, a proposal that I developed together with Pit Schulz in a yet unfinished text on Netzkritik (net criticism) 2.0.

Here are some quck links to reports, in German, about the event:

andreas schepers
oliver grassner
http://www.uninformation.org/weblog/56/
http://www.bamberg-gewinnt.de/wordpress/archives/824
http://www.sozlog.de/?p=579