

**Abstract to SMiD 2024 “Media (and) sustainability: Crises, paradoxes and potentials”
Themed Call**

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The digitalization of media is often presented as an immaterial and environmentally friendly solution to the climate crisis, even though it has a significant and constantly growing carbon footprint (Kuntsman, 2020; Lucivero, 2020; Ministry of Transport and Communications Finland, 2020). However, the environmental impact of digital media is frequently forgotten in media research and practice (Kannengießer & McCurdy, 2021). In this paper, we build on document and interview data to examine how media companies in the Nordic countries understand and frame the environmental responsibility of their digital services.

Drawing on organizational communication and environmental communication literature, we examine these understandings and frames through the lens that future-oriented corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication can be performative and guide action toward aspired goals. Extending research on organizational aspirational talk (Christensen et al., 2013, 2021; Schoeneborn et al., 2020) and sustainability scenarios (Svenfelt et al., 2019), we shed light on the at times paradoxical goals and responsibilities of digital media companies to minimize their negative impact on the planet (carbon footprint) and to maximize their positive impact on society (carbon handprint). Initial findings show that digitalization and climate change are both addressed as major megatrends that transform organizational practices and are integrated into organizational strategies but are nevertheless frequently

treated as separate phenomena in organizational communication. Concurrently, organizations are typically silent about the environmental consequences of constantly and rapidly expanding digital consumption. The research aims to suggest practical tools that would be useful for the media industry in their seek for responsible practices in the climate crisis era.

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