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SMIT stands for Studies on Media, Information and Telecommunication. The research centre, founded in 1990 at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, is part of iMinds. SMIT specializes in social scientific research on media and ICT, with an emphasis on innovation, policy and socio-economic questions.

Currently, the research center consists of over 60 researchers. SMIT research combines user, policy and business analysis with both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. In order to develop new methodological tools, a continuing dialectic between theory and empirical research is one of the centre's high-level objectives. Three methodologies have become the core of SMIT's research agenda: • user research • policy analysis • business modelling. Together with research center MICT (UGent), SMIT forms (and leads) the iMinds' research department Digital Society.

Ike Picone is since April 2006 researcher at iMinds-SMIT and project leader/Senior Researcher since 2010. Since 2012, he is a part time doctoral-assistant on journalism studies at the VUB Department of Communication Sciences. Since October 2012 he is also appointed as joint research coordinator of the Brussels Platform for Journalism. His research focusses are situated in the domain of news and journalism studies and focus on the theme of interactive and participatory news use, with a special interest in digital storytelling and self-publication. He specializes in qualitative user research, especially semi-experimental digital ethnography, with links to Living Labs, Proxy Technology Assessment and methods like in-depth/diary/expert/laddering interviews and focus groups. His study on the participatory news practices of regular news users resulted in a PhD in september 2010.



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