Social networking

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Magazines *on* or *off* line?

Aarna Hanley
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

A magazine?- a bound printed form of media containing print and text? Magazine, the term, is one we are all familiar with but when one begins to try to define it we run into difficulty as it represents a media form that has more differences than similarities. To complicate the matter of defining it, a recent magazine trend has been to develop an online presence. Magazine titles are no longer confined to their printed form but now coexist within the digital realm. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the relationship between the print form of a magazine title and it's website. In addition the paper will consider how the identity of the magazine is changing due to the presence of its online counterpart. This paper is concerned with a genre of magazines publications known as independent magazines. The Independents as defined by Megan Le Masurier have an editorial focus of "under-represented manifestations of popular culture and creative work for independent producers of fashion, design, the visual arts, photography, music and film although a few are overtly political." (2010: 4) The paper will discuss the continual importance of the printed form to a magazine's indentity in particular refernce to the Independents. The goal of this paper is to offer a more appropriate definition of a magazine within this changing digital climate.

Within the theoretical framework of media studies the paper will assess magazines digital presence through comparative textual analysis of both the print and online forms of three independent magazines AnOther, Interview and COLORS.

Keywords

A magazine?

Our printed best friend?

They reveal our desires, awaken our aspirations and feed our needs.

The term, magazine, is one we are all familiar with; a printed bound book that contains text and images? The problem is when one begins to try to define the term we run into difficulty because a magazine signifies no uniform reality (Holmes, 2008). It represents a media form that has more differences than similarities. The fact magazines are now developing an online presence further complicates the matter of a definition. They are no longer confined to ink and paper now they also coexist in digital bit and bytes.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the relationship between the print form of a magazine title and it's website. In addition the paper will consider how the identity of the magazine is changing due to the presence of its online counterpart.

This paper is concerned with a genre of magazines publications known as independent magazines. The Independents as defined by Megan Le Masurier have an editorial focus of "under-represented manifestations of popular culture and creative work for independent producers of fashion, design, the visual arts, photography, music and film although a few are overtly political." (2010: 4)

Their growing presence is explained by the contemporary trend where creativity is becoming more valued and cultivated in our time as identified by Richard Florida (2002). This trend places the independents as a micro-business of the 'creative industries' of design, music, fashion, computer graphics and games, film and television (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999:9). The Independents have also been labeled the 'last magazines' as they are tied primarily to the print medium. (Renard, 2006) Yet they use the marketing, distribution and social networking possibilities enabled by digital technologies (Le Masurier,2010: 24).

The medium specificity that defines the independents as a genre in the magazine industry hence will offer an apt case study to look at the idea of media change and furthermore the place for the printed form within our digital age. Hence their paradoxical presence within this digital age demands a more appropriate definition of a magazine which is the goal of this paper.

Comparative textual analysis will be used in order to analyze this online/offline relationship. Yet when studying a body of material as diverse as magazines, it is nearly impossible to make claims about representativeness hence three magazines have been chosen for anlaysis to act as case studies without being models. (Piepmeier, 2008) The three publications that will be analysed are AnOther, Interview and COLORS. All three are members of the above Independents but they all have very different publication histories. Their differences offer an appropriate comparison to look at a magazine's presence into the digital realm.

The point of view from which we will frame this analysis is 'the reader'. A magazine does not exist without a readership. "The mantra of magazine publishing is always to pay attention to the needs, desires, hopes, fears and aspirations of 'the reader'."(Holmes, 2008: xii) Therefore a community forms between readers and makers of the magazine. The

analysis will contextualise this community within the 'creative industries' and from there provide a definition of this magazine as an object/artifact of this community. (Florida, 2002: Hartley, 2009) Therefore the comparative textual analysis will compare the reader's experience to that of the online and offline versions of the magazine title within the context of the magazine's editorial philosophy. The editorial philosophy "explains what the magazine is intended to, what areas of interest it covers, how it will approach those interests, and the voice it will use to express itself." (Johnson and Prjatel, 2007:135) Questioning how the different forms of communications positions 'the reader' and how their experience with the printed version affects their encounter with its digital doppelganger and visa versa.

AnOther … magazine?

AnOther Magazine was first published in 2001 and is a biannual British high-end fashion magazine published by the Dazed and Confused Publishing Group. The printed version with over 450 pages defines itself as 'the definitive guide to the new season in high fashion and culture.' AnOther reader's, "want to experience the fashion collections in a refined magazine alongside the best of contemporary art and culture, and in an environment free of celebrity gossip and down market advertisers."

The very title of AnOther calls attention to the materiality of the magazine itself. This reflects an emerging trend within independent publications like itself of having self-reflexive tendencies. Magazines of its sort as Michael Jacovides has observed are questioning the very nature of what a magazine is? how it works? and how it could work? (2002: 17).

At the very least for it's name, AnOther it is an fitting publication to analyse as it enables us to question if these self-reflective values translate online? And furthermore if the online environment is actually redefining what a magazine is?

AnOther's website, AnOtherMag.com brings together the publications AnOther and it's male counterpart AnOther Man with a claim that it is "more than just another magazine website." (http://www.anothermag.com)

AnOtherMag.com transposes its print aesthetic to the digital screen. The serif font type which varies only in size; a pared down aesthetic of black and white where the printed page unceremoniously couples print and image. The magazine's aesthetic actually recalls the very pared down and simple physical description of a magazine that was given at the start of this paper; a printed form containing text and image. With AnOther the focus is purely on the content of the words and the subject of the images.

Interestingly one's first encounter with the interface of the webpage recreates one's encounter when first opening a magazine as the reader's eyes move across the screen following images and text. Yet the eye is forced to scroll down in keeping with the context of the digital experience. From then on the reader's experience differs and transforms them from a reader to a user. As Lev Monovich has argued, "a defining feature of new media digital objects includes modes of representation in which we are interpolated as users rather than just viewers or readers.' (Banks, J. and Deuze, 2009:421). In this online environment cover stars are bought to life, models move, interviewees speak. Our visual literacy in this virtual magazine relies upon our digital literacy as Richard Lanham asserts "To be deeply literate in the digital world means being skilled at deciphering complex images and sounds as well as the syntactical subtleties of words. Above all, it means being at home in a shifting mix of words, images and sounds." (Handa, 2005: 198, 200)

Unlike the printed form, the website offers the opportunity for self-directed interaction (Cranny-Francis, 2005). Readers are not confined by a beginning, middle and end rather they can move through layers as content is presented in a way that bears more resemblance to a filing cabinet. They have the choice to open whichever file they so desire. The website is divided into four distinct sections; Current which files away columns by its leading writers; Exclusive files web-exclusive fashion editorials; Reader is a file of an edit of the best blogs on the web; and Loves is a file of recommendations of luxury products by their online community. This self-directed activity means the reader is actively involved within the creative community or class who "share a common creative ethos that values creativity, individuality, difference and merit." (Florida, 2002: 8) In readers being their own editor in this digital realm of the magazine they become part of a collective whole. Jefferson Hack, one of the founders of Dazed and Confused, fittingly describes the relationship between print and online form, "What Dazed Digital can offer on the web is about the moment. The printed magazine's is much more about the collective memory...a souvenir of what's happening in the moment." (Le Masurier, 2010: 28)

Interview- "the new doesn't necessarily wipe out the old."

Kurt Anderson, cofounder of Spy and New York columnist //Kurt Andersen, "The Good Old Boy of Time Inc, "New York, January 23, 2006

Interview Magazine holds a historical place in independent publishing history. Andy Warhol first published it in 1969. As the ultimate Pop Art gesture, the magazine began

as an artwork. It's own history reiterates Joseph Monteyne idea that these very genres of magazines are closer to "an art object than to the mass-produced serial objects so characteristic of popular cultural."(2002:7) The magazine is still attached to its original philosophy of providing celebrity, art fashion, film, music and cultural news with the same inherent tone of popularity. Hence it offers a pertinent case study to look (literally) at the place of old media within a new media terrain.

Interview defines it's digital counterpart interviewmagazine.com as an 'online magazine'. Despite the fact it defined itself as a magazine if we consider its print form as being one visual genre interviewmagazine.com uses the language of a completely different visual genre. It does not have a beginning, a middle and an end and its online form visually resembles the genre of websites (Cranny-Francis, 2005). The online magazine has a digital aesthetic and therefore readers or rather users experience the online content very differently. The reader asynchronously move through the content rather than a linear movement across the content as would be the case with the printed form. Individual channels identified in the global navigation bar at the top of the site house content on fashion, music, film, art and culture. Related content to each of these categories is then gathered from the calendar of events to blog posts.

Specifically for this paper analysis of Interview is interesting in light of its history. It allows us to look at how a publication with such print legacy translates into an online environment maintaining the integrity of the past while also looking to the future. The company, Code and Theory, responsible for creating interviewmagazine.com placed great importance on respecting the publications history when developing the online strategy by designing an infrastructure that had "the flexibility to publish 40 years of multimedia archives as well as remain flexible enough for future needs."(http://www.codeandtheory. com/) Through the archive section the digital magazine offers something unique and it is not confined to a single issue. Neither is it confined as one object, unlike its print counterpart. Rather it collates its whole history in one online magazine in the archive section where four decades of interview magazine covers can be seen. Ironically it is the online magazine, the intangible form, that actually gives tangibility to the past.

Despite the fact the reader interacts with the content of the two media forms so differently there is a consistency across the two in terms of their aesthetic. The distinct typographic markers of the print form have been translated to the online magazine. This raises the idea that the magazine title comes to represent a larger entity embodying many media forms. Furthermore in relation to the pursuit of a definition this shows that "medium-specific

perspectives may limit our understanding of the ways in which media interact shift and collude with one another….each medium is touched by and in turn touches its neighbors and rivals." (Thorburn and Jenkins, 2003: 11)

*Interview*ing *AnOther* community

The intimate relationship a reader has with a magazine has always been a distinct characteristic of the magazine as a media form. As David Abrahamson acknowledges, 'the editors and writers of magazines share a direct community of interest with their readers.'(2008: 148) The digital forms Interview and AnOther magazine have taken this idea of a community even further within the digital realm by giving the users of their website a digital file which holds content that the individual selects from the website. Interview has aptly called this 'My Library' describing it as a means by which "user's can save material from the site in a kind of playlist". In AnOther a category titled 'Loves' allows users to select and save in 'Everything I Love' international luxury objects they love which as the website describes, "has been hand-picked for you by our global network of contributors." With applications such as these the reader's experience with the magazine becomes personalized, to the level they become their own editor of content. Therefore moving online further deepens the community-like interaction between a magazine and its readers and this can be explained within the context of Florida's idea of the 'creative class' a class born in our times. "A fundamental characteristic of today is that we strive to create our own identities. It is this creation and re-creation of the self, often in ways that reflect our creativity, that is a key feature of the creative ethos." (2002: 7)

Another key characteristic of a print magazine, that has defined the relationship between it and its reader, is the idea of tactility. As Steven Heller has described, "turning pages is the quintessence of interactivity ….it focuses attention on the word and image at hand."(2008: 43) Therefore the materiality of the Independent magazine becomes important as it acts as an artifact to this creative community. For the reader the tactile relationship is one of intimacy. This intimacy is reinterpreted in the digital realm through such applications as the library-like function (and also Augmented Reality as will be discussed later on). The community of readers and their magazine become even closer as they can select their own content to form an individual edited files that exist within the online magazine. "The internet is a multimedia channel, which tends to emulate and integrate many older media, blurring their boundaries without really supplanting them." (Pauwels, 2005: 609)

The shift online has reinterpreted and reformed aspects that have defined a reader's relationships with print to now fit a user's relationship with the online magazine, a user's new online digital mate. Yet neither usurps the other both coexist deepening the bonds of the magazine community.

COLORS magazine-a computer lab

COLORS is a quaterly magazine read by young adults around the world that was established in 1991 under the editorship of Tibor Kalman as part of the publishing activity of Fabrica, Bennetton's communication research centre. Each issue explores a different theme by predominately using the visual language of pictures. The magazine's editorial philosophy is based around the premise that diversity is positive and all cultures have equal value. Themes are as diverse as looking at a place '#70Bejing', to a thing '#73Money", to a sentiment '#66Best Wishes' to the frivolities of #09 Shopping.

In 2009, in it's 18th year of publication COLORS launched it's website COLORSLAB. This website takes the identity of an interactive platform. The platform is a collaborative space where writers, photographers and ordinary readers submit their work online. Where as the other two magazines used their websites as further content providers COLORSLAB's primary purpose is as a content producer. But this content is produced by the readers which deepens even further the idea of community between readers and editors that we looked at with the other publications. With COLORS the line between editor and reader becomes even more blurred in this community.

With COLORS there is an immediate visual difference unlike the other two publications in the interface of its website. We are presented with the bare minimal amount of information and choice. We can either upload information or view past issues.

Unlike the other two magazines when you sift through the content of the past COLORS issues online you do not view it as a HTML page rather the pages are presented as they were within the printed binding of the original magazine and this is overlaid with othermultimedia forms such as video content and audio. In this context Cranny-Francis' discussion on how users or in the case of readers, use their literacy of past visual forms when interacting within new textural forms is appropriate here. This is because the reader views the printed form but in a multimedia environment repositioning the reader as a user and also changing it's relationship to the printed magazine. But COLORS takes this even further through it's use of Augmented Reality. When the reader holds selected pages up to their computer's web-screen the reader finds themselves in a world that mixes reality with

that which is virtual.

COLORS online component not only alters the relationship of the user to the content but also it alters the identity of the printed form. The printed form is no longer confined to ink and paper and it now has a virtual umbilical cord to the online form. Its online presence has a place in offline existence yet now so does the reader/user. The on/offline magazine are linked and what links them is a creative community therefore a definition of a magazine must accommodate this community which exists across media forms.

Summing up

In conclusion we can see from the analysis of the three publications that the presence of the magazine's online counterpart changes how the reader interacts with the content of the magazine. As we have identified the reader is central to how a magazine works therefore if an online presence is changing the nature by which readers interact there should also be a change in the way we define what a magazine is.

The presence of the online does not mean that magazines are disappearing. Anything but. Rather the online helps cement even stronger bonds with the reader and its content. The notion that a magazine is defined by paper has to be left behind. "Old media rarely dies: their original functions are adapted and absorbed by newer media, and they themselves may mutate into new cultural niches and new purposes." (Thorburn and Jenkins, 2003: 12) As in the case of the Independent magazine the mutated form, "becomes a part of the culture, a way to develop the culture, not a neutral media commentator." (Le Masurier, 2010: 11)

A magazine title now represents a larger entity which is not restricted to just one media form rather it positions a contemporary subject in a multimedia environment. Within this creative community of readers and makers the magazine is artifact but the online component, "has allowed the indies(independents) to develop what could be called a 'global niche' of readers whose specialized interests are not limited by location but connect horizontally across national borders." (Le Masurier, 2010: 19)

Therefore a magazine is linked to the idea of a community. Their shared values are those of the editorial philosophy and in this new media domain these values are developed and explored not just in one media form but, across many.

COLORS website succinctly gives a new definition for our once trusted printed friend, "the word magazine takes on a new meaning made of both paper and screen, photography

and video."

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The Lord of the Who?

By Elise Keeling
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

This article seeks to examine the impact that electronic, digital, and interactive technologies have had on the production of literary knowledge and the narrative. The research assignment will further speculate the role of 'digitally preserving' narrative literatures through what has been labelled 'transmedia storytelling'. It is an investigation which assesses the integrity of a great narrative once it has been subject to the inevitable 'tossing' and 'turning' throughout the vast mediums in this universal 'media playground'. It will also utilise contemporary media theory to break down and conceptualise transmedia storytelling and further assess the implications of 'participatory culture' on the creative industries. Whilst we are only beginning to discover the exciting possibilities and capabilities which technology and digitisation hold, we would not be doing our job as inquisitive human beings if we did not speculate into the role of digitisation of the narrative.

The importance of this research is to understand exactly how much one 'records' and 'preserves' of the original narrative when the various cross-sited narratives are re-fabricated for each media platform they deploy. The article will hopefully address the convergent narratives of our time and therein give us a better understanding of digitisation and the narrative and further the assumptions which surround it.

Keywords

Introduction

Convergent literatures or 'cross-sited narratives' is the idea of multi-modal stories told across various media channels. As a society we have become dependent on images and representations constantly seeking visual mediums and new ways of receiving information and narrative.

J.R.R Tolkien's novel 'The Lord of The Rings' was handed to me when I was eleven years old. My father had treasured the book as a young adolescent and he gave me the same worn-down novel which he had treasured in his childhood. I too fell under the powerful realm that this piece of literature had over my dad, taking in new and exciting interpretations of this brilliant world that Tolkien had created. However through the ever-changing media landscape and what has been labelled 'transmedia storytelling' it would be fair to say that

my experiences and interactions with the piece would differ vastly to other's experiences.

Like many popular literatures "The Lord of The Rings" has been dragged throughout the digital arena having a profound and wide ranging impact on popular culture. Its original publication in the 1950's as an intricate and masterfully epic narrative had an enormous impact on society. It then maintained its popularity with its transformation to popular radio, theatre and film adaptations which re-imagined the original narrative. This lead to the inevitable adaptations of 'Lord of The Rings' video-games, tragic attempts at video sequels and of course the ability to read it on the computer screen via e-book technology.

The re-imaginations and hype which came about from the Lord of the Rings I found all too exciting, however I did not know how to feel when I came home one day to find my brother playing Lord of the Rings on his playstation. I watched eagerly as he fought for the Dark Lord Sauron destroying all of middle earth; an absurd rendition of my beloved childhood narrative. So at this juncture I must ask, what are the consequences of digitisation and convergence to a brilliant narrative?

Narratives are something which society has cherished and enjoyed for hundreds and thousands of years; libraries and entire institutions have been developed for the protection and safety of the written word. However new technologies have emerged over the past decades which have challenged the popularity and power of the written novel. It is in the name of 'digital preservation' and 'cross-sited narratives', whereby media technologies have adapted an original narrative to fit their specific medium. The possibilities of these technologies are all very exciting, particularly when considering participatory culture and 'remix' theories. However it then becomes necessary to speculate the importance for the manifestation of the original narrative when it has been re-imagined and re-fabricated throughout this vast media playground.

Paradigm Shift

Historically, before transmedia storytelling was capable, the focus of the author was simple; to tell one good story and keep audiences engaged; "the plot was then considered the most significant part to a story, then came the characters" (Ruppel. 2009. 23).

Marc Ruppel outlines a shift in the audience's understanding and priorities of new media, narrative and play, and further our methods for studying these fields. He examines the enormous impact which electronic, digital, and the interactive technologies and practices have had on the production of literary knowledge and narrative. Over recent decades

audiences have become more deeply engaged with good solid characters. This is evident through television shows, where a good storyline is not central as audiences focus their attention on the well-rounded characters which they either -like or dislike (Ruppel. 2009. 24). Consider 'Seinfeld', the popular television show of the 90's, the episodes each have an irrelevant plot based around insignificant problems such as someone's bad breath or an irritating habit they might have. This is not what keeps us interested, it is rather how the characters deal with the situation which keeps us watching.

However, increasingly through transmedia narratives, scholars are noticing another big shift in society's way of thinking. Scholar Geoffrey Long notes "The entertainment industry has learned that yes, popular recurring characters can increase repeat revenue, but better still is a rich story world that can host multiple sets of recurring characters, as in Star Trek and Star Wars" (2000. 13).

Thus the modern paradigm is revealed; There is an overriding importance for the story teller to captivate universes in unique ways. For example, there is no main protagonist in the Star Wars epic as the initial three films follow Anakin Skywalker's journey to the dark side, and the later three films follow his son, Luke Skywalkers journey. The overarching story instead becomes about the intriguing universe which Lucas has created. Long describes this as the storyteller assigning the role of the main protagonist to the world and the structures and mechanisms which exist within it (2000. 160). Many transmedia narratives aren't the story of one character at all, but the story of a world.

Consider the biggest box-office hits, the grandest transmedia narratives; Star Wars, Lord of The Rings, Harry Potter, Matrix, Avatar. One common factor which they all share is that they are constructed around physical spaces which are somewhat different to our own world and norms.

Furthermore, Henry Jenkins suggests that because current generations have grown up consuming texts across diverse media platforms, by design we have specific expectations and hunger for sophisticated story telling;

"Younger consumers have become information hunters and gatherers, taking pleasure in tracking down character backgrounds and plot points and making connections between different texts within the same franchise" (2007. 12)

Thus Jenkins coined the term 'convergent culture' which describes the exciting new avenues which producers are taking and the great lengths which they are going to in order

to improve the experience of a 'grand narrative'. He describes how significant it is that each extension of the narrative, whether it is video game, film or television series can stand on its own as an 'individually enjoyable entity' (2007.13).

Negative Capability / Franchise for this 'new audience'

Mark Deuze is a contemporary theorist who underlines the problematization of popularity in convergent culture. When a text is transformed as popular culture, the one thing permeating in the minds of producers at all times is profit. The Lord of The Ring's film trilogy alone grossed a total of 2.91 billion dollars never lone the profits from gaming, merchandise and online profits. Media companies have incentives to spread the narrative or brand across as many different media platforms as possible. However, the inconsistencies across these platforms can be potentially detrimental to the understanding of a franchise.

Geoffrey Long suggests that if a film such as the Matrix were like any ordinary non-transmedia franchise, the film would stand as an independent phenomenon (2000. 89) Instead the first film was so successful that producers edged the storytellers to create sequels with huge budgets for exceptional special effects, and slightly inconsistent and confusing storylines. This is further illustrated through the creation of 'Enter the Matrix' and the 'Animatrix' mini-series which had a mostly negative reception from audiences because content was both related and irrelevant to the films. Long refers to this kind of transmedia storytelling as capitalizing on 'negative capability' where the "implicit meanings confuse audiences"(2000. 56). Thus highlighting how media conglomerates and the 'cash grubby' producers can threaten the integrity of the narrative.

So how is Lord of the Rings so popular when one can completely alter the sequences in the narrative? Long suggests that if the transmedia extensions can keep up with the tones, structures and characters of the 'world' then the plot becomes irrelevant and the audience can even feel empowered and enthralled as entrepreneurs of the narrative (2000. 60). Therefore my interaction with the playstation game is irrelevant to my emotional engagement with the novel because the game stands as an independent re-imagination of the narrative and is significant as an individual strand of the Lord of the Rings paraphernalia.

New technological achievements do not necessarily mean the extinction of older media, but rather their recombination. Society is a network of hunters and gatherers, chasing down bits of the story across media channels, attempting to fully experience every fictional world. Thus new kinds of audiences have formed, and producers are creating narratives

for new social structures that enable the production and circulation of knowledge within a networked society (Long. 2000. 21).

Digitisation or 'Fidgit'-ization?

The artful application which producers use through convergent technology to make stories more alluring and enjoyable mean that everyone can enjoy a text such as Lord of the Rings regardless of what our preferred medium of consumption is. This is conceptualised through Julia Kristeva's notion of 'intertextuality' whereby every narrative is interconnected with other narratives which either influence it, or are influenced by it. Examining the basic underlying principles of intertextuality leads to a better understanding of the special challenges and benefits of weaving a narrative across multiple media forms.

Geoffrey Long notes that adaptations of a narrative are never identical to the original work. He believes that this is not a bad thing because the changes often 'reflect both the benefits and disadvantages inherent in particular media types' (2000. 56). 'Lord of the Rings' would have had fans complaining about the many plot central moments which Peter Jackson left out of the movie due to 'time constraints', however Jackson added battle scenes which were absent from the novel to add to the 'spectacle' and 'theatricality' of the film. Thus the film is not a retelling of the novel but a reinterpretation, whose medium enabled different effects and elements to come through and make the text stronger. Similarly there was a positive response toward Lord of the Rings gaming online; 'Shadows of Angmar' which is a multiplayer online role-playing game released in 2009. You choose a character from 'Lord of the Rings', good or evil, and you take off on a completely individual extension of the original narrative, interacting with computer controlled characters and other entities in the world. This online narrative extension exists as a completely individual entity which utilises the concept of 'middle earth' to suit the format and advantage of the medium.

As William Uricchio recalls Jackson's theatrical re-imagination of 'Lord of the Rings':

> "No one ever 'saw' Frodo or the rest: every casting decision, every image, every sound, 'trans-lates' Tolkien's words, and is but one of an infinite number of such translations or embodiments or performances; and these, it seems to me, are profound 'changes' in their own right." (2006. 18)

However each mode of technology still upholds the same recognizable narrative, the plot and characters has been slightly adjusted but the universe which is projected is near identical. Lord of the Rings has maintained its popularity through holding onto the idea of this one grand narrative, this one unique universe, which is so foreign to our own.

Transmedia Storytelling is the art of 'world making' and each narrative which re-imagines Tolkien's novel shares a 'genetic link' with one another (Jenkins. 2006. 21).

A Good Transmedia Narrative?

Angelique Toschi proposes that a good transmedia extension should make a distinct and valuable contribution to the franchise as a whole (2009. 35). There are two ways of achieving this; the first is the ability to achieve tight 'bonds' between texts, where one medium tells the first part of a story, and another medium continues the story which 'cliffhangers' onto a third medium. The second is the ability for each extension of the transmedia narrative to be able to stand on its own. This is where each individual text enriches the audience's experience with the rest of the franchise (Toschi. 2009)

  A truly successful transmedia narrative often spans multiple casts of characters, as evidenced by Star Wars, Avatar, Twilight, Harry Potter and millions more. The story of the 'Lord of the Rings' follows many characters and has many sub plots; Frodo's journey with the ring, Aragorn taking up the thrown of the King of Gondor, Gandalf becoming a white wizard etc. However the overriding story of the Lord of the Rings franchise is about Middle Earth and the very structures which exist within this universe between elves, men, hobbits and wizards; the structures which are somewhat foreign to humans. This is why Lord of the Rings gaming, films, websites and parapheneilia are so prominent in society; A good transmedia author will make his world a primary character in his story (Long. 2000. 54). This is what Tolkien first did, this is what Jackson recreated, and is what millions of fans are participating within on their computer and television screens right now.

> "A good transmedia extension will not only answer questions raised elsewhere in the franchise, but it will also pose a number of its own for future expansions to use. In this manner a good franchise can be extended for decades, and a world can be developed into a rich, well-rounded narrative universe"
> (Long. 2000).

Conclusion

Special attention must be paid to developing a stage upon which multiple storylines, often in different media types, can expand and weave into one another, and every extension must maintain the consistency of that world. Whilst utilising different media platforms to portray the same 'story world' is not an effective way of digitally preserving the one narrative, it can potentially strengthen the value and integrity of the product as a whole. Furthermore, better understanding of some of the challenges facing transmedia storytelling and its negative capability, for both audiences and producers, would prevent

much negative backlash. Understanding the new paradigm for narrative in society and the technological and commercial capabilities conceptualises the process of narrative convergence and proposes a bright and dynamic future for the art of storytelling across media platforms.

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Judging a Book by its Trailer: Media Literacy, Viral Advertising and the Novel in a Digital Age

By Katherine Fitzpatrick
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

Those in the publishing industry have long been producers of cultural texts, providing information, entertainment and social commentary through the textual medium of the printed book. Technological advances from the printing press to the development of digital printing have meant the ways in which publishers deliver content to consumers are constantly evolving. Recently, the rapid digitisation of culture has become evident in the publishing industry. Publishers now face a changing market signified by the proliferation of e-readers and easily accessible e-books. Not only is the delivery of content transforming to appeal to increasingly technologically savvy consumers, but the very concept of the book and the way it is marketed to those consumers is changing. Multi-media texts and creative online advertising campaigns are being developed in a bid to bring the book into the digital world. The book trailer exemplifies this attempt to capture the burgeoning digital market through maximising the relationship between printed text and visual understanding. The book trailer has become a powerful advertising tool which both utilises online public forums such YouTube to reach consumers and capitalises on the media literacy of contemporary readers. This article aims to examine the ways the publishing industry has adapted to rapid technological change and increasingly media literate consumers by examining the use of book trailers as viral advertising for printed texts. The article will analyse the relative strengths of book trailers as advertising tools, in particular examining those created for Seth Grahame-Smith's postmodern appropriations of renowned classic works of fiction.

Keywords

The publishing industry has long been subject to the preferential fluctuations of technology and culture. Today, the industry faces both a competitive market and rapidly changing technological landscape. In 2006 Australian author Brian Castro claimed large publishing houses were "killing literature" because "everything is about the bottom line".[1] Castro's assertion demonstrates a fear for the future of the novel and literary culture in an increasingly competitive market. Research conducted by Mark Davis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows a shrinking number of new Australian novels published each year. Davies suggests that such figures reflect an industry that is no longer interested in

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[1] Brian Castro quoted in Rosemary Neill, "The Decline of Australian Fiction", *The Australian,* 18 March 2006, 3.

the prestige of establishing and developing a national cannon, but one that is motivated by sales and profit margins.[2] In recent years, the tension between this kind of "bottom-line" publishing and literary integrity has heightened as technological developments are poised to revolutionise the industry. E-readers such as the Kindle or Ipad can provide consumers with cheap electronically accessible texts. The proliferation of such technology has changed the way content is delivered to consumers, the product provided, and the nature of marketing and advertising campaigns launched by publishing houses.[3] New forms of creative advertising for novels have emerged online, in particular the book trailer which has become a powerful advertising tool capable of enticing technologically savvy consumers. This article will examine such emerging forms of viral advertising for printed texts in order to demonstrate the ways in which the publishing industry is adapting to the rapid digitisation of culture and increasingly media literate consumers.

Early digital forms of the novel have offered consumers interactive options, online links to related forums and websites, animated illustrations and interviews with the authors.[4] These digitised and interactive versions of the novel have achieved initial commercial success where some areas of book sales have begun to drop. Figures provided by book and e-book retailers reflect the impact of such digital developments on commercial publishing. Sales figures released by online retailer Amazon, for instance, indicate electronic texts have outsold hardcover books since they were made available on the company's website.[5] While such figures demonstrate a shift in the demands of consumers and trajectory of publishing houses, they do not necessarily mark the death of the novel. Amazon's early success with e-reader technology suggests the mode of delivery and textual form of literary fiction, alongside other genres, has transformed allowing hybrid texts which utilise several mediums. This departs from more traditional notions of publishing associated with the production of printed texts and allows the widespread and inexpensive distribution of cultural texts. In this sense, genres such as literary fiction may not be facing extinction but rather undergoing a digital transformation.

Digitising content is not the only way of meeting the demands of technologically savvy consumers. Advertising and marketing for books has developed in scope, creativity and medium, culminating in the book trailer which has emerged as a powerful form of online

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2   Mark Davis quoted in Rosemary Neill, "The Decline of Australian Fiction", *The Australian,* 18 March 2006, 4.

3   Bill Cope & Dean Mason, Ed., *Markets for Electronic Book Products: Emerging Markets for Books, from Creator to Consumer (*Melbourne: Common Ground Publishing, 2002), 15.

4   John Colette and Meredith Quinn, Ed., *The Business of Electronic Publishing* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1997), 2.

5   David Teather, "Amazon's E-book Milestone", *The Guardian* 20 July 2010.
< http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2010/jul/20/amazon-ebook-digital-sales-hardbacks-us>

advertising. Book or literary trailers can be freely viewed on host sites such as YouTube and MySpace, and utilise moving images, animation, music, and dialogue to produce a visual enticement for the written text. Literary trailers are essentially "crafted as a moving image pitch for the book" as suggested by author and video marketer Sarah Weinman.[6] They are directed and produced in the same vein as those made for 'Hollywood blockbusters' and rely on production values, aesthetic appeal, and consumer interest for success. The trailers have largely been produced for commercial titles where the imaginative possibilities of fiction can be relayed in a visual form.[7] Trailers have been produced in the United Kingdom and United States by industry figures from publishers and literary agents to booksellers such as Borders who exhibit trailers as in-store promotional material. In 2009 British publishers Simon & Schuster produced over 200 book trailers for new release titles compared to only a handful made in 2008.[8] Simon & Schuster's investment in the five to seven minute productions is being mirrored by publishing company's globally, and attests to the growing advertising power of the literary trailer. The trailers sell the imaginative landscape of the novel through visual and aural collaborations which are accessible to consumers who are comfortable with online forums and multimedia texts. Book trailers demonstrate the publishing industry's adaptation to the digitisation of culture and increasingly technologically able consumers.

The success of book trailers as viral advertising for printed texts can be viewed within a wider theoretical framework which suggests that viewers respond differently to visual, multimedia texts than verbal argumentation or single medium text. Academic and theorist A. Cranny-Francis suggests that over a long viewing history, visual texts have become a powerful medium because they "engage viewers as embodied subjects, encouraging them to relate the meanings of the visual to their everyday lives".[9] Cranny-Francis argues visual texts "engage the senses, not just the brain". This correlates to the popularity of book trailers as the brief productions utilise moving imagery, sound and dialogue to engage viewers' senses and construct a complex series of signifiers to pique the viewer's interest. Viewers are able to relate the images and dialogue to their lives and extract meaning from different images edited together in a particular sequence. The book trailers offer viewers a taste of the content and meaning extrapolated from the written text but with speed, intimacy

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6 Sarah Weinman, "Book Trailers: The Key to Successful Video Marketing" *Poets & Writers 40* 1 November 2008, 1.
< http://www.pw.org/content/book_trailers_key_successful_video_marketing>

7 Weinman, 2.

8 Melissa Kent, "Don't Judge a Book By It's trailer" *Sydney Morning Herald* 27 June 2010.
< http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/dont-judge-a-book-by-its-trailer-20100626-zb1u.html>

9 A. Cranny-Francis, *Visuals in Multimedia: Texts and Contexts* (London: Sage, 2005), 26.

and detail unavailable to print based advertising. Whether the trailer aims to construct an alternate reality, as one might for a fantasy novel, or evoke a mood in viewers, such as the trepidation and curiosity constructed in crime fiction; the trailer enables viewers to impress their own meaning upon the series of signs and signifiers constructed through the multimedia productions. Cranny-Francis asserts that such visual multimedia texts "not only attract viewers, but also construct abstract ideas or concepts, and position users to receive those ideas or concepts in particular ways".[10] Book trailers in this sense construct the fictive landscape of the novel and position viewers to perceive a relational connection with their own lives, furthered by purchasing the printed text.

The successful online advertising campaign of Seth Grahame-Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* series (2009) and similar titles can be examined through this framework of the sensory power of visual imagery. The books adapt classic works of western literature, combining the wordy social critiques and plots with science fiction figures such as sea monsters, vampires, werewolves and zombies to create postmodern textual appropriations. The series includes many variations of the work of nineteenth century novelist Jane Austen, alongside other adaptations of familiar titles such as Grahame-Smith's *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* (2010) and Porter Grands' *Little Women and Werewolves* (2010). The video trailers for such titles are available on video sharing website YouTube. The site records the number of times each trailer has been watched, and links related material, increasing the circulation of each trailer and making possible an analysis of its popularity. A general search for 'book trailer' in the YouTube site search engine provides viewers with multiple book trailers, among which the trailer produced by Hachette Book Group for Grahame-Smith's *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* features as a popular item. YouTube records 426,120 views of the trailer which was posted on the site in February 2010, making it among the most watched literary trailers available on the site.[11]

In the trailer a fictionalised Abraham Lincoln fights an old world vampire amidst blood spattered historical documents in a fire lit study. The trailer is most effective in its adoption of a pseudo-historical aesthetic and rhetorical tone. The black and white shots are interrupted only by colour images of blood spatter which permeate a document presented as the American Declaration of Independence. Dialogue and text are carefully edited with images to produce "the true history of our sixteenth president"; Able Lincoln slayer

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10 Cranny-Francis, 53.

11 "Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter", posted by Hachette Book Group 25 February 2010. Viewed 10 September 2010
< http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X58RPS665V0>

of vampires.[12] The trailer is an example of the sensory power of images and persuasive power of text which together convince the viewer to engage with the notion of an alternate history and be swayed by the dramatic qualities of gothic vampiric figures. The pseudo-historical setting of the trailer allows viewers to momentarily accept the premise of the fictionalised historical figure and his actions, as the persuasive tones of Lincoln's rhetoric lends legitimacy to the novel's plausibility and imaginative qualities. Such trailers rely on the viewers' awareness of the use of appropriation in the construction of the text. The allure of such books is the renewal and modernisation of a familiar classical text, and the promotion of the books through multimedia filmic productions primarily distributed online reflect this desire to digitise and modernise the familiar.

Other book trailers popular on YouTube demonstrate a similar linkage of visual and textual elements to entice a modern, technologically able reader. Many popular trailers are fast paced and movement centred demonstrating the capabilities of multimedia texts to produce action sequences and an adrenalin-fuelled atmosphere. The book trailer for *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters* (2009), for instance, exemplifies such qualities of multimedia advertising by contrasting action sequences with the formal dialogue characteristic of Jane Austin's original work *Sense and Sensibility* (1811). The trailer begins with a recognisable dialogue between lovers, which is interrupted by the appearance of a monstrous creature from the lake who bloodily digests Austen's Mr Willoughby. The trailer, produced by Quirk classics, won Amazon's Best Book Video of 2009 and has been viewed 248, 351 times on YouTube.[13] Its popularity stems from the humorous adaptation of Austin's romantic plot, but also the medium's ability to capture fast narrative progression and action sequences unavailable to print based advertising. Slower, more atmospheric trailers appear to hold less appeal to viewers. Such trailers tend to advertise more literary fiction, as distinct from the popular or mass fiction examined here though Grahame-Smith's novels. The recorded views on host site YouTube demonstrate that teenage fiction, science fiction and fantasy books have all drawn large numbers of viewers and tend to incorporate fast paced action and special effects in their promotion of titles. In this sense, such genres lend themselves to this kind of viral advertising more than others as a result of the differing style, plot and imaginative capabilities of genre and the way these transpose between textual mediums. Book trailers such as those advertising Grahame-

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12 "Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter", posted by Hachette Book Group 25 February 2010. Viewed 10 September 2010

< http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X58RPS665V0>

13 "Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters: Book Trailer" posted by Irreference July 13 2009. Viewed 10 September 2010

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jZVE5uF24Q>

Smith's postmodern adaptations of classical texts enable an aesthetically pleasing and dramatically enticing multimedia glimpse at what the printed text can offer readers that a more traditional form of print based advertising may be unable to provide.

Video marketer and author Sarah Weinman suggests the trailers are affective advertising tools because of the increasing social power of video-sharing sites such as YouTube and MySpace. Literary trailers, Weinman asserts, "can reach big audiences, at a fraction of the cost of newspaper or magazine ads, airtime on television or the flights and expenses of author tours".[14] Sites such as YouTube mean post production advertising costs are minimal and creative forms of advertising have a forum to reach like-minded consumers.[15] Video sharing sites not only allow advertisers to engage with viewers in online communities, but book trailers appear to consumers as a less aggressive form of advertising. The trailers do not appear on computer screens as pop-up ads or within add space on unrelated websites. Video sharing sites allow the viewer to search for trailers, meaning the trailer is associated more with a creative project than an intrusive advertising campaign. Online journalist David Benady suggests that the nature of online advertising is shifting as advertisers struggle to find a hit campaign amidst the "clutter" of online spaces.[16] While this is changing the landscape of viral advertising, book trailers have achieved a steady increase in viewership and cultivated disassociation with aggressive advertising campaigns. Suveer Kothari, YouTube's UK head of sales, believes many more industries and brands will begin to utilize YouTube as an advertising space. Kothari claims YouTube's delivery of "premium content" means the site is a "great platform for brands to distribute advertising and to create a hub around it".[17] The success of the video sharing site in part attributes to the fact that publishing houses are now spending a considerable part of advertising budgets on viral marketing in the form of book trailers, and building this practice as part of an effective long term business strategy.

Criticism of the increased production of literary trailers suggests that unlike other forms of online advertising, the trailers represent traditional advertising campaigns where consumers participate only as passive viewers of texts produced by industry professionals.[18]

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14 Weinman, 3.

15 Noel Bussey, "Has YouTube Changed Creativity?" *Campaign* February 26 2010 <http://www.allbusiness.com/media-telecommunications/movies-sound-recording/14002435-1.html>

16 David Benady, "Advertising to the YouTube Generation" *Marketing* 25 November 2009, 34-35, 34.

17 Suveer Kothari quoted in David Benady, "Advertising to the YouTube Generation" *Marketing* 25 November 2009, 34-35, 35.

18 Melissa Kent, "Don't Judge a Book By It's trailer" *Sydney Morning Herald* 27 June 2010.
< http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/dont-judge-a-book-by-its-trailer-20100626-zb1u.html>

The collaborative nature of online communities is certainly responsive to campaigns that require participation and creative collaboration of the consumer. Scholastic's 2007 promotion of the seventh Harry Potter sequel, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, is demonstrative of the possibilities of collaborative online advertising. Scholastic launched the multi-million dollar marketing campaign, "There Will Soon Be 7", by staggering the release of seven Harry Potter questions aimed to spark debate among fans in online forums.[19] The questions were combined with tours, blogs, online debates and competitions all designed to maximise the consumers input in the increasing hype surrounding the final book of J. K. Rowling's enormously commercially successful series. Rather than presenting readers with a glimpse of the upcoming title in the form of a trailer, Scholastic encouraged readers to participate in the growing anticipation surrounding the book's release.

While the campaign was a success, it was designed for a product with a virtually unrivalled international fan base, an established film franchise and an initial print run of twelve million copies in the United States alone.[20] Scholastic had no need to capture the imagination of dedicated fans, and the campaign was aimed at creating 'hype' rather than enticing readers. Scholastic's campaign does indicate, however, the advertising power of collaborative online communities. The book trailer could be used alongside participatory online advertising methods in order to reach the largest number of consumers and produce creative and original marketing campaigns. Trailers could be posted to blogs, created as online collaborations among fans or used as part of promotional competitions in order to maximize the collaborative possibilities of online advertising. Publishers such as Harper Collins have begun to explore such participatory uses of the book trailer, running online competitions and requiring readers to create book trailers for the company's new release titles.[21] This use of participatory and collaborative online advertising demonstrates a shift in the way content is marketed to increasingly technologically savvy consumers, and signifies the publishing industry's departure from more traditional forms of print based advertising.

While the effects of the digitisation of culture on the publishing industry are yet to be fully understood, the utilisation of viral advertising techniques such as book trailers

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19 Chris Cobb "Harry Potter's PR Magic: How J K Rowling, Scholastic and independent booksellers are maximizing Potter's success" *PR Tactics* July 19 2007.

20   PR Newswire "There Will Soon Be 7: Scholastic announces record-breaking 12 million first printing in the United States of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* " <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/there-will-soon-be-7---scholastic-announces-record-breaking-12-million-first-printing-in-united-states-of-jk-rowlings-harry-potter-and-the-deathly-hallows-51624787.html> Created March 14 2007. Viewed October 15 2010.

21 Harper Collins Publishers, <http://www.harpercollins.com/features/roaddogs/ > Viewed October 15 2010

demonstrate the industry's adaptation to technological change and shifting consumer demands. Book trailers represent a creative use of the sensory power of imagery and persuasive power of language to engage technologically able consumers with a product associated with traditional single medium text such as the book. The production of book trailers signifies an industry changing to meet the demands of increasingly media literate consumers and a large scale shift in the way content is delivered, advertised and perceived by consumers. While industry figures continue to analyse the merits and possibilities offered by e-reader technology, the imaginative possibilities of print based text are being sold to consumers through the careful editing of visual imagery, dialogue and sound. Book trailers are demonstrative of the increasing power of video sharing sites and viral advertising, and entice viewers towards unexplored fictional landscapes by creating an immediacy and visual impact unavailable to print based advertising. The increased production and consumer popularity of literary trailers demonstrates the adaptation of the publishing industry to the rapid digitisation of culture and increasingly technologically savvy consumers.

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Transforming blogs into books

By Sophie Bosch
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to explore the perception of the blog as a means of communication and the very recent trend of many blogs of all types — cultural, political and social — being published as books. The article will also explore the transience of the content being communicated in a blog as opposed to the permanent and concrete nature of the content being communicated in a book, that is, the integrity of books as a body of information as opposed to the ever-changing format of and information communicated by a blog.

There are several case studies that are very relevant to this trend particularly in the field of fashion and design. Fashion blogs with a focus on street photography or photographs of people's everyday life have been immensely successful and popular due to their subject matter being very different to traditional fashion magazines and publications that have had to meet market demands. Therefore, the content and demand for content evolves more organically from what visitors to and commentators on the blog are interested in. As a result, if the individual who has started the blog decides to edit and select blog posts and turn them into material for print and publication, a market already exists for this material to be sold to, especially if the blog has a large following. Specific examples include The Sartorialist (2009) by Scott Schuman, Facehunter (2010) by Yvan Rodic and The Selby is in Your Place (2010) by Todd Selby.

Keywords

BOOKS INTO BLOGS • DIGITAL MEDIA • PUBLISHING • NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGY • BLOGS • THE SARTORIALIST • FACEHUNTER • TODD SELBY

There has been a recent trend of blogs, a relatively new digital technology or format being turned into books, a form of content delivery with a long history that is entrenched in and bound up with forms of life and social practice. This trend exemplifies a technological opportunity that can and has in some instances changed the way we write in the digital age but that also complements a pre-existing form of content delivery. This is a result of the advantages of successful bloggers being able to select and edit the best blog entries for print and publication as a more integral whole and also become authors of books. Books are an appealing medium for authors of blogs to preserve authorial dominance through publication in print. Books also have the structural advantage over blog commentary because the information can be arranged according to theme or category rather than mere sequence and also have the attraction for authors as being a simpler one-way communication and an object documenting salient parts of a blogsí archive or elaborating further on generally informal and short posts. There is also still a great deal of prestige

associated with an author having a book published and printed, a prestige which blogs as a general form of writing or publication lack.

There are several case studies that are very relevant to this trend particularly in the field of fashion and design. Fashion blogs with a focus on street photography or photographs of peopleís everyday life have been immensely successful and popular due to their subject matter being very different to traditional fashion magazines and publications that have had to meet market demands. Therefore, the content and demand for content evolves more organically from what visitors to and commentators on the blog are interested in. As a result, if the individual who has started the blog decides to edit and select blog posts and turn them into material for print and publication, a market already exists for this material to be sold to, especially if the blog has a large following. Specific examples include *The Sartorialist* (2009) by Scott Schuman, *Facehunter* (2010) by Yvan Rodic and *The Selby is in Your Place* (2010) by Todd Selby.

With the digital revolution the relevance of books as a means of content delivery has been brought into question and much discussion has been generated about where they fit in our society. As stated by Johnson, ìSince the late 1980s there has been a widespread feeling within the industry that digitization is bound to have a profound impact on publishingî[1] and there have also been fears that digitization would lead to the ìimminent demise of the printed book.î[2]

However, the recent trend of blogs being turned into books would suggest otherwise and lead to the possible conclusion that in the digital age, books can complement digital texts because their function as a means of content delivery is different. Although the digitization of texts from the late 1990s onwards was more amenable in some areas of publishing such as journals, professional texts and reference, trade books still are for the most part more successful as printed publications though this may change as a result of the release of more recent technologies such as the ipad and the Kindle e-book reader. However, Johnson has suggested that ìeducational, scholarly and trade publishing are less amenable to online publishing, partly because they are dealing with forms of content (pedagogical knowledge, sustained argument and narrative) which lend themselves less readily to online environments and partly because of the nature of the institutions and social practices

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1   Thompson, J.B. (2005). ëThe digital revolution and the publishing worldí. In *Books in the digital age: the transformation of academic and higher education publishing in Britain and the United States*. Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity p. 309

2   Thompson, J.B. (2005) p. 309

in which the uses of these forms of content are embedded.î[3] This is relevant to art and design books which in relation to these three particular case studies would be classified as trade books. Perhaps the reason these particular types of blogs make successful books is because books are still important cultural artifacts to society.

The blog has innovated content delivery as it allows individual users to publish their own content and get feedback from other blog users or viewers of that blog. By definition ìa blog is simply a personal webpage in a journal format, using software that automatically puts new entries or ëpostsí at the top of the page, and shifts old entries to archives after a specified time, or when the number of posts becomes too large for convenient scrolling.î[4] To further explain the uses and functions of a blog Gomez, a blog marketer states, ìThe owner [of the blog] posts messages, along with pictures and hyperlinks to news articles, while the users visiting the site have the ability to post comments on the messages and linksÖ Blogs are typically updated daily (often many times a day) using software that allows people with little or no technical background to update and maintain them.î [5]Therefore, blogs operate under a very different premise to books and as a result books can complement blogs as means of content delivery rather than them being mutually exclusive. Although initially it was thought that blogs would be another source of competition for publishers, blogs have created many new and important opportunities for publishers.[6] ìBloggers often act as filters for the information online, making it easier for agents and editors to identify the most interesting and unique new voices in the blogosphere.î[7] Blogs are a valuable source of new talent for publishers and also provide responses from readers before publishing. ìBloggers who wish to be authors offer publishers ready-made platforms and opportunities to publish into established audiences.î[8] Books are appealing to authors or originators of blogs because they preserve authorial dominance of the content avoiding the interruption of thought processes or themes that sometimes occurs on blogs. Books also give the author the opportunity to be selective of the best blogs from a certain period of time or allow authors to choose blog posts along a certain theme or which can be divided into different chapters or sections and give the blog a more logical progression to the reader rather than

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3   Thompson, J.B. (2005) p. 329

4   Quiggin, J. (2006). Blogs, wikis and creative innovationí. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9(4) p. 483

5   Gomez, J. (2005). Thinking Outside the Blog: Navigating the Literary Blogosphereí *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 21 (3) p. 3

6   Nelson, M. (2006) The Blog Phenomenon and the Book Publishing Industryí, *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 22 (2), p. 3

7   Nelson, M. (2006) p. 3

8   Nelson, M. (2006) p. 3

just being sequential. Books also make it easier to compare different blog posts and draw conclusions about what these comparisons mean rather than looking at each blog post as a separate entity. Therefore, books give authors of blogs an opportunity to represent their blog and blog content as a more logical or integral whole.

Scott Schumanís blog, *The Sartorialist*, started in 2005 and shares pictures and comments on menís and womenís fashion with a particular focus on street photography and street fashion. The blog was selected as one of *Time Magazineís* Top 100 design influences in 2009 and has up to 48 000 page visits a day. The blog is comprised of full-length colour digital images of finely tailored men and women accompanied by Schumanís commentary about their look. Schuman started the blog to fill a gap that he felt existed in the fashion world. In his explanation of the origin of his blog Schuman states ìIíd been shooting on the street and I found that the photographs I kept going back and looking at were stylish, older guys who were really cool and tailored and old school. I thought they looked inspirational, but I never saw that kind of look in magazines. So I was shooting things that I thought other creative people and designers would be interested in seeing and perhaps referencing.î [9] However, unlike many fashion blogs that donít use original material Schumann ensured his content was original and focused on a consistent and distinct voice and eye rather than technical bravado. Schuman created interest in the blog by ìcreating a brand or persona. î[10] This coupled with the originality of the material enabled the blog to be turned into a book very easily and also meant that the book already had a market from the blog followers interested in its content.

Schumanís ability to create an individual ìbrandî is what led to him attracting a book deal. ìSuccess in the blogosphere can earn a blogger media attention, benefit a bloggerís professional reputation, attract a book deal, or improve the bloggerís business. However, most successful bloggers do not write only for money or promotional purposes— they actually enjoy the process and the activity[11]î Schumanís overall concept for his blog was unique and different to typical fashion publications which had to cater to specific markets due to commercial constraints. ìThe blogosphere is a breeding ground for new ideas and fresh voicesî[12] and ìEditors are interested in blog books because bloggers usually have a

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9   ìThe Sartorialist Press Articles,î The Sartorialist Blog, accessed September 12, 2010 www.thesartorialist.com/pdf/amphoto.pdf

10   ìThe Sartorialist Press Articlesî

11   Nelson, M. (2006) p. 7

12   Nelson, M. (2006) p. 9

unique voice and platform.î[13] Schumanís unique voice, brand and aesthetic in his blog which attracted readers in the blogosphere where ëtraffic is currencyí[14] was what allowed publishers to discover a niche market they could cater to with the publishing of Schumanís blog book. A publisher would not have previously known about this market without Schuman tapping into it with the creation of his blog, and the success of the blog led to the creation of a book with selective content of his visual and written fashion commentary.

Although a book documenting specific posts on a blog may not be necessary or contain any new content, the tangibility of the book and the more selective capabilities in the print medium for the individual who originated the idea of a particular blog means that the content may stand as a more integral whole. Schuman describes his specific reasons for making a book out of his blog at the beginning of *The Sartorialist* book. Schuman views his blog as a ìsocial document celebrating self-expressionî[15] and refers to peopleís comments on the Sartorialist website as making the blog a ìliving fabric.î[16] However, Schuman confides in the readers of his book in the preface ìI hope that, as you look at the images in this book, rather than giving a look a ëthumbs upí or a ëthumbs down,í you will focus on the elements that will inspire you.î[17] In this comment it is apparent that as the author of the blog, Schuman is asking his readers to consider the content for its effect on the individual viewer rather than interacting and commenting in the online blog community centred on the content of his blog. Perhaps by Schuman returning to the more traditional print medium he is encouraging viewers to approach the images with an aim for a simple response of inspiration, isolated from the thoughts of other users of the blog. In this way the more personal and private transaction from author to reader in a book is emphasized by the release of Schumanís book different to a blog where sometimes the authorís intentions in a blog post can be diluted by discussions and comments generated by other viewers. This particular transformation from blog to book shows the role books still play as cultural artifacts in our society. They still have a purpose as a simpler form of content delivery and means of one-way communication which complements the two-way communication of newer forms of content delivery that have come into use since the digital revolution and widespread use of blogs.

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13   Nelson, M. (2006) p. 10

14   Nelson, M. (2006) p. 4

15   Schuman, S. (2009) *The Sartorialist* London: Penguin p. 5

16   Schuman, S. (2009) p. 5

17   Schuman, S. (2009) p. 5

Yvan Rodicís blog, *Facehunter*, started in 2006 with the idea of documenting a man (Yvan Rodic) out and about in London and beyond with the aim of capturing ìeye candy for the style hungry.î[18] Rodic released his first book in 2010, it comprises of a selection of more than 300 photographs from the blog and a few of his commentaries. Rodicís comments on a book of his blog being published were ìAfter four years of blogging, I got my first book publishedî[19] and the reason he gave about the decision for the book to be published was that ìin a digital world, there is something romantic to print photographs. î[20] Rodicís comments suggest that although blogs are a very valid and important form of communication in todayís society there is still a great deal of prestige attached to an author having a book printed and published. Also, when Rodic references the romance of print photographs this suggests that the tangible quality of books, the history of print media and how it is embedded in our social practices maintain books as important cultural artifacts in a digital age. Rodicís book was made available worldwide, in four versions: UK & International, France, and the French part of Belgium and Switzerland, the US & Canada and Germany, Austria and the German part of Switzerland. The book was also available for pre-order on Amazon. This indicates that the publishers were confident due to Rodicís pre-existing blog following that a market existed for a selected anthology of the content of the blog in several regions. This pre-existence of an audience has been beneficial to the publishing industry, ìthe fact that blog readership is specialized, and that blogs themselves are not completely ubiquitous, actually works as an asset to the publishing community. It is precisely because blogs are specialized that they are valuable: they offer a targeted audience, providing direct communication and feedback to an audience publishers are trying to reach.î[21] This also illustrates how blogs can tap into niche markets through the online communities of blog followers and can also lead to these niche markets becoming mainstream or more widespread if enough interest is generated in the blog.

Todd Selby started his website www.theselby.com in June 2008. Although it does not take the traditional format of a blog, the content has been shaped by viewer demand and the aesthetic of the website is almost identical to a blog and has links to comments on the photos featured in each section. Todd Selby is a portrait, interiors, and fashion photographer and illustrator.[22] His web project offers an insiderís view of creative individuals in their

18 ìFacehunterî Facehunter Blog, accessed September 12, 2010 http://facehunter.blogspot.com/

19 ìFacehunterî Facehunter Blog, accessed September 12, 2010 http://facehunter.blogspot.com/

20 ìFacehunterî Facehunter Blog, accessed September 12, 2010 http://facehunter.blogspot.com/

21 Gomez, J. (2005) p. 5

22 About Selby The Selby is in your place Website, accessed September 12, 2010 http://www.theselby.com/bio.html

personal spaces with an artistís eye for detail.[23] The Selbyís website met much viewer demand and had up to 55 000 viewers a day within a few months of its launch. Todd Selby released his first book, *The Selby is in Your Place* in May 2010. A recognizable aesthetic of the interiors Selby chose to photograph with such a large following would not have been possible without this blog style website. Although the site doesnít use the blogís architectural infrastructure as such, Selby had an innovative idea, which might not have originated without the medium of the Internet to communicate it and the culture of blogs to provide a community of followers. Selby expanded on the ideas he had covered in his blog site by including further commentary as well as design elements around the photographs selected for publication in his book. Joe Wikert of John Wiley & Sons, Inc., said, ì[A] blog is a great way for an author to extend their book with additional information, points of view, examples, etcÖ This is a core element for the future of book publishing: I feel it will become more important to truly augment and extend the original product with other types of content delivery.î[24] Similarly, a book is also a great way for an author or blogger to extend their blog with additional information, points of view and examples into a more cohesive whole. Selbyís original idea translated well into a book and could be marketed to followers of the website as a coveted cultural product. This is especially true because Selby was able to select the most significant postings to be printed and published as a more integral whole with the addition of new material that added meaning to his blog and provided customers with further incentive to purchase his book.

There is no doubt that the Internet has transformed the media landscape[25] and technological developments such as blogs have influenced content delivery and provided a new format for content delivery. Prominent academic, Clay Shirky, who specialises in digital media, has discussed the Internet and digital revolution as causing the ìlargest increase in expressive capability in human history.î[26] It is certainly true that blogs have increased expressive capabilities and possibilities as well as creating non-narrative but sequential archives. Blogs are a form of social and individual documentation and expression that are complemented well by the more tangible and finite content delivery medium of books.

Therefore, the different aspects and features of blogs and books in communicating

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23   About Selby

24   Nelson, M. (2006) p. 16

25   Clay Shirky: How cellphones, Twitter, Facebook can make historyî YouTube, accessed September 12, 2010 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_iN_QubRs0&feature=player_embedded#!

26   Clay Shirky: How cellphones, Twitter, Facebook can make historyî YouTube, accessed September 12, 2010 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_iN_QubRs0&feature=player_embedded#!

knowledge and information indicates that as different means of communication they complement each other and serve different purposes of content delivery in contemporary society. The open information within and transient nature of blogs as opposed to the selectivity and permanent nature of information contained within a book means that as different means of communication with different functions and purposes they can also complement each other because of societyís different uses for them. Books are an appealing medium for authors to preserve authorial dominance through publication in print and blogs have created a new point of entry for outsiders into the book publishing industry. Additionally, blogs are increasingly providing publishers with new ideas and fresh voices by blog authors who already have a following and therefore a pre-existing market for their book. In conclusion, it is likely that the trend of blogs providing material for new books will continue and that the two forms of content delivery will become increasingly intertwined and will increasingly complement each other in the communication of information in the digital age.

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The Power of Going Social

By Mendel A. Bernardino
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

Businesses can now use social media platforms such as community forums, online community sites, blogs and social networking sites as 'market research sources' in order to further understand the preferences of market they are trying to serve. Through social media tools, consumers can participate in providing information and feedback to businesses and practically tell them what their market needs are. Market research through social media tools can provide benefits for the company such as cost efficiency, fast and timely consumer feedback, updated and relevant information straight from the consumers.

The paper will touch on companies who have done so effectively and what the key factors are in ensuring a successful market research campaign through social media tools. (ex. how Kraft used social media tools as additional 'research sources' to name the new "Cheesybite" and how Dell banked on IdeaStorm to get new product ideas from consumers). Privacy and volume versus control issues must also be taken into account when using social media applications. Evidence will be gathered from case studies, online journals and articles

Keywords

Introduction

Businesses have spent millions of dollars for market research in order to find out what might work for the market they are trying to serve. Focus group discussions, online and phone surveys, phone and face to face interviews and the like can cost one's company a fortune not to mention the enormous amount of time it takes to plan, implement and get the results from these market research activities.

Moreover, it becomes increasingly hard to conduct market research as consumers become more reluctant in tolerating doorstep research interviews or be interrupted by a telephone interview which take up most of their time and end up without them hearing any feedback from them (Cooper 2009). Therefore, it only makes sense to have a conversation with customers in a way that taps into a medium that capitalizes on their willingness to participate and interact.

With the emergence of Web 2.0 and Social media which is defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Businesses now have the tools and the capabilities to reach out and have a conversation with the very customers that they would like to serve. Social media applications such as social networking sites like Facebook or Twitter, video sites such as Youtube, blogs, forum posts to name a few can be utilized by businesses to acquire market information to benefit from the participatory culture being demonstrated by online users.

For instance, Kraft has used social networking sites, blogs and forum posts to get people involved in naming their newest product they intended to launch in Australia and New Zealand. Dell has also engaged consumers to give new ideas for possible new products through their website named IdeaStorm. These businesses, to name a few, have taken advantage of social media to gain brand awareness, acquire market research information and to converse with their customers directly.

Why should marketers care?

People like to be heard. Listen and Talk to them.

Participation has been one of the principal of components of a digital culture that has emerged in society. According to Schudson (1998) and Norris (2001) as mentioned by Deuze in his article (2006), "people have become increasingly willing and able to voice their concerns and claim their place in society...whenever they feel their personal interests are at stake (Deuze 2006)." With the capabilities brought about by Web 2.0, people want to be heard more rather than just be spoken to. With this being said, forums, online communities, blogs may be venues wherein an open conversation can take place between companies and its consumers. Social media discussions, if done properly and in proper online venues, may result to raise brand affinity levels while simultaneously acquiring real market research knowledge straight from the target market themselves. Conversations involve two way communications. Those who do not understand this idea such as those companies who shamelessly plug advertisements in these online spaces will definitely end up being left alone without anyone to talk to (Lucy 2009, p.22).

Intimacy in Online Media

Intimacy in two way conversations is what online media applications have lucratively achieved where traditional research methods have failed. Traditional research methods are usually faced with a high number of disinclined respondents who have qualms about being interrupted by phone interviews or written surveys which most often than not, they never hear anything about afterwards. Interactivity and engagement are two things that people have come to expect with the new version of the web, Web 2.0 where broadcast media monologues are now transformed into dialogues among users (Marketing Week, 2009, p.25). When consumers are being heard and talked to, they feel closer to the brand and also feel valued and special in the process. The online research space also enabled more openness and honesty which is something that does not come easily in face to face situations (Marketing Week, 2010, p.31)

Increased use of Social Media

Social media usage is steadily increasing with people's thoughts and ideas being exchanged and disseminated in forums, social networking sites and online reviews. Consumers, for instance, are more than eager to share with the online community either their satisfaction or disappointment with products or services they purchased. According to a survey, 75% of people use online reviews and posts as additional information before making a purchase decision (Cooper 2009, p.21).

Therefore, it may be seen as advantageous when businesses use social media applications to find out more about the needs and wants of the people. It is only practical to conduct research with one's customers that banks on the community's willingness to respond and participate rather than forcing traditional market research methods then complain about the people's objections to these traditional methods (Cooper 2009, p.21).

Benefits of Social Media

Fast Consumer Research

Compared to traditional methods, using social media applications as market research tools can bring the acquisition and sharing of information in a very timely and swift manner. (Smith, 2009, p.23) Since it is online, businesses can easily converse with their audience and get the feedback they want instantaneously. It no longer involves the timely process of door to door interviews, trying hard to squeeze out information from respondents then analyzing the results taken which can take some time. As a consequence, market situations may have changed by the time the information arrives to the company. For instance, a company who has recently experienced a public relations nightmare (ex. leak of substandard products in the market) recently may be able to manage the situation by apologizing to their consumers through their blogs, community forums and social networking sites to manage the situation before it gets out of hand. By doing this, it will be able to immobilize the spread of bad word of mouth before it does an irreparable damage to the brand- something traditional research methods and even public relations methods would not be able to bring about.

Cost Efficiency

Although both traditional and social media research methods entail costs for the company, the latter is definitely the cheaper alternative. Matt Rhodes, head of client services at online community specialist FreshNetworks, whose clients include BT and Butlins, says it can be a very cost-effective way of doing qualitative market research. "You don't have to go to the

effort of recruiting people and getting them together, which is good when budgets are being slashed," he says (Smith 2009, p.23)." Costs such as recruitment of research personnel, focus group conductors, research analysts, respondents' compensation, transportation costs and so on can affect the total cost of a research campaign significantly. While online research conducted through social media sites can slash off unnecessary costs entailed in the research process since it leverages an asset which the company already has, its online customer database. Having one's own customer advisory panel or online research community has allowed companies to shift from traditional outsourced customer research to one's own customer panel. This brings about at least a 40% cut back on research costs. (Cooper 2009, p.21)

Social Media Applications by Businesses

Kraft and Vegemite CheesyBite

Kraft was planning to come up with a new "Vegemite" to launch in the market. First of all, Kraft wanted to find out what people wanted the new product to have. They put up an online census and website for consumer feedback to discover what characteristics people want their Vegemite to have. After 30,000 people have participated in the poll, Kraft found out that people were looking for a Vegemite that was 'spreadable' and does not need to be combined with butter. (The Age, 2009)

Product formulations were tested and the final product having a combination of Vegemite and cream cheese was produced. The new product seemed to have a huge potential for success after it gained high acceptance in its test market (Marketing Magazine, 2009). Next, Kraft needed a name for its soon to be launched product and thought that it would be best to leave it to the people to decide.

A Name Me Contest was rolled out throughout Australia and New Zealand. Name submissions can be done through the Vegemite website, SMS, or through a PO box. In addition, social media platforms were used to generate buzz, increase awareness levels and to encourage people to participate in the contest. Facebook, Youtube, Twitter and blogs were utilized as the means to involve as many people in the Name Me contest as possible. The contest was an enormous success as thousands of loyal consumers took part in the contest and have come up with 48,000 names for the product. (Kraft Website 2009)

Kraft then announced the winning name, 'Vegemite iSnack 2.0', and thought it best describes the relevance to snacking, the distinction between the old and new Vegemite, and the personal call to action as the reasons why the name was chosen. Although the

name was on the list of the names submitted, they made a mistake of not choosing the most popular names and then conduct a poll to determine which would be the best choice. This move by Kraft led to a strong objection from both the media and Vegemite consumers, who also used the same social media applications to show their aversion to the name 'iSnack 2.0'. (Wright 2010)

Kraft needed to appease the disgruntled consumers by changing the name once more. To do this, they once again asked people to vote a name from 6 pre-picked names through social media platforms along with online polls and phone surveys. Thousands of consumers once again voiced out what their name preference through online polls and through social networking sites. After the research process was over, it was finalized that the new product was going to be named as Vegemite Cheesybite and was distributed in supermarkets and other trade channels subsequently. (Kraft Website 2009)

Dell's Idea Storm

Michael Dell founded the Dell Company in 1984 to be able to eliminate the so called "middleman" when it comes to selling personal computers or PCs. He found a way to sell custom built PCs directly to customers. Customization is what has differentiated Dell from its competitors. Customization involves pretty much the customers telling the company what they want and the company responding to this request (Arora et al 2008, p.306). In the case of Dell, its customization capability has worked well for them as they have reached millions of customers in more than a hundred countries all over the world in 2009.

In February 2007, Dell found a way to talk back directly to their customers through Dell's Ideastorm. Dell customers just about tell the company about what they want with their PCs. However, with Dell's Idea Storm, Dell was able to make connections with customers more interactive. A power to voice out one's ideas and to participate in "brainstorm" sessions regarding new products and services were given to Dell customers through IdeaStorm. Through this process, Dell is able to generate new product ideas coming straight from the customers without involving the lengthy and expensive traditional research methods while also offering quicker response times. "Storm Sessions" open up once in a while and for a limited time allow Dell customers to submit their ideas regarding a specific topic. Since these sessions are only up in the web for a limited time, conversations are targeted, relevant and time-bound (Dell Website, 2010).

In 3 years, Dell has been able to implement 400 ideas from over 10,000 idea submissions. They have listened to their customers and their customers have been able to also see these

ideas come to life. This research process has been able provide Dell with fresh, new ideas for their products and services, not to mention the quick response time and the brand affinity generated through these 2-way conversations fostered by this technique (Dell Website, 2010).

Social Media Pitfalls to Avoid

Privacy Issues

Joe Webb, a consultant at TNS, a research agency, pointed out that people are growing concerned at what they give away in sites such as Facebook and Twitter with the issue about using personal data for use for third parties. These social networking sites may be useful for their honesty but if the issue of the spread of personal information persists, it may have an adverse effect on whether honest or misleading feedback is generated from these sites (Marketing Week, 2009, p 25). It is also important that whatever information or data the consumer provides would not be used without the permission of the user or invades his privacy in any manner or else be prepared for a deluge of negative feedback about your brand.

Difference in Online Consumer Behaviour

Businesses also need to note that there might be differences in consumer behaviour online compared to offline methods. For example, some people may write something that does not really reflect what they feel for reasons such as fear of one's information being divulged to third parties or being influenced by groups they belong with to write in a certain way. Some people also have a tendency to not read instructions or other information carefully when replying online which also results to get truthful and accurate information about a certain product or topic (Lars 2008).

Balance between volume and control

Businesses must also be aware of the benefits of either providing everyone free access to online research forms or getting feedback from a limited and carefully monitored pool of people. Free access to online research forms tends to generate chaos and clutter if not managed properly. Nicky Jones of the Mirror group says, "It is a question of getting a balance between a deluge of information from the masses and less feedback but from a carefully monitored pool of people. For our business, the latter works much better." It is up to companies whether they seek to gather as much information as possible or course the research from a controlled group of people. (Smith, 2009, p.23)

Conclusion

With the emergence of web 2.0, social media applications can be used by businesses as market research tools to learn more about the market they are trying to serve. Businesses now have the capabilities to talk directly to their consumers and interact with them as well. The participatory culture that has emerged as people become more inclined to be heard rather than just be spoken to have enabled social media methods to flourish with possibilities especially in market research. The level of intimacy and honesty in social media discussions and the willingness of consumers to have a say in issues and matters can be an incentive to pick this option over traditional research methods. Social media is capable of providing real time conversations with consumers, fast customer research at a cheaper cost. This is something that has been enabled social media conversations.

However, although social media applications are successful at giving the aforementioned benefits, social media is not the definitive way to conduct market research. According to Neil Jones, director of research and audience insight at MTV, "We believe that no research tool is more 'real' or 'valid' than any other if conducted properly and at a robust level. At MTV, we tend to use a variety of tools within a research project depending on the type of insight we are looking for (Marketing Week 2009, p.25)".

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Social Media and Rugby: A Game of Inches

Tiffanny Junee
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

Australians are active consumers and participants of organized sports and media. As a recent Nielsen study showed, they are also some of the most engaged users of social media in the world. After only six years, social media has already had a profound role in (re)shaping corporate and social communications practices. This paper investigates how social media has (re)shaped the social dynamics and identity of professional rugby union players, administrators and rugby fan communications in Australia. Not surprisingly, social media has affected both individual and corporate agency within the rugby community raising questions about how and where it is possible for individuals to act independently within rugby communities both on- and off-line. This essay draws on selected examples of online corporate, player and fan texts to question how social media is being used (and possibly abused) by members of the elite rugby community in maintaining and creating agency.

Introduction

Organized sports carry their own set of cultural symbols, social constructs, language and values system. In Australia, football has dominated mainstream leisure consumption and its relationship with the media (Cashman 2005). While Rugby Union has traditionally been considered the preserve of middle-class white Australia - entrenched in the elite private school system - Rugby League has been its working-class, hybrid cousin, played and promoted within the public school system (Phillips 1994). Soccer, although now the largest participation code of football in Australia across both sexes and age groups, has traditionally had its home within ethnic social and media communities; while AFL, up until 15 – 20 years ago, was largely confined (by practice or by choice) to the southern state

of Victoria (and immediate surrounds) and not surprisingly, considered and promoted within the media as Victorian Football.

Traditionally, Australians are active consumers and participants of organized sports such as rugby union (Bloomfield 2003), a football code that has enjoyed a unique relationship with print and electronic media in Australia (Rowe 2007). According to a recent Nielsen study, Australians are also the most engaged users of social media in the world[1]. The purpose of this paper is to understand how this unique relationship has evolved to include digital (or 'new') media and its impact on communications within the elite rugby community. Accordingly, this paper will look at consumption[2] of social media by members of key rugby community sub-groups: professional rugby union players, administrators, rugby media and rugby fans and analyze the impact of these communications on agency.

As a study of current online behavior within the rugby community it will also comprise a theoretical and textual analysis of selected online social media corporate, player and fan texts[3], posing the question: how is social media being used (and possibly abused) by members of the elite rugby community in maintaining and creating agency[4]? Agency underlies this investigation with the purpose of the article to show how and where agency is possible within existing structures within rugby communities – both on and off-line.

Sport + Media = Entertainment

The history of media entertainment has increasingly come to incorporate the history of sport (Briggs and Burke 2005). When the Commodore 64 computer became a mass-market consumer good in the late 1970s, technologists said it was destined to change the way we communicated. It didn't; primarily because the home computer was a standalone machine with no network facility[5] yet available. However, its mere presence premised a change in

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1   Nielsenwire (January 2010) found Australians spend the highest average time (7+ hours per week) directly engaged with social networking sites. http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/global/led-by-facebook-twitter-global-time-spent-on-social-media-sites-up-82-year-over-year/ [accessed: 16 October 2010]

2   The author will situate analysis within the context of Consumer Culture Theory's understanding of cultural meanings via socio-historic influences in shaping social dynamics and identity within everyday contexts as prescribed by Arnould and Thompson (2005).

3   For an in-depth discussion of the cultural significance of fan texts see Henry Jenkins (1992), *Textual Poachers* and his five key features of 'fandom'.

4   Agency is defined, for the purposes of this article, as the capacity of the individual to act independently.

5   Barry Wellman (2001), *Computer Networks as Social Networks* for a discussion on the ability of the internet (as a computer network) in increasing a person's social capital.

how we defined games. The arrival of *Atari* and *Pacman* software in the 1980's legitimized this new and approved form of alternative 'play' – one that no longer necessitated 'going outside' - in the minds of 80's youth and their baby-boomer parents. Leisure, play and entertainment space was converging right before our very eyes. (Crawford 2004) Did we see it? Of course we did. Did we understand what it would mean for us technologically, socially or even culturally? Not intrinsically. We did however understand that gaming on computers was separate to playing and watching football: because sport was consumed live or via the mediums of television (maybe even recorded on VCR for delayed viewing) and radio (Cashman 2005). That was convergence in Australia pre-internet (Simons 2007).

Up until 1995, the key differentiator between all four football codes: Rugby Union was the only amateur code in Australia. However, during season 1995 ex-rugby player, Ross Turnbull, led a 'rebel' group of corporates in a charge against the establishment with the *World Rugby Corporation.* Having signed up some of the biggest names in international rugby, the Australian led 'rebellion' - as coined by both the establishment and the rugby press at the time[6]. It was a social, political and cultural challenge, founded in the economics of mass entertainment that would redefine the operational constructs within which not only the players and the code would function, but also how mass (digital) media entertainment would be produced in a converging global consumer sphere[7].

This wasn't necessarily anything new in Australian rugby. Afterall, it was essentially, the same player-driven, corporate-supported revolution that provoked the creation of Australian Rugby League in the early 20th century (Phillips 1994). However, unlike the rebel breakaway league post-WWI, rugby union's resolution came in the form of a new international administrative and operational response negotiated between newly formed players unions and administrators, enabled ultimately through corporate media sponsorship. Effectively, commercializing and globalizing the game of rugby union.

The Australian Rugby Union was now a founding member of an international rugby

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6   Ex-Wallaby and Fairfax journalist, Peter Fitzsimmons' book The Rugby War, published in 1996 embodies the sentiment of the time.

7   Dana Thussu (1998), Electronic empires: global media and local resistance

co-operative SANZAR[8] responsible for the development and administration of a new professional regional competition and entertainment product – *Super 12 Rugby*[9] - comprising provincial representative teams from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. While it was essentially a new and improved version of the *Super 10* series, added was the commercial broadcast media commitment (rugby as entertainment for mass market consumption) via a record multi-million dollar broadcasting deal with global corporate Murdoch media empire in the form of Pay TV entity, *Foxtel* and its affiliates in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa[10]. While financially this enabled professional rugby operations, it also introduced new corporate structures that essentially reinforced the existing fields of power[11] within the traditional institution of the game itself. Effectively extending the sphere of influence from the local to the regional[12].

In 1995, two things happened: rugby turned professional, and the internet (formerly ARPAnet) and the indexed web – what we know as the world wide web (www) became public[13]. Open source software and ICT technology developments introduced new group capabilities to web users that made the www a 'conversation place'. In 2004, Harvard student, Mark Zuckerberg launched a social networking site www.facebook.com[14] and

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8   SANZAR is a ruling body and by definition a well-funded institution of power in rugby union administration in the southern hemisphere. Housed within the established power structures of the Australian, New Zealand and South African rugby unions. Its entertainment product, Super 12 is housed within the traditional places of rugby worship (the stadium) and distributed via the SANZAR FOXSPORTS affiliates. The promotion and scheduling of which is re-negotiated between rugby and media executives intermittently, highlights the co-dependency of the media and rugby relationship for the purposes of distributed entertainment. SANZAR's codes of conduct and rules of governance are written and enforced by the traditional rugby ruling institutions of the national rugby union under the auspices of the International Rugby Board - www.irfb.com

9   Super 12 has subsequently expanded twice and will be known as Super 16 from season 2011.

10   For more information on the history of SANZAR refer: www.rugby.com.au

11   Bourdieu talks of the 'fields' of knowledge that can restrict, enable and maintain agency within institutional and social constructs. This is acutely obvious within elite rugby communities.

12   McLuhan introduces the idea of the evolution from the local to the regional and beyond in *The Guttenberg Galaxy*

13   For a complete history on the development of the internet and the world wide web refer: Henninger's (2008) *The Hidden Web*

14   According to Zuckerburg, facebook.com is founded on the idea of sharing information within networks: http://blog.facebook.com/blog.php?post=2208562130

effectively transformed the global village into a networked society[15] in which the transfer of information via digital means opened new pathways and means of creating association. This is what Bourdieu[16] refers to as social capital and what Wellman considered a by-product of the socialization of human-computer interaction (HCl[17]) and fundamental to the building of modern community[18].

Not surprisingly, access to and consumption of new media and mobile technologies has redefined the way Australians communicate (Henninger 2008). As members of the global metropolis[19], Australians with internet access have the opportunity to both consume and generate content online - what Axel Bruns (2008) calls the process of '*produsage*'. This marked change in the nature of media consumption and community interaction is clearly evidenced in the current usage of social media by elite Australian rugby players, Rugby HQ (as the Australian Rugby Union now calls itself), Australian rugby media and the presence of rugby-dedicated fan pages on social networking sites such as *The Old Boys Rugby Choir* on *facebook.com*.

Digital Rugby Community Texts

Following is a textual analysis of selected digital texts (reproduced as screen-grabs) from facebook and twitter to expose the nature of community and individual narratives online. These texts have been chosen to provide a key insight into the variant ways in which sub-groups build community online via use of digital tools. The diversity of the conversations is derived from the inherent nature of social networking sites to turn local comments into unique global conversations (connectivity) and the vibrancy of those social networks (what Stutzman compares to cities)[20] as places[21] people visit frequently, with variant motivations

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15   Castells further develops the evolution of society in line with media technologies in his Internet Galaxy - http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=515976 in which he debates the virtues of virtual communities as opposed to a network society.

16   Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1992), 'The logic of fields', Part 2, Chapter 3, in their An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology, Polity Press, pp.94-115.

17   Wellman, Barry (2001), 'Computer Networks As Social Networks' in Science, Vol 293, pp. 2031 - 2034

18   Manovich (2002:46) described the divide between the technology and the media surface 'what can be called the computer's ontology, epistemology and pragmatics' as being a key influencer on 'the cultural layer of new media, its organization, its emerging genres, its contents'

19   Shirky (2008) - http://www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=7600047
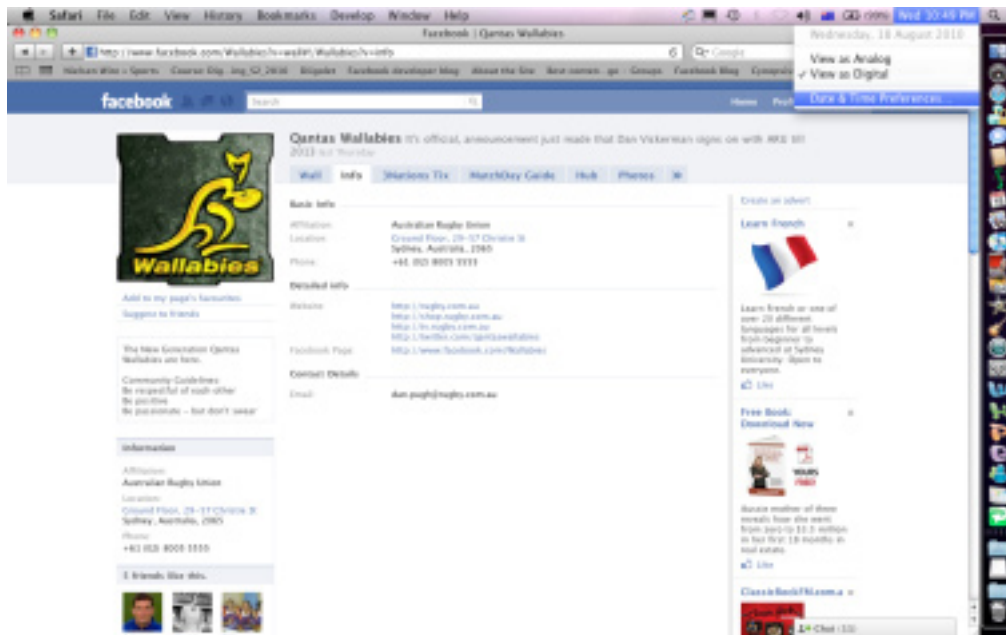
20   Stutzman, Fred (2008)

21   danah boyd (2008)

for interaction.

The ARU

The Australian Rugby Union (ARU) uses *Facebook* and *Twitter* as a sales and PR space. Traditionally, the ARU's key corporate messages were distributed (or 'pushed') via

accepted channels (fax, telephone, Beta tapes, press conferences and more recently email) and staffed by professional communicators and media production specialists. The timed release of information into the public space was contrived[22] . However, this is still true, with social media used as another information distribution channel[23]. For example: while the ARU has recently started to use other more interactive and informal platforms such as Youtube and Yfrog (multimodality) for posting 'behind the scenes' video content of the Wallabies on facebook, at their official website[24], its static 'posts' do not tend to evolve into conversations beyond the corporate marketing and sales script.

Not surprisingly, the tone of ARU online communications[25], remains formal and in

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22   Quail (2010) engages in a detailed discussion of social networks as a PR distribution channel

23   David Holmes (2005)

24   www.rugby.com.au

25   even post a major online design and content overhaul of www.rugby.com.au in 2008, the tone and style of communications practice remains corporate.

keeping with its corporate position at the head of the rugby community hierarchy; both

locally, regionally and globally (refer below).

The ARU maintains its authority online in the way that it convenes group discussions online,[26] 'pushing' crafted corporate messages into its newsfeeds and falling short of a dialogic (two-way) interaction with its fan community. Dialogic interaction[27] appears reserved for communication between ARU representatives and the mainstream corporate media entities of print, broadcast and online (traditional media partners) as well as a handful of selected bloggers and online 'mashups'[28] such as: www.theroar.com.au [29].

   The former chief rugby union writer (print journalist) for the Murdoch-owned *The Australian* and *Daily Telegraph* daily mastheads, Peter Jenkins, heads the media department at *Rugby HQ (*as the ARU brands itself). Which begs the question: in an age of convergence is this coincidence or corporate design? And while it may explain the lack of sophistication (lack of technacy[30] even) of the ARU's online communications, it is possible the ARU strategies are purpose built around vested commercial interests rather than a shared interest in the actual game of rugby itself. These commercial interests are themselves the product of rugby as distributed media entertainment.

   To its credit, however, the ARU has embraced although by now means comprehensively

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26   Shirky (2010)

27   Pavlik, John (2008)

28   Burrows (2007) defines a 'mash-up' as "a new hybrid of web-based applications that mixes different services from disparate – even competing – websites."

29   Founded and run by the sons of long-serving Fairfax rugby journalist, Spiro Zavos.

30   Refer to Margaret Simons (2007) and Bruns & Jacobs (2007) for a discussion of the professional media capabilities and the requirements for new media journalism one of which is digital technacy.

the new media technologies. In direct contrast to some high profile international rugby clubs[31], who have banned players from participating on social networking sites, considering them 'a waste of time'.

Professional Players

Of all community subgroups it would appear that players are the most comfortable with social networking sites. Which begs the question: is this because they are used to being 'public personae[32]' (reflexivity) and thus a by-product of the emerging 'attention economy' (Hearn 2008)? Or a natural progression, given technological advances, in the way we imagine communities? In the case of the players, micro-blogging site of twitter.com is the preferred 'space' for intra-network communications.

Only a handful high profile of ARU

contracted Wallabies 'tweet'[33]. Every now and then a new one sneaks tentatively online and calls out to his existing network for help[34]. But for the handful of players who do tweet regularly, they tend to talk to each other and/or other high profile professional athletes

31   http://www.planetrugby.com/story/0,25883,3823_6340042,00.html

32   *Netiquette* is a dynamic social practice that according to Miller (2001) is redefined within the 'cultural milieu of a collectivity' as an 'evolving etiquette for participation on the net within a community'.

33   Of the Wallaby touring squad chosen for the end of season tour to Asia, Italy and the United Kingdom only ** players have public profiles – none of which are yet verified - on Twitter.com

34   This reinforces Wellman's (2001) idea of social network of relationships that provide sociability support, information and a sense of belonging.

(predominantly from league and swimming) via the use of '@' or via direct message (DM) rather than engaging directly with fans beyond talking about their daily routine[35] to no one specifically (refer below).

Players have a lot more visibility of fans and are a lot more visible themselves, thanks to social networking sites such as facebook.com: the impacts of which are not measurable via digital text analysis alone. Players such as: Kurtley Beale[36], Matt Giteau [37]and now league convert Lote Tuqiri [38]appear to hold both private and public conversations in the micro-blogging sphere of twitter. They also appear to use their own locker-room jargon (including nicknames); something which isn't new for players to do in person although it may be perceived as a way to maintain levels of privacy within the public social media sphere. The use of in-house jargon reinforces a sense of distance for the player. Yet, at the same time introduces a new level of 'behind the scenes' access and authenticity.

Fans are now able to follow, although not privately engage with the players, via direct message without their express permission. This effects a direct transfer of established socio-cultural norms from person-to-person[39] to online behaviour[40]. Which begs the question: are social media platforms merely the modern-day equivalent of Foucault's Panopticon? Wallaby 'tweeps' fell silent following the now infamous @ItsStephRice [41]'suck on that faggots' tweet during the Wallabies historic win over South Africa in Bloemfontein. Perhaps this silence reflects a panoptical form of self-regulation, or perhaps it represents a

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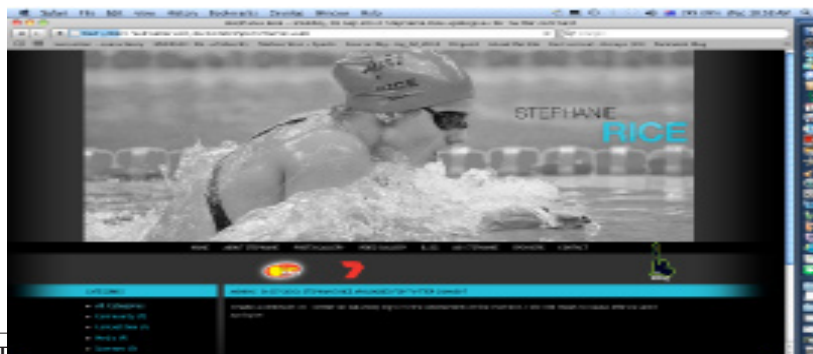
35   This is what Hearn (2008) refers to as a self-conscious construction of the meta-narrative.

36   http://twitter.com/kurtley_beale

37   http://twitter.com/giteau_rugby

38   http://twitter.com/LoteTuqiri

39   Barry Wellman (2001)

40   Perhaps what Foucault would consider the process of self-regulating.

41   http://twitter.com/ItsStephRice

more hierarchical structure of top down authority where players are abiding by corporate ARU social media policy with the threat of monetary penalties. There seems to be two forms of power operating here – one where players regulate themselves and each other based on the fear of not seeming cool with each other or to their fans; and a second kind where real threats are imposed and implement by the governing body, the ARU.

While Rice's @ItsStephRice original post was promptly deleted from the Twittersphere[42], her Twitterfeed removed and replaced with an apology on the front page of her official website (see above). Rice's tweet confirmed that when she is not being a world-class athlete herself, she is an engaged rugby union fan.

More telling than Rice's tweet itself, was the fact none of the Wallabies responded to or commented publically on Rice's tweet. An invaluable lesson of brands adhering to *netiquette[43]*, or was it deemed inappropriate given Stephanie Rice's boyfriend, Quade Cooper is a Wallaby team member?
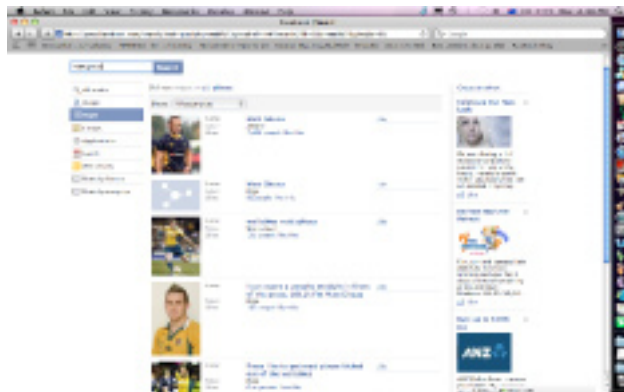
Another challenge of being a public identity in 2010 is maintaining control of ones identity and brand[44]. This is an environment in which mock identities and fan-produced pages can and do have a tendency to be produced. Examples include the sites for Matt Giteau as identified below.

Superstars of the game today are of an age that they have never known life without a mobile phone or internet connection. So given the historical socio-cultural media/rugby texts, it is

42   Reinforcing the role and politics of corporate management and highlighting a source of concern for digital archivists and a challenge for both corporate communicators and journalists seeking confirmation of digital artefacts for both credibility and fact checking.

43   http://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc1855

44   What Hearn (2008) calls 'Brand Me'

logical that digital texts will evolve with the rugby communities just as they migrated from printed, to electronic and now digital communications with group conversations enabled by social media, platforms where players feel comfortable engaging.

Rugby Fans

Fan groups online[45] are all about participation and engagement with the game of rugby union. Thanks to community support on facebook.com, on Saturday 11 September, 2010, a group of 35+ well-meaning ex-rugby players earned their stripes to sing the national

anthem prior to the Australia v New Zealand Tri Nations test match in Sydney. Led by Australia's modern-day swagman, John Williamson, they called themselves *The Old Boys Rugby Choir*, [46] . What was their motivation? According to OBRC member, Sean O'Hara, 'Just to be there in amongst it[47]: the opportunity to be front and centre (to participate) rather than observe come Test Match Day.

This group of rugby-lovers (some of them ex-1st grade players) managed to mobilize over 10,000 fellow rugby (and non-rugby supporters) via the power of facebook. In less than a week, *The Old Boys Rugby Choir* group page on facebook had in excess of 13,000 fans and now registers over 14,000.[ ] However, the power of social media, may have not been

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45   What Jenkins(1992) would see as fandom functioning as an alternative social community

46   Prime time commercial and Pay TV broadcast coverage was unprecedented (refer: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKNT7LIBFc4,, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GI6rBSOM3No, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bA-LUNuWis

47   "Yes we were stoked just to be out there. They gave us free tickets to the game we were happy with that. We are not after money or fame just some love!!!" – Sean O'Hara (OBRC member) via facebook email interview on 15 September, 2010

as absolute, if the traditional media had not shown their support (Shirky 2010). Not only would *The Old Boys Rugby Choir* not have had credible content for their story and site, they wouldn't have had truly mass consumer exposure beyond their local communities (Flew 2007)[□]. Coupled with privileged access to *Rugby HQ*: a couple of the group members are prominent businessmen, *The Old Boys Rugby Choir* use of a mix of old and new media channels with outstandingly efficient results.

As professional journalists themselves will admit, Twitter.com is an efficient and effective way for sourcing content (crowd-sourcing[□]).

While professional journalism, media, and corporate hierarchies still exist and prosper, thanks to technological advances in computers, mobile telephony and new media, they also exist alongside not only each other but new social media platforms which enable an entirely new style of conversation, consumption and participation (Shirky 2010). A by-product of this is random 'reader' engagements and non-linear style communications.

Conclusion

Rugby union fills a particular socio-cultural niche with it's own unique history and cultural discourse. It has its own ritual patterns, a stable structure of community comprising administrator, fans, supporters, sponsors and players; as well as cultural norms of engagement and relationship patterns[□]. Twenty-first century media is the antithesis to this. It is global, social, ubiquitous, and cheap, and has created a media environment where the 'audience' are now full participants (Shirky, 2010). Within this sphere, the traditional media and communications practice, that was structured around the principle of control, is plausible in the case of rugby union community due to the traditional institutional elite maintaining agency via structure, knowledge and networked relationships.

The inherent differences between the way members of the rugby community construct identity and engage online is reflective of traditional social constructs. The arrival of new social media platforms and mobile telephony technologies have not redefined the communities, but afforded a ubiquitous connection to broader community discussions in which engagement is varied and participation optional. Accordingly, new media capability has not redefined professional rugby's rules of media and fan engagement, although it has exposed some cultural elements of key subgroups such as: hybrid language and colloquialisms used in private conversations between players and their associates and the process of media information distribution.

Social media has meant rugby communities have additional communications channels in an already multi-channeled public media space. And while the globalization of Australian rugby union with the advent of professionalism in 1995 ensured the cultural migration from amateur to professional, agency remains tightly held by the administrators and the media within the converged space of professional sport as entertainment for mass market consumption[□].

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The Social Consequences of Social Networking Sites: The Impact of Facebook on Teenage Girls

By Kerry Widdup

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

This article seeks to examine the impact that electronic, digital, and interactive technologies have had on the production of literary knowledge and the narrative. The research assignment will further speculate the role of 'digitally preserving' narrative literatures through what has been labelled 'transmedia storytelling'. It is an investigation which assesses the integrity of a great narrative once it has been subject to the inevitable 'tossing' and 'turning' throughout the vast mediums in this universal 'media playground'. It will also utilise contemporary media theory to break down and conceptualise transmedia storytelling and further assess the implications of 'participatory culture' on the creative industries. Whilst we are only beginning to discover the exciting possibilities and capabilities which technology and digitisation hold, we would not be doing our job as inquisitive human beings if we did not speculate into the role of digitisation of the narrative.

The importance of this research is to understand exactly how much one 'records' and 'preserves' of the original narrative when the various cross-sited narratives are re-fabricated for each media platform they deploy. The article will hopefully address the convergent narratives of our time and therein give us a better understanding of digitisation and the narrative and further the assumptions which surround it.

Keywords

SOCIAL MEDIA • PUBLISHING • NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGY • FACEBOOK • TEENAGE GIRLS •

Introduction

Social networking sites have undeniably exploded in the last few years, generating excitement at the opportunities opened by new technologies. One social networking site in particular that has gained a huge following is Facebook, which is prolific amongst teenagers who relish the opportunity to create and recreate highly stylized identities and showcase their relationships with their peers. However, little research has been conducted since the explosive membership growth and widespread popularity of Facebook in the 21st century and we are yet to see the consequences of a generation of teenagers who have grown up online. From interviews I conducted with ten teenage girls, all aged 16 or 17

years old, I attempted to look at some of the social and psychological issues associated with Facebook such as the creation of an increasingly narcissistic generation, un-realistic body image, social pressure, privacy issues, friend-grading, and cyber-bullying. In addition I also attempted to examine whether or not Facebook has actually changed the way in which teenage girls relate with one another and with others such as family members.

Self- Display and Identity Formation

One of the first things that struck me when conducting this research was the increased significance of Facebook as a medium for social interaction. ìItís weird if you donít have Facebook,î was the first thing I was informed during my venture into ëgirl world,í a term coined by Rosalind Wiseman in her book Queen Bees and Wannabes (2002). All of the teenage girls I interviewed said they logged into Facebook at least once a day, with the majority logging on several times a day. ìEspecially now that you can have Facebook on your Iphone.1 The second thing that struck me was the level to which social conventions in ëgirl worldí dictated the level of maintenance expected on ones Facebook account. ìItís considered gay if you leave your Facebook profile the same for longer than two weeksî one girl informs me whilst the rest nod in agreement.[1] Asked if they regulate and monitor what content and pictures appear on their Facebook pages, the girls agree that they would ëuntagí (remove the link to their profile) any pictures which they didnít think made them look ìhotî or ìskinny,î showing a clear fixation on their looks, self display and presentation on Facebook. All of the girls also admitted to regularly going online and browsing or "stalking" the profiles of their friends and acquaintances and forming opinions on, or "judging", them based on what content was displayed on their Facebook page.

From these responses one can gage that Facebook is integral to the way these teenage girls live and the way in which they present themselves. This reliance starts to create problems due to the fact that ìteenage girls are coming of age in a more dangerous, sexualized and media-saturated cultureî (Markello: 2005: 134). The interviewees have already expressed a desire to only appear online looking ìhotî and ìskinnyî and a quick glance at each of their Facebook profiles show an array of highly sexualized pictures in which all of them wear skimpy and revealing clothing and are posing in a manner befitting a Playboy photo shoot. Valentine claims this behavior ìidealizes images of female bodily perfection and messages of perfectibility which exercise control over womenís lives by constructing a self

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1   The use of the word "gay" is slang for bad or undesirable and does not refer to sexual orientation or happiness

that is distorted and divided against itself, and that is self-policing and self-destructiveî (in Markello: 2005: 137). Facebook only exacerbates this valorization of female bodily perfection within modern ëgirl worldí as one must adhere to unobtainable standards in pictures on their profile if they are to avoid being ëjudgedí by their peers. This can lead teenage girls to extreme behavior such as crash dieting, cutting and self-hatred if they cannot obtain this standard. The increased sexualizing behavior of teenager girls on Facebook is also evident as the interviewees say thatís it is not uncommon to be called a ëslutí on Facebook, indeed it is even a term of endearment amongst friends. They rate sex as the most talked about topic online, often knowing within days about the sexual activities of their friends and acquaintances within days via Facebook. Sex is definitely no longer a private matter ìand itís getting worse, kids in like year 7 (aged 12/13) are rooting (having sex)î one of the girls says. ìThis is a far cry from the traditional view of teenagers being awkward, shy and ill informed about sex,î says sex and relationships expert Tracey Cox (Knapton: 2008). ìThere's no doubt that Social Network Communities have had a dramatic impact on teenage sexuality and their access to information about sex" (Knapton: 2008). Indeed a recent survey of teen chat rooms found that there was one sexual comment made per minute (Subrahmanyam: 2006: 395). This focus on sex, and the ability for teenage sexual experiences to be broadcasted and discussed on Facebook is a real worry as it positions vulnerable young girls in a situation where they are encouraged to engage in sexual acts they may not entirely understand and feel comfortable with. Furthermore these acts will then be discussed online for everyone to see, branding the teenager with a reputation that may be hard for her to shake. Interestingly enough, it also appears that if a girl completely abdicates from any type of sexual behavior, she is then also socially shunned as being "frigidî"and "lame".

   Another worrying consequence of this Facebook generation is the narcissistic obsession they have with self-display. The regular taking of, and uploading of, photos to maintain their stylized identity are creating a generation who only think of themselves and how others perceive them. This has been taken to the extent where teenagers will go to events and spend the majority of their time there taking photos of themselves enjoying the event, which they can later upload to Facebook, rather than having fun at the event. One particular instance that the interviewees share with me concerns a small group of girls which whom they are friends, at a recent school formal. The said group spent the entire night taking photos of themselves at the formal and would run up and greet other people only to take a photo with them. ìThey didnít even, like, speak to anyone or have fun they just took photos for Facebook,î said the girls. But when the photos were posted, these

girls looked like they had had a great time. ìThey just did it to look like they were the center of attention and have heaps of friends and stuff.î Which begs the question of which is more important to teenagers these days: lived experience or online identity? ìYoung people have always devoted attention to the presentation of self,î claims Sonia Livingston, but is this presentation overtaking any semblance of the ërealí self? (2008: 393). With the interviewees describing many outings, even just going to the beach or going to coffee, as a constructed set-up in which girls can take photos of themselves looking a certain way to further their online identity, it appears as though this narcissistic self obsession may be taking over these teenagers lives at the expense of real social relationships and consideration of others.

In addition to this self-obsession, this glitzy online display is creating unrealistic social and economic pressure on teenage girls. Many of the girls feel as though they must constantly invest in different clothes and accessories to avoid being photographed in the same outfit more than once on Facebook, which is considered a faux pas. ìIf I go out in an outfit someone takes a photo then I wonít wear it again for at least 6 months,î says one of the girls. When I ask them if they regularly buy new clothes to avoid this situation they all say yes, with all of them saying they spend most of their pocket money on new outfits and go shopping at least once a fortnight. In an extreme case, they girls tell me about a friend at a different school who will buy expensive, designer clothes almost twice a week, wears them once to be photographed in, keeps the tags on, and then resells them on eBay. Whilst the teenage girls consider this behavior over the top, they all concede that it is better than wearing the same thing over and over again, which would get oneself socially shunned. These girls are being placed under increased economic pressure to try and keep up with the online identities they, themselves, have created. Not only do these social conventions privilege girls from wealthier backgrounds, but places those who cannot afford to constantly update their wardrobe in difficult positions with the interviewees telling me of girls resorting to shoplifting and stealing from their parents to try and keep up with Facebook expectations.

Privacy Issues in Facebook

Privacy is also a major concern for teenager use of the Internet and Facebook as many teenage girls do not see the online world having consequences in the offline world. Williams and Merten believe that ìadolescents behavior offline is so heavily regulated by parents, teachers and school administrators and is therefore kept in check and often

appropriateî(2008: 256). However once these teenagers go online they ìdo not experience moral re-enforcement or possible punishments and therefore act in ways that would be unthought-of of offlineî (Williams and Merten: 2008: 256). The positive thing I got out of interviewing the girls is that they are all very aware of the dangers of strangers on the internet and as a consequence have all utilized the varying privacy setting provided by Facebook so that only their friends can view their profile page. Unfortunately, the girlís precautions end there and they do not foresee any of the dangers associated with allowing all of their 800+ friends on Facebook to see and access all of their personal information. In addition the girls do not usually carefully screen people who request to be their ëfriendí on Facebook as they all wish to look popular by having the maximum number of friends they can. Therefore people they hardly know can gain access to their accounts. Another issue, which the girls do not seem to consider carefully, is that once an image, video or information is on the Internet, it can never be removed. Therefore behavior that they consider appropriate at age 16 may seem embarrassing or inappropriate when they are older but there will still be evidence of it on the Internet (Benson: 2009: 6). It is already clear that the girls do not consider the content on their Facebook page appropriate for all audiences by the fact that they all say they would not allow their parents to view it. ìIíd die if my mum saw my Facebook pageî says one girl while two other interviewees admit that their mothers actually have a Facebook account but the girls turned down their motherís ëfriend requestí so as to shield the content. This may be an act of rebellious independence from a teenager; however, it is likely more a desire to prevent an authority figure from censoring inappropriate content.

Cyber-Bullying

What is perhaps the most worrying consequence of Facebook is the explosion of cyber-bullying. Teenagers, especially girls, have always formed cliques and used bullying as a way to enforce conformity. Rosalind Wiseman writes of ëgirl worldí as a guide for parents:

   ì*One day your daughter comes to school and her friends suddenly decide she no longer belongs. Or she's teased mercilessly for wearing the wrong outfit or having the wrong friend. Maybe she's branded with a reputation she can't shake. Or trapped, feeling she has to conform to what her friends expect from her so she won't be kicked out of the groupÖ a group of girls with all the tact, sense of fairness, and social graces of a pack of marauding hyenas*î (2002: 3).

However this type of social exclusionary behavior has only been exacerbated by the ability to communicate constantly online, with victims having their profiles bombarded with insults and hurtful comments for everyone to see. The teenage interviews say they are all familiar with this type of behavior. They, themselves, have all been the recipients of online abuse of some type on Facebook, believing that is it the feeling of being anonymous that motivates other teenagers to be more vicious than they would offline. ìThey all hide behind their computer and say stuff they wouldnít dare say to your face,î says one of the girls. ìPlus you canít get in trouble for what you say on Facebook, cause like, itís not at school or anything and you can always delete your comments straight away if someone says something.î This comment displays how the law and educational institutions have not caught up with this new technology, and itís tech-savvy users. Cyber-bullying in its most extreme form however, can cause extreme psychological issues, depression and even death. The interviewees share a particular nasty incident where a boy from a nearby school dropped out of school because he couldnít deal with the bullying that he endured. The bullying didnít cease once he left though, his Facebook account was bombarded with comments telling him he was a ìloserî and ìdrop-kickî and ìwould never amount to anything. î[2] He later had to seek professional help for depression and anxiety. Cyber-bullying can also drive teenagers to the extreme of suicide. Two publicized instances of this in the US are Megan Meier, a 13 year-old girl who hung herself after being tricked and abused by a friendís parent posing as a 16 year-old boy, and Phoebe Prince, a 15 year-old girl who also hung herself after being relentlessly abused online by the ëpopular girlsí who called her a ìslutî and said they wished she ìjust commit [suicide]î(ABCnews: 2010) (Donaldson James: 2010). These cases exemplify damaging and destructive consequences Facebook can have if used as a tool to harm others.

Conclusion

While Facebook is an extremely popular social networking site, society should be careful not to praise the new technology without examining the social and psychological effects it can have. When used properly, Facebook is a fantastic way for people around the world to stay in touch with one another. However, when proper judgment on how to use Facebook is not exercised, as it is often not amongst teenage girl whose vulnerability and desire to fit in can often cloud their judgment, then it can be a site of extremely destructive behavior and social conventions. As the interviews with 10 teenage girls have shown, the prolific use of

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2   "Drop-kick" is slang for someone who is unpopular and unlikely to succeed in life

Facebook has produced a number of undesirable social and psychological consequences. One of the more interesting responses I got from the girls was that they unanimously stated that they did not, in fact, like Facebook but were scared to stop using it, as they did not wish to be socially ostracized. It is unrealistic to suggest that teenagers should all cease to use the social networking site, however it is obvious that substantially more regulation and guidance needs to be available for teenagers so that some of these negative consequences are limited. Increased education about Facebook and the proper way to use the site would be one avenue I would suggest, as well as updating the law and rules of educational institutions so that online behavior does not go unpunished offline.

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Microblog Sensation: The Growing Popularity of Tumblr

Emily Marquart

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

As people's lives become more and more intertwined with their online interactions it is important to understand why this is occurring and what this means for their identity, both on and offline. The research into what makes a social media site such as Tumblr so appealing to bloggers gives an insight into the direction other blogging platforms may take in the future. In a world where digital publishing is becoming exceedingly prevalent research into this field is significant.

Keywords

MICROBLOGGING • IMMEDIACY• COMMUNITY • SOCIAL NETWORKING • TUMBLR

Microbloggging is one of those words that comes up fairly regularly in discussions about the effect that technology, particularly social networking, is having on our lives so it is important to have a clear understanding of what the word means. The Wikipedia definition of mircblogging is: "a form of blogging that lets you write brief text updates (usually less than 200 characters) about your life on the go and send them to friends and interested observers via text messaging, instant messaging, email or the web" (Wikipedia as cited in Java et al, 2007, 1).

Microblogging differs from regular blogging due to its brevity. Kristina DeVoe states that "freedom and brevity are the current appeal of microblogging over traditional blogging, which often focuses on established topics using stylized and sometimes lengthy prose" (DeVoe, 2009,

David Karp, the creater of Tumblr. Photo taken by Jonan Basterra ©

3). Microblogs are short bursts of information that do not require the author to plan or invest as much time in as a traditional blog that you would perhaps find at Blogspot or

Wordpress.

Microblogging often occurs in real-time, another characteristic that distinguishes it from other social media such as traditional blogging (Sakaki et al, 2010, 10). Users update information about what they are doing either while they are doing it or soon after, made even more possible by being able to update via mobile phone. This real-time characteristic also allows news stories to spread faster than ever before.

Java et al note that mircoblogging fulfils a need for a faster mode of communication. They state, "[b]y encouraging shorter posts, it lowers users' requirement of time and thought investment for content generation" (Java et al, 2007, 2). Boyd et al explain that the requirement of little effort allows "a fast paced conversation environment to emerge" (Boyd et al, 2010, 10). Popular microblogging platforms include Twitter, Facebook, Plurk and Tumblr, the focus of this article.

At the time of writing this article, September 14 2010, Tumblr had a total of 7 847 501 publishers and 117 886 397 posts. 5 579 628 of those were posted on that same day. Tumblr is a microblogging website that is becoming increasingly popular in the Web 2.0 world. It is a blogging platform that aims to give users the easiest and fastest way to blog, whether they want to publish text, audio or video material. Founded in 2007, one year on and the site had accumulated 400, 000 users, growing at a rate of 15 per cent each month.

The 'About' section of Tumblr's website boasts positive reviews from an array of sources. The New York observer notes that Tumblr is beloved for its users "for its clean interface, ease of use and community". Fast Company confidently states, "It's blogging, the way blogging was meant to be" (About, 2010). It also explains that the "average Tumblr user creates 14 original posts each month, and reblogs 3. Half of those posts are photos. The rest are split between text, links, quotes, music, and video." (About, 2010).

It is evident from the rising number of users and excellent feedback that Tumblr is doing something right in the microblogging world. The combination of being able to quickly upload data of the users to choice and to share with other users in a community is the key to Tumblr's growing success. Devoe's research supports this theory, as she states:

> What are you doing? The question is simple, yet provocative. Posed to users in some fashion each time they log into one of their many online social networks, the question begs an answer and assumes to important things: immediacy coupled with community. (DeVoe, 2009, 2)

Immediacy is apparent from the first moment of accessing Tumblr's homepage. Tumblr's

sign up process can be completed in 3 quick steps. All it asks of its users-to-be is their email address, username (which can be changed at any time) and password. They are ready to begin updating. Once a user is logged in they have access to the dashboard. The dashboard is where users can view posts from the Tumblr blogs they follow and also where they can update their own blog.

The simplicity of the navigation of Tumblr is something the website prides itself on. At the top of the dashboard are icons titled text, photo, link, audio and video. The variety of choices means a user can upload anything he or she would like to share, no matter the medium. There is no limit on the length of the text posts but the swiftness of Tumblr tends to invoke short, punchy posts, not unlike those found on Twitter profiles, which can only be a maximum of 140 characters.

Tumblr users are not limited to posting from their dashboard. It is quite simple to email posts (Tumblr is able to detect what type of post it is) and there is also the option of automatically updating a users' Twitter or Facebook account when a something is posted. This means less time invested by the user to update each of their social networking sites, making this type of blogging the most efficient way to get your point across to a wide number of people.

Another posting option offered to users is the bookmarklet. The bookmarklet is able to the dragged to the bookmark bar, often found below the address bar. When users are on a webpage and they find a photo or quote they want to share they do not have to navigate away from the page in order to post it. The bookmarklet allows the user to upload to their Tumblr without actually being on Tumblr. It is a simple tool that heightens Tumblr's immediacy factor.

As for designing the look of your blog, Tumblr has that covered too. There are many themes (none of which force advertisements onto a bloggers page) to choose from in the theme garden section of the website and most of the themes available are able to be modified – almost to the point of not being able to recognise the original theme. Users are also offered instructions on how to create their own themes using HTML code. Every aspect of a user's Tumblr page can be personalized to reflect the individual blogger.

On the note of personalization, Danah Boyd says explains that "bloggers see their blog as a reflection of their interests and values. They also contend that the blog does not show them entirely, but only what they choose to perform in that context" (Boyd, 2006, 17). Tumblr offers the option of private posts, meaning only the owner of the blog is able to

view certain things if they wish.

However, a lot of users find that their Tumblr is a way of being a part of a community and want to share their posts with their community of followers. Users are likely to follow blogs that have similar interests and values to their own. The reblog function of Tumblr allows users to repost something that they found interesting or inspiring on someone else's blog to their own page. It also enables them to comment on posts, often creating a dialogue between users. This enhances the sense of community.

Reblogging for Tumblr is what re-tweeting is for Twitter – more than an act of simply copying and rebroadcasting. Boyd, Golder and Lotan suggest that the "practice contributes to a conversational ecology in which conversations are composed of a public interplay of voices that give rise to an emotional sense of shared conversational context" (Boyd et al, 2010, 1). Reblogging is a way of continuing a thread of discussion throughout a Tumblr community.

Technology website Web2practice has this to say about the conversation aspect of microblogging:

> Microblogging is a very social method of communication that appeals to our inherently inquisitive human nature. We're social beings who like to know what other people are doing, reading, writing, watching, listening to […] it's open, informal and spontaneous, all of which encourages social interaction. (Web2practice, 2009)

This further explains the appeal of not only microblogging in general, but also using Tumblr as a microblogging platform as it is offers easy ways to share the things mentioned in the above quote and start a digital conversation.

Another way dialogue is created between bloggers is the Ask Box function. Unless it is disabled, each blog has an ask box where users can send questions to the blogger, with the option of anonymity (again, unless it is disabled). The right to disable the Ask Box function comes back to the bloggers ownership and control of the blog. Boyd states that "there is a sense of ownership, a sense that a blogger has the right to control what acts and speech are acceptable and to dictate the norms [of their blog] in general" (Boyd, 2006, 17).

The anonymous option for the Ask Box function can often create negative dialogue between bloggers. It often incites harsh criticism due to the fact that there aren't the consequences that would be felt if they had revealed their username. This is not the type of audience that bloggers feel comfortable with having and, as Boyd notes, an "unwanted audience presence gives people a sense of being invaded" (Boyd, 2006, 18). The option to

disable anonymity, or the Ask Box entirely, gives bloggers control over their digital space.

A part of Tumblr's appeal lies in the fact that while it is incredibly easy to find yourself a suitable digital community, it is also just as easy to control the information you send and receive. Donath and Boyd explain that our "[n]etworks are the extension of our social world; they also act as its boundary. We may use the network to extend the range of people we can contact; we may use it to limit the people who can contact us" (Donath & Boyd, 2004, 11). Without the ability to limit our interactions as well as expand them, microblogging platforms would lose some of their appeal to users.

The ability to expand our social networks through social media such as Tumblr has numerous benefits for users. Donath and Boyd explain that "[s]ocial networks – our connections with other people – have many important functions. They are sources of emotional and financial support, and of information about jobs, other people and the world at large" (Donath & Boyd, 2004, 1). Tumblr can benefit users in these ways through functions such as reblogging and the Ask Box. Both of these functions help create many communities within Tumblr.

Another aspect of Tumblr that helps create communities is the ability to have more than one contributor to a blog. This feature is useful when it comes to regularly updating a blog because it means that the effort of producing content can be divided among an unlimited amount of contributors. Users can gather like-minded bloggers to produce a Tumblr page, often dedicated to a specific interest such as novels, celebrities or fashion.

Even when a blog is accessed by only one user Tumblr has an optional feature that allows users to submit posts to blogs that are not their own. The posts are then screened by the owner of the blog. Submissions are posted if they fit the category and overall feel of the blog, with credit given to the user who submitted the post, usually by way of linking to their webpage.

In conclusion, Tumblr is becoming increasingly popular for a vast array of reasons, most notably its accessibility to users and the important factor of community interaction. This paper only begins to explore the appeal of microggling platforms, of which Tumblr is a just one choice out of many, and there is plenty of room for further research into this particular evolution of blogging.

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A case study of Douban.com: an Web 2.0 online community in China

By Guangyu Li
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

The new information technology provides various digital tools to new generations which change their daily life online and offline. In this Web 2.0 era, users' influence plays a vital role. In 2005 there was an early "Web 2.0" website in China named Douban.com. It starts as an online community website which brings people together through similar interests and focuses on value-add interaction among its users Different from Xiaonei.com and other famous websites in China, its idea is original. In a way it is a unique Chinese website. This paper will discuss what the main features of Douban.com are and why those special features occur. Its users' groups will also be analyzed in order to find out the influence.

Keywords

WEB 2.0 IN CHINA • ONLINE COMMUNITY • DOUBAN.COM

## 1.		The characteristics of Douban.com

In this information age, Douban.com is a symbol of "Web 2.0" in China. Established in 2005, Douban.com came out as an online community for book lovers, movie lovers and music lovers. The design of Douban.com is quite clear and simple, so users will concentrate on information. It is based on users' expectance and reviews and focuses on connecting communities of similar interests via its interest group.

It had got more than 18 million registered users and nearly 5,000 users group since there was only 3 staff working for this network site in 2006. According to Alexa rankings, it currently boasts 3.2 million registered users. It is due to its characteristics that Douban. com achieves that success.

### 1.1	Comments, recommend comments and rating

As a deputation of web 2.0, the involvements of users are the most significant because they produce the main content. There is no traditional editorial content, which is similar with Digg.com. Douban.com only provides brief introduction on books, films, music, and exhibitions as its subjects. Under the introduction, users create comments like reviews, suggestions and even price comparisons from multiple vendors on this subject. Its comments are the centre of its value and create a variety of communication circles as a

starting point which can be considered as the most significant part. With the comments, Douban.com gains the function of reviews-sharing website where users create, share and evaluate what they like.

Douban.com is also considered as a database for movies, books, and music like Amazon.com. The huge difference between those two is that Douban.com itself does not involve in books business. A huge part of users of Douban.com are interest-based information seekers. More than half of the users in Douban.com often search for comments on books or movies in order to acknowledge some useful information or make decision to buy. Questions and comments on particular reviews or suggestions of others are usually the conversation between users in this case.

There is also a recommend function for the comments in Douban.com. Users can choose whether this comment is useful or not. The recommended comments will appear in front of other comments. Users can also share certain comments with their friends in Douban.com. Similar with recommend function, rating is for particular book, movie or music, which will show in the top page of Douban.com. The two functions affects users' attitude towards particular books, movies or music and play great role in book or movie market. Due to the huge popularity of Douban.com, top rating books are often leading Chinese print media.

1.2 Recommender system: Guess and broadcast

The recommender system is another feature of Douban.com. Douban.com Guess is the most usual one in the recommender system. It is an adding function of Douban.com book for the users. Like the personal recommendation, Douban.com Guess will select the content users might be interested in from the mass of data by analyzing their daily reading habit, wish list and comments. "Douban.com guesses you may like… " is shown in the users' homepage. As it written in the page of book.douban.com/recommended, "The more users use, the more accurate Douban.com guess will be." This function will be quite accurate especially when users mark huge amount of books with personal labels, like favorite or expecting. Douban.com Guess is the primary recommendation system of Douban.com and used to be a feature of Douban.com. Now it only exists in Books and becomes a part of the whole recommendation system. In the new service 9:00, there is also recommendation like Douban.com Guess.

Based on huge data of users, recommendation system is increasingly powerful. It appears in Movies, Music or even the Communities. It will suggest some activities or interest groups by "people love this usually join groups like..." or "people love this also follow activities like..." In the front page of Douban.com, the today's recommendation is also a part its recommendation system.

The recommendation system selects all information in order to save users' time and to improve their experience, which will appeal to lots of users. Moreover, in some way, Douban.com is a review-share website, so the recommendation is essential to provide users a chain of information based on their interest. In that case, recommendation system can enhance the loyalty.

1.3 Communication: Neighbor, Groups, Same city

The neighbor is an individual communication tool. Neighbors can easily know what each other do. What neighbors recently read, wrote and recommended would broadcasting to each other, which ensures that users gain the latest information and neighbors keep in a close relationship. This function is like the follower in twitter, but it is automatically released rather than users' wish. The Neighbor provides users' opportunities to have interpersonal communication with people are like-minded or interesting.

Groups and Same city are communication tools between communities, which supports people with similar interests to get together and communicate. Group can be formed for anything: books, lifestyles, personal views or even some strange features. For example, there is a group in which each member provides and enjoys morning call. The sub-group gains some function of BBS, like the own home page, but it is also open to others who are not group members.

Same city is a new function introduced in 2008. Users can add their living details and know who are in the same city. One huge benefit is that users can check and share the information of activities hold in certain city. The same city allows users not only communicate in the virtual community, but also initiate and organize activities through that virtual community to the real life. This function is much more convenient than the traditional community, because the communication tools are more effective and can reach a huge number of people at the same time. It connects the online community with real life.

1.4   New introducing: 9:00

January 2007, new service for blog, 9:00 started. 9:00 is a collection of latest updating blogs which are carefully selected. Different from the content-based blog, 9:00 is based on users' interests and habits, which sometime are not necessarily confined to a certain topic. There are four classifications, for example "Channel 2" is about the media; "Channel 3" focus on life and design. This user-based blog service helps each user to quickly and effectively identify the most interesting information suiting their taste. Moreover users can also add the blog they like and make 9:00 as their personalized collection of blogs.

Compared to the comment-content from books, movies and music, 9:00 brings new content: users' favorite blogs. Users are no longer the content-maker, but they also contribute to the content and even become a part of Douban.com recommendation system. At the same time, Douban.com gains more information about users' interests on blog habit and add blogs outside. Therefore the database of Douban.com will increase dramatically.

Table 1.The main functions of Douban.com

Special	Community service	Recommendation system	New introducing
Reading	Group Guess	Nine o'clock	
Movie	Same City	"People also like"	
Music	Neighbor	Today's recommendation	

1.5 The users of Douban.com

According to the interview of Yang Bo, it is considered that the main users of Douban.com are the booklovers, students and some artists because people hold an impression that Douban.com belongs to the minority-people are special and different from the majority. Yang Bo, the CEO of Douban.com explained the reason is that the minority are more active in creating content rather than the majority. However, the users in Douban.com are various.Douban.com is user-centered website and any user can find the mind-like person in Douban.com. Yang considered characteristics of users is that most obviously they have their own independent thinking. This feature is not limited to a certain extent like age, location or income.

There used to be a research in Douban.com discussing the age, gender and professions

in 2007. It shows that the main users of Douban.com are aged from 18-30 and most are well-educated. As a Web 2.0 site, in a way, the development of Douban.com is decided by its main users.

2.   The reasons of Douban.com success

2.1 Douban.com suits the internet policy in China

Internet regulation happens in every country. When this topic comes out, people might think about China as an example due to the Great Firewall. Since 1997, Chinese national Internet usage has grown from 630,000 users to more than 123 million users. The huge population of internet users could form some potential problems which would bring huge influence. The Chinese government started worried about the internet regulation. Under years' effort of researchers, the Great Firewall came out. Like Derek Bambauer and his partners described, "Some of the better known tactics used involve filtering search engine content and removing results, blocking or editing Web log (blog) posts with political keywords, and regulating cybercafés to prevent banned Web sites from being accessed." The internet in China is more sensitive in some way. To suit the internet policy in China becomes a quite important rule for all internet companies. Douban.com is a web 2.0 website based on users' interest. Users create pure information about books, movies and music. This is what gives Douban.com its visceral power: the ability to get important information neither tampered by the neither government nor propaganda from companies. Pure information is a powerful pull especially Douban.com is the biggest aggregate or of pure information.

2.2 Douban.com absorbs others' advantage

Firstly, the simple design of Douban.com brings lots of praise. As we all know, the most acclaimed part of Flicker is the organizational form of its Tags. In addition, its favorites, friends and groups also strengthen the social network features. The simple design in Flicker ensures that users can add any photos on the tag and add note whatever they like. Organized with the tag, there are no strict rules in Flicker's classification, which continue to strengthen the interest of communication. Douban.com can won the key features of Flicker because the CEO of Douban.com, Yang, does appreciate the simple flicker page. Douban.com does "draws on flicker" especially on its simple design.

  Secondly, people consider Douban.com follows the review function of Amazon. We now know Amazon not only provides a lot of books and simple web pages, but also makes great efforts to create a network community atmosphere. It encourages readers to paste book reviews and now there has been nearly 1 million reviews, which becomes one of Amazon's

biggest feature. Writers are also invited to chat online with Amazon readers. For example, the famous writer John Updike started a story in Amazon and then 40 million people sent follow-up novels. All those features are what the Chinese online bookstores miss out. However Douban.com did well on that.

2.3 Needs for the online community

Online people now meet one another, keep up diverse social relationships, and create various forms of online groups or communities. Moreover, people not only create new relationships online, but they also import preexisting relationships into the online realm. People participate with other group members in online communities to seek mutual benefits such as strengthening social ties, circulating information, archiving experiences, exchanging opinions, sharing common interest and providing emotional support. Such relationships may not only engender reciprocal trust among members but also form a trusting or distrusting attitude toward nonmembers. Also, they transfer the norms of real life social relations to online relations, creating a continuum between the physical and the virtual world. In addition, the relationships may facilitate or decline social interactions among people and their psychological well being.

2.4 User-center meets the require of Web2.0

From the Douban.com, it can be seen a revolution of internet community. In Web 2.0 era, online community is totally different from the traditional BBS. Instant of that, dynamic, highly flexible, self-organized becomes the features of the online community. In Web2.0 era Douban.com bring a new relationship between users and content. The active users form the content and build up their self satisfaction through this kind of action. What the active users create also attract other active users to engage in. On the other hand, the negative users who usually do not create content can contribute to the content by rating, sharing and recommending. All will change the arrangement of contents and lead to a various content. At the same time, the content attracts both active and negative users. The activities of all users become significant to Douban.com.

Conclusion

As an online community in web 2.0 eras, Douban.com always focuses on its users. Its functions like comments and 9:00 serve the purpose that users build content. The recommendation system enhances both users experience and users loyalty. The neighbor and group function support the communication between users. The same city extend users 'reaction of groups and bring the online community into real world. Douban.com becomes

one of the most successful online communities in China due to its user-centered position and web 2.0 features. What is significant in Douban.com is that functions of Douban.com produce a new relationship between content and users which cause users to be the core value.

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The privacy issue on social network sites: Facebook

By Yuan Yuan Guo

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

Social network service is one of the most important technologies in Web 2.0, and has appealed hundreds of millions users. It not only provides a platform for users to express themselves, but help them socialize and build up communities online.

Social network site (SNS) usually requires users to offer personal information to join in. So, users may public their personal information such as name, age, occupation, and interests on SNS. The information like this may result in privacy issues, which will bring many inconveniences to users not only in the cyberspace but also in the real world.

In this paper, I will give an introduction of SNS and Facebook first. Then the concepts of privacy will be discussed. The main part will be focused on the description of current privacy issues on Facebook, and followed by the analysis of reasons and related theories. Simple management measures will be put forward in the final part.

keywords

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES   FACEBOOK   PRIVACY

Introduction of SNS and Facebook

The social networking service we will study in this paper is the web-based social networks, namely social network sites (SNS), which have developed rapidly in the last several years. There is no explicit definition for SNS because of its various characteristics. According to Acquisti and Gross (2006), SNS is "Internet-communities where individuals interact with others through profiles that represent their selves".

The history of SNS can be traced back to 1978 when Turoff and Hiltz set up the Electronic Information Exchange System, which provided users a platform to email each other, see the bulletin board and access the list servers (Hiltz and Turoff, 1978). The website sixdegrees. com found in 1997 was the first widely known website which enables individuals to establish a SNS (Freierman, 1998). After this was the business network of Ryze.com in 2001 and then Friendster.com in 2002, then SNS enjoyed worldwide popularity (boyd, 2004). By 2004, two of the most popular SNSs MySpace and Facebook have been launched, which lead SNS to a new era (Jones and Soltren, 2005).

Facebook was created in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, a sophomore at Harvard

University. His prime intention was to build the Harvard community with students' directory and ID pictures. Two-thirds students in Harvard posted their pictures and information on the site only in two weeks (Fortune, 2005). By the end of 2004, Facebook owned over 1 million members. In September 2005, Facebook opened its door to high school, and it started to accpet users with workplace e-mail addresses in May 2006. In September, it opened to every one of ages 13 and above with an e-mail addresses (Coughlin, 2006). In October, it attracted nearly 10 million users and rated as the seventh most popular website on the World Wide Web in U.S. (Cassidy, 2006). In April 2008, Facebook caught up with MySpace, and finally became the world's largest SNS (Arrington, 2008). It developed at a staggering pace, doubling in size since 2009. In July 2010, its users were up to 500 million (The New York Times, 2010).

Facebook becomes overwhelming because of its unique features. The most attractive feature is "the site's authenticated network structure": most users of each group initially knew others in reality like school or workplace (Kirkpatrick, 2006). Moreover, Facebook's photo albums appealed a large number of users. It allows members to post unlimited photos, and they can "tag" a friend in the posted photos which will also show up in other friend's site.

However, Facebook has its own flaws. Privacy issue is one of the most disturbing issues, which sparked severe debate recently. The privacy revelation may bring tons of inconveniences to users, sometimes even lead to detrimental results.

Concepts of privacy

Before referring to the privacy issue, the privacy concept should be reviewed first. According to Brandeis and Warren (1890), privacy is as the "right to be let alone". According to U.S. Supreme Court, privacy refers to people's right to seal their private affairs, and protect them from surveillance and intrusion of government (Whalen v. Roe, 1977). Lessing (1998) defined privacy as "what's left after one subtracts the monitored and the searchable from the balance of social life". Privacy is a complicated concept which involves "freedom of thought, control over one's body, solitude in one's home, freedom from surveillance, protection of one's reputation, protection from searches and interrogation and control over information about oneself"(Solove, 2002). There is no consensus definition on privacy. A more functional concept for this paper is that privacy refers to one's control over their personal information (Westin, 1967). Users of SNS have right to protect their personal

information from intrusion, and they should be the only person to control who can access their information.

Currently, privacy issue has become one of the greatest problems for internet users. Online privacy and security can be considered as a main reason for not using the Internet. There is a "privacy paradox" when people join in SNS (Barnes, 2006). On the one hand, users are worried about the loss of privacy when they communicate online; on the other hand, users tend to disclose their personal information on SNS. Acquisti and Gross (2006) describe this "paradox" as a disconnection between users' intention and their actual action. In the following paper, I will analyse this "disconnection" based on the world largest SNS: Facebook.

Privacy issues on Facebook

The privacy concerns of SNS encompass improper exposure of others' private information, impaired image due to passing gossip or rumours, inappropriate contact, stalking, and surveillance, revelation users' information to third-parties, and identity theft from hacking.

In the following, I will discuss the privacy issues on Facebook from its policy changes over years. The specific issues will be analysed from five aspects: News Feed, Beacon, third party, complex privacy setting, and the latest change of privacy policy.

Issue from "News Feed"

Facebook started "News Feed" feature in September 2006, which can collect all actions made by users' including updating profile information and joining or leaving groups. All these actions will be displayed in a feed on the start pages of users' friends. Therefore, users' activities seem to be totally exposed on Facebook, which brings users a strong sense of privacy violation. According to boyd (2008), News Feed changed the structure of online information, especially in the domain of privacy. It not only exposes all users' behaviors they conceived hidden previously, but violates users' personal boundaries to a large extent. The creation of this function was criticized harshly at first. A Facebook user Pam Schwartz complained that she did not want all her friends to know what she commented on other friend's wall or photo, and some family members and employers even began to use the news feed to snoop and make troubles. Although the information posted was not private, excess exposure about all friends' information on the home pages displeased most users. It is true that the news feed can enhance the potential risks of privacy revelation, because tracking down others' daily activities has become so easy. It seems that users now have

accepted News Feed as one of the most popular features of Facebook. Whenever they log onto Facebook, the News Feed is the first thing to see. However, even if users can make controls on the exposure of information, it is still hard to protect their privacy. This is because users tend to use the default privacy setting, which aims to make information sharing to a maximum extent.

Issue from "Beacon"

In November 2007, Facebook launched "Beacon", an online advertising system, which can track users' personal actions on 44 partner websites. Information including purchases decisions and games played are broadcast on News Feed without users' permissions. What's worse, even if users have logged off from Facebook, their information still can be broadcast. Although there are specific privacy settings on this feature, the problem is that even if users can choose whether or not to public their actions on third-parties sites, Facebook still can track the data regardless of the privacy settings. This sparked an extensive protest. An anti-Beacon group MoveOn.org's accused Facebook that Beacon advertising system violates users' privacy. The spokesman Adam Green (2007) advocates that "it's time for Facebook to reverse this massive privacy breach." In response, Facebook made some changes, but that still could not satisfy with users. Finally, the Beacon service was stopped because of the privacy issue.

Issue from "Third Party"

Third parties on Facebook can access most users' personal information. Facebook allows third party advertisers to use users' posted photos without their permissions, and it neither supervise nor support "Platform Developers". What is worse, they even cannot control how these "Platform Developers" deal with all users' information they have obtained. All of these actions of Facebook can be considered as the intentional and illegal use of someone else's property for one's own use or some other unauthorized purpose (Los Angeles Times, 2009). The third parties can use Facebook for data tracking, commerical exploitation and other malicious purposes, which bring numerous inconveniences to users. Besides, there is even a link between Facebook and government agencies. For instance, the Patriot Act (2006) permits state agencies to disregard the privacy setting on Facebook to look for potential staff.

Issue from complex privacy policy

Facebook has its own privacy policy, which has grown significantly over time. According to Pan and Zinkhan (2006), privacy policy can be categorized into two types, comprehensive

description and succinct statement. Based on experiment, they found that the more complex the policy is, the less likely it would be read. The privacy setting on Facebook is very complex, which is 5000 words longer than the U.S. Constitution. Facebook claims that it aims to provide specific controls for online sharing. To deal with privacy on Facebook, users have to look through 50 settings with more than 170 options (The New York Times, 2010).

Obviously, most users are not patient enough to complete the privacy setting instead of following the default setting on Facebook. However, most default settings tend to public users' information, which is a huge potential risk for privacy revelation.

Issue from new privacy policy

Since March 2010, Facebook began to make changes on its privacy policy. It claimed that new changes aimed to simplify the complex privacy settings and tried to give users more control of their information. However, based on experts' analysis, the new changes are obviously planned to push users to share more information than before, which reduced users' control over their personal data. The main issue lies in "transition tool", which guided users to share information they posted with everyone through the new "recommended" setting, even if users had accepted the previous default setting. It is no doubt that this change led to higher incidence of privacy revelation. Even worse, under the new policy, Facebook treats information as "public available information" (Bankston, 2009). The privacy options which allowed users to limit others to access their posted information have been excluded by the new policy. Although users have the ability to prevent everyone but friends from seeing their friends list according to old privacy setting, it has been removed from the new privacy setting system. This change is very controversial. According to the survey among 680 participants by IT Security Company (2010), 95 percent of them think the change is bad, which is a huge challenge for users' privacy control. In response to this, Facebook made changes again in May, but the effect is very limited. There are still numerous disputes on this change.

Related reasons and theories

Since Facebook has its own privacy policy, why do the privacy issues occur so frequently? First, there is a lack of management on privacy issue on Facebook. One principle of Facebook is to encourage users to share information to a maximum level, and their larger emphasis has been focusing on this intention. So the neglect on privacy management is inevitable. Second, most users are lack of awareness about the privacy issue, and simply

choosing the default privacy setting. Even though some users restrict the access of their information on "friends only", they tend to accept "friend request" from acquaintances or totally strangers. Therefore, exposing personal information on their profiles means creating a public profile. Besides, the complex and confusing privacy policy of Facebook is the most important reason, which put users in an extremely high risk but they even have no consciousness about that.

Although the privacy issues on Facebook never stop occurring, its users still grows quickly. We can explain this phenomenon based on two theories. First is "Uses and Gratification" theory. According to Blumler (1974), there are three basic needs for media users, including needs for diversion, for para-social relationships and for identity construction. All these needs also can be considered as users' basic needs of Facebook. Based on the survey carried out by Debation and Hughes (2009), Facebook provides a strong gratification to users that can exceed their privacy concerns. Second is "Uncertainty Reduction Theory". According to Berger (cited by West & Turner, 2004), communication can help people reduce their uncertainty about others, thereby promoting the interpersonal relationship. Most users tend to use Facebook in order to eliminate the uncertainty about the environment around them. Besides, SNS has its own motivations for users as mentioned above.

Suggestions for management

Indeed, privacy issue on Facebook is always its largest weakness, while its founder Mark Zuckerberg claimed that "sharing is the 'social norm'" (Mashable, 2010).

To ensure the "sharing" in an appropriate way, Facebook should enforce its privacy management from three aspects. First, although Facebook aims to make the sharing to a maximum extent, this intention should be put on the basis of users' free will. Any pushing actions should be avoided. For instance, the default privacy setting should pay more attention to users' privacy control rather than the disclosure of users' information. Second, as for users' lack of awareness on their exposure of personal information, corresponding education should be delivered to users. The consequences of overlooking privacy setting should be emphasized to alert uses. For example, the cases involved in privacy revelation can be collected and edited in the form of videos or files, which can be used as impressive lesson for current users, thereby enhancing their awareness on privacy management. Third, as for the complexity of Facebook privacy policy, the officials of Facebook should consider cutting down the confusing and annoying parts of privacy setting, and keeping the simple and concise points, thereby enabling users to make wise choices easily. Besides, a general

guide or tip for the privacy setting should be made, in case of uses' misunderstanding.

Conclusion

The privacy issue on SNS is a disturbing issue since its inception, which can be well illustrated by the development of Facebook over years. The reasons for this phenomenon can be categorized into three: first, the lack of privacy management on Facebook; second, the users' lack of awareness about potential privacy issue; third, privacy policy on Facebook has its own flaws. According to the "uses and gratification" theory and "uncertainty reduction" theory, Facebook cannot be isolated from people's daily life, especially the young generation. Therefore, it is essential for Facebook officials to reconsider their privacy policy, and reinforce their management on privacy issues. Overall, higher transparency on privacy setting, more education on users about the significance of privacy management, and simple and concise privacy policy should be taken into account to address this issue.

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Internet slang used by online Japanese anime fans

By Miaomiao Wei
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

Internet slangs are widely used online in China since the computer technology spreads. Online users from specific "virtual communities" may create, borrow, use and spread internet slangs in terms of particular fields. This report examines the internet slangs used by online Japanese anime fans which are observed in an online community called "baidu dongmanba". Data are categorised in regard of language features. After this an analysis on the characters of slangs used by anime fans are made and relations between these slangs and Japanese anime cultures are explored.

Keywords

INTERNET SLANG. JAPANESE ANIME FANS. VIRTUAL COMMUNITY

Introduction

The internet was introduced into China in 1994, and two years later, it can be accessed by common users. BBS (Bulletin board system) was one of the most popular online communicating systems at that time in China. After entering the age of Web2.0, participation of users is emphasised more than before. The notion of "virtual community" emerges as new technologies are increasingly applied.

"Virtual community", according to Rheingold (1994, in McQuail, 2009), Lindlof and Schatzer (1998, in McQuail, 2009), is a community formed by individuals who share similar interests through the internet. Online forums, BBS and other information sharing and social networking services on the internet, have provided platforms for virtual communities to develop. Based on similar interests, online users in a virtual community can share opinions and exchange information. During these activities, special internet slangs generate which are different from other slangs spread in the whole internet. These slangs are often popular in a particular online community and can be hard to understand by other online users, which are similar to "jargons". The origins and characteristics of these slangs are usually decided by the sharing interests in the online community.

The communication between online Japanese anime fans in China is an example of using both ordinary internet slangs and "jargons" in a particular virtual community. As internet users can be signified by using common internet slangs, online anime fans can further be signified by special internet slangs associated with their particular interests.

This paper will explore these "special" internet slangs used by online Japanese anime fans through a quantitative research on one online community "baidu dongman ba". Internet slangs used by the users are collected, categorised and then analysed in terms of their relations with the special interest of this community. A guess can be established that the internet slangs used by these anime fans include both common internet slangs which are accepted by the majority online users, and the special "jargons" which are mostly created, understand and spread by anime fans.

Methodology

Before investigating the internet slang, the notion of "Chinese Phonetic Alphabet" should be introduced. It enables all the Chinese characters to be pronounced by roman letters. However, the intonations which are essential for distinguishing meanings in Chinese cannot be shown by this alphabet. This "Chinese Phonetic Alphabet" can be called "pin yin" by its pronunciation in Chinese.

The term "internet slang" in this paper, does not only refer to words. It comprises Chinese characters, English letters and words, as well as codes such as emoticons. It represents language variation in the online environment.

In the first part of research, a particular online community is fixed, which is formed by the Chinese fans of Japanese anime, on the most popular BBS in China: "Bai du tie ba" (the words "tie ba" can be explained as "please post" or "please publish"). It is a public online communicating and publishing system which is consisted of countless forums. Everyone who wants to focus on particular interests can create a new forum, which is named by his

or her interests. However, all the names of these forums must have the word "ba" at the end, as a signature of "Bai du tie ba". For instance, a forum about journal writing can be called "journal writing ba".

In order to investigate the usage of internet slang by online anime fans, I collect data from a forum called "dongman ba" (anime ba). This "ba" has over 222,000 subject posters. Each of them is posted by one user as a topic, and then others can discuss about it. The place where they talk is a new webpage which is called "lou" (a building), the first speaker who sets the subject is called "lou zhu" (the owner of the building), who is on the first floor. The second person who speaks is on the second floor, the third one the third floor, and so on.

Data are collected from fifty subject posters (fifty "buildings") appeared at the first page of this "ba" (forum) at a random time point. Ninety-two words or codes that are not used as common Chinese are picked out in every first page of the fifty "buildings". They will be categorised in the following analysis.

The second part is a qualitative research which focuses on analysing the characters of the special internet slangs used by these Japanese anime fans. Links between these expressions and Japanese comics, animations as well as Japanese cultures can be found. Specific examples of words or expressions will be examined.

Data collecting and categorising

The ninety-two internet slangs which have been collected can be divided into two groups. One is consisted of Chinese characters while the other one is not. The latter (Group 1) comprises English letters, codes and numbers. It can be further divided into four subgroups:

Group 1 (24)

1) Common English words or abbreviations (6)

The original meanings in English are remained. For instance, "out" means "out of date" in the context. "What" expresses astonishment.

Three out of these six slangs are not regular English. "Loli" refers to young girls who are under 14. It is short for "Lolita"; "PV" is a common abbreviation for "Promotional Video" used in Japan; "CP" refers to couples. All these words have close relationship with the spread of Japanese anime. It can be indicated that these English words are not borrowed from English, but from Japanese which borrowed English words in earlier time.

2) Acronyms of "pin yin" (6)

Chinese words are firstly written by phonetic alphabet, such as "□□"□the owner of the building□becoming "lou zhu". Then its initial letters are picked out and combined as an internet slang, "lz" or "LZ" ,which remains the meaning of the original Chinese characters.

3) Emoticons (9)

4) Numbers and mathematic symbols (3)

The other group of Internet slangs (Group 2) is Chinese. It can be categorised into seven subgroups:

Group 2 (68)

1) Ancient or traditional Chinese, and dialect words (5)

Both of them are not often used in modern Chinese now. However, they are welcomed by the online users again.

2) Chinese words take place of the ones which have similar pronunciation but different meaning. (6)

It is in fact a kind of "wrong spelling". People can understand it by guessing the meaning from its pronunciation. For instance, the word "□□" (bei ju) which means cups, takes place of "□□"(bei ju) which means tragedy in online conversations.

3) Ordinary Chinese words which are explained in new meanings (15)

Their original meanings still exist in daily life. However, in online situation, these words gain new meanings which may be far from the original ones.

Example: "□"(di) means the emperor in modern Chinese. It is increasingly explained

as people who do best in a particular area, like "the best expert". However, this saying is sometimes ironic or exaggerating.

4) Phonetic translations from foreign language (4)

One is from English while the other three are from Japanese:

"□"□fan□; "□□"(yo xi)means "all right" in Japanese.

5) Verbs and adjectives used as conveying the users' mood. (13)

The words which mean "making a fist", "having no strength", and "sweating" etc. are all related to the typical acts or gestures that anime characters make.

The word which means "staying at home" is related to the living style of anime fans.

6) Words directly introduced from Japanese (14)

Some of these slangs are translation of meaning from Japanese. The others are Chinese characters used in Japanese. The sequence is that Japanese borrowed some Chinese characters in the before, while now Chinese borrow these words "back" into Chinese. The meanings of these words have changed a lot.

7) Others (11)

Characters of the internet slangs related to Japanese anime

In the internet slangs investigated, some one or two words are used to describe actions or conditions which often appear in anime works. Particularly in comic books, an action or a state of the character can be represented by still pictures. For instance, in order to show a character is "drinking a cup of tea comfortably", a picture is drawn, which depicts a person drinking a cup of tea with satisfaction on his or her face. Inside or near this picture, one Japanese word which means "tea" (sometimes the word is Chinese character) is added to describe the action of having tea, as well as indicate the ease of the character.

There is a phenomenon that internet slangs can transfer the meaning of this picture into written language by only remaining the word "tea". In this situation, this single word refers to more contents rather than its literal meaning. The single word in Chinese slangs, are

always translations of Japanese words given in the pictures. Sometimes they are Chinese characters which do not need to be translated.

As a result, a word containing rich meanings from a picture is highly abstract and refers to a complex meaning. Such as in Chinese internet slangs, the Chinese word "tea" can be interpreted as both the action of drinking tea and the condition of feeling comfortable. Similar example can be seen in Group2. 5: the word of "sweating" refers to the character's face with a drop of sweat on it, which means embarrassment in anime language; the internet slang "pounce" means rushing to someone and giving an embrace, which are often used as showing close friendship online; the word "touching head" stands for the action of stroking someone's head, also expressing friendship and familiarity.

Another special word "love" of its internet use can also refer to complex meanings, but the source and function of this word is different from the above slangs. The word "love" used as internet slang, are given new meanings and flexible in grammatical usage. The first meaning of "love" as a noun in this situation is most close to its ordinary use, which means "things someone like". Secondly, it can work as a noun similar to "interest" and used with verbs like "having". If an Japanese anime fan wants to describe a character or a comic book or a plot or a line spoken by a character is "interesting", he or she can say it is "having love" or "containing love", which means there is some interests inside the object being described inspiring the speaker. The word "love" has complex meanings as a noun in anime environment. It also refers to something cute or lovely, so "having love" can explained as "having some cute factors inside". On the other hand, "no love" refers to "not interesting". However, this expression can be used as an active action of the agent. For example, a user (the agent) saying "I have no love in this story" means he or she has no interest in the story.

In spite of "having love", "love" can work as a verb which can be used alone or accompanied with adverbs indicating degree, such as "big", "desperately", "crazily". "Big love" means "like something with great interest", "crazily love" means "being keen on something", and "desperately love" shows an extreme state of "love something". However, all these expressions only convey verbal meaning and often present exaggerate effects which are a

typical character of anime.

Another word "meng (pronounciation of 'pin yin')", together with the word previously mentioned "love", are rooted from the phenomenon of "cute" culture in Japanese anime. "Meng" is a Chinese character used in Japanese being directly borrowed "back" into Chinese internet slangs. Its Japanese pronounciation is "mo e", a litter similar to the Chinese one "meng". The traditional Chinese meaning of "meng" as a verb is to "bud or sprout" or to "begin from the origin" which is a metaphorical use, or it can be used as an adjective signifying the "beginning state of something". Being borrowed into Japanese, the meaning of "meng" changed. It turns to mean "on fire" or "burning" as a verb or an adjective in traditional Japanese. However, the meaning changed again during the spread of anime culture. "Meng" is extended to be used as an adjective which means "something can be described as fascinating and inspiring", or indicates something is "cute". Similar to the adjective use of "love", "meng" can be used together with adverbs of degree.

The internet usage of "meng" and "love" presents the flexible use of Chinese internet slangs. Comparing to traditional Chinese, these words have more complex grammatical functions and the limitations bounding their use is little. This phenomenon is shared by other ordinary internet slangs as "di" shown in Group 2.3. "Di" as a noun indicating a status of a human, can attach various adjectives and nouns in order to express a creative meaning. For example, "beiju (tragedy) di" refers to someone who are "tragedy" or "very unlucky", which also contains exaggerate effects.

Conclusions

This report collects examples of internet slangs used by Japanese anime fans in online communities. Data are categorised and separated into groups according to the language features. Focus is placed on the expressions relating to Japanese anime and cultures. Abstract expressions comprised of one or two words are found to convey visual meanings. The flexible grammatical use of the word "love" suggests a character of casualness in common internet slangs. The word "love" and "meng" indicate the relationship of slangs used by anime fans and Japanese anime and its culture. Internet slangs used by these fans have the ordinary characters of common internet slangs. At the same time, some special "jargons" they use are specific in anime cultures. Further investigation about this topic can

explore relations between Chinese internet slangs with Japanese cultures and language, rather than limited in anime cultures.

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Mobile Technology: the new classroom where attendance is made anytime and anywhere

By Chalida Hiruntrakul
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

In last decade, people were discussing widely about the use of Internet on the desktop computer. At this point of time, the arrival and advancement of mobile technology has dynamically taken the stage towards the future time. This new creation makes new experiences of mobility with access to happen and transform the boundary of learning.

This paper will be discussing how this newness is affecting human being, especially the process of learning. Back in previous days, classroom is the only place to shape cultured foundation. However, accessibility and equality to gain such foundation were unable to be distributed evenly. People in developed countries and prosperity tend to have education privilege. Fortunately, with the proliferation of technology, opportunities are broadly scattering to everybody regardless of where they live. We are now living in the new age of education where classroom size is no longer measurable. The intangible online classroom, which was regarded as the utopia-learning environment, is becoming the realism of today. The accessibility via mobile devices allows even greater opportunities to learn upon individual's preference. With the impacts from mobile technology, there are numerous points to attend to. The shift of learning pattern from the past present and future, the acquisition of learning and knowledge, the consumption of mobile technology are some of the key points to be conversed.

Keywords

DIGITAL MEDIA • MOBILE TECHNOLOGY • ONLINE MEDIA • MOBILE MEDIA • ONLINE LEARNING • E-LEARNING • COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE • MEDIA CONSUMPTION • COMMUNICATIONAL TECHNOLOGY • COMPUTATIONL TECHNOLOGY • MULTIDIMENSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Introduction

In our childhood routine, kids are sent to school and classes upon the registration paper. It is rarely that any of us will be allowed to choose what we want especially in school where educational knowledge is being offered in literal structure. This is owing to the inherent ideology that juveniles generally require closely and constantly to be protected. This group of people is being misjudged. There is a large volume of published studies and researches describing the true nature of learning through stages of one's life. It is the fact that through times, people change and develop simultaneously in some ways.

This is to be noted that now at this twenty-first-century, we are at the age called 'Information Age' as suggested by Manuel Castells(Castells M. , 1989), who has written the most complete synthesis to date of information society and communication research. At this Information Age, it is where dynamic information forms in every social interaction. The stimulus is the embodiment of technology that modifies our historical social context, social relation, and culture substantially. Internet and mobile devices are parts of the technological innovations. The interplay of both parts pave ways for people to instantly gain technological mobility.

Mobile technology is one the fastest growing communication technology and is taking part in every social member. With the impacts from mobile technology, there are numerous points to attend to. This paper will touch on three main parts. The shift of learning pattern from the past present and future, the acquisition of learning and knowledge, the consumption of mobile technology are key points to be conversed.

Backgroud

In 1907, Dr.Maria Montessori revealed in her discovery about the child's true normal nature(Montessori, 1912). She observed on how children interacted when they were given independence in a setting with material designed and their self-directed learning activity. Surprisingly, without any solid rules or strict instruction, kids in this observation batch were able to learn and concentrate with their full-consent and inner-guidance. Not so long after, Alexander Sutherland Neil-the well-known advocate of progressive education and children personal freedom- established the Summerhill School in United Kingdom to support his belief and theories. He strongly believed that children have their personal freedom during their childhood. They learn best when they want to learn and this presents the possible projection of an individual in the future stage.(Neill, 1960)

There have been many studies being made in order to justify the most valid conclusion of how individual develops through his or her lifetime. According to Levinson's research, he pointed out that human's knowledge is being modified throughout lifetime. We are all altering in multidimensional, multidirectional, and multidisciplinary directions. Such changes are being driven by culture and context of an individual.(Colarusso, 1992). Further in this journal, online environment will be conversed as the new context of people in this present time. With the emergence and pervasive use of online platform, this affects

vigorously the learning process and educational alternatives of human beings. We are able to step out to the global classroom, where advocates and amateurs assemble, and create the big pool of knowledge. The new mainstream educational space, where rules are abstract and borders of learning are invisible.

In recent years, Internet makes every impossibility happened and becomes increasingly important to the delivery of information and communication practice. It is an affordable and express artifact that was created by human wisdom and led to human knowledge complexity. With the rapid development, Internet is no longer being used in just the limited space of the square screen or so called desktop computer. We are now moving towards the time where people are online anywhere with mobile devices.

The shift of learning pattern from past, present and future driven by technology

At the beginning of every creature, the first teachers are parents. For human being, getting into school is the rule of living life. Everybody knows what those educational institutions give and what we all get. For decades, many studies have been conducted to revise how human beings learn and develop. By looking from different point of views and ways to get to the foremost conclusion, there is uncountable answer to this complex progress.

To look from the scientific point of view, there is a neuroscience research been made(Alison Gopnik, 2001). The researchers explained that our genes do not encode all the knowledge. Instead, experience shapes the genes and brain. It helps fortify the connection and alters the structure of our brain. To further dispute regarding this point, the children who attend school would have a very low neuro-connection because experience within the classroom is very limited and they are new learners with rare experience. However, children are considered as the exceptional learners. Given the independence to children to learn on their own wills results the most effective learning quality. Dr. Montessori and Alexander Sutherland Neil have proved this assumption with evidences. Both of them focused on identical area of quality learning. They pointed out that the golden key to effective learning should start at independence(Montessori, 1912). Interaction gives them further exercise on their area of interest and participation(Neill, 1960).

The differences of the past, present, and future learning patterns are apparently contrasting. In the past, learning pattern was more likely to be one way or so called asymmetric role between teacher and student(Hemphill, 2010). This past pattern is reinforced and controlled by superior, teacher for instance. Teachers tended to dominate

and control the flow of the activities in the classroom and all students are on the follower status. In this present time, two ways learning flow or so-called synergistic interactivity is taking place(Kennewell S., 2007). Collaborative learning, E-learning, Virtual classroom learning are some of the practices. By allowing the interaction to happen in greater concentration, the learning is found to bear higher quality. For the future of learning, with the increasing usage and advancement of online technology that manipulate every aspect of people life, people are likely to have higher and better attribute. However, this does not mean that the classroom-based will totally be replaced with the computational and communicational technology. It is more likely that the role of online instructional and learning system may be instructor's assistant and learner's assistant anytime from anywhere(Penfield, 1996).

The acquisition of learning and knowledge

Human development is a compound study. In this part, it will be highlighting just part of human development that is the Lifespan theory of cognitive development. This cognitive development manifests two intertwined elements, one biological and the other cultural. The biological part is the neuro-physiological architecture of the mind as it evolved during biological evolution while the cultural element refers to bodies of knowledge available from and mediated through culture.(B.Baltes, 2001)

Through lifespan, human modifies in some ways(Colarusso, 1992). All those alteration is driven by culture and context stimulus. These changes can be classified to two parts within an individual, the nature and another is the nurture. The first one is driven by the genetic while the environment is determining the later one. (Boyd, 2006) Learning and knowledge has the symbiotic relationship where both depend on each other.(Mikkulainen, 2010) It has been found in many studies that in order to gain the quality learning, it should move responsively with the learning needs of an individual. Learners should do more than merely go through the motions; instead, they should understand how they benefit by engaging in the collective learning. Salomon and Perkins pointed out learners need to learn how to capitalise on the social milieu by learning to contribute to the learning of the collection. (D.N., 1998). By starting from the self-realisation, individual tends to move on his own will with full-consent of what he desires to learn.

Moving on to the online context where constitutes high number of users. With the growth of communicational and computational technology, people are availing and becoming more literate in computer. The question to this area is that, how do we learn and capture the

knowledge online. E-learning is a new way of learning that was established in early 1990s. (Callister, 1996) It provides learners with an environment of one-to-many instruction learning without limitation of time and place. Providing with different kind of knowledge sources, open learning system, delivery of multimedia format, cooperative learning, storing and accessing to huge amount of learning material are some of the key benefits users can have with E-learning method. In early period of E-learning, people were more acquainted with the browse-based on HTML web pages. With the progression, knowledge map-based was introduced to the online platform.(Shaw, 2008). The map shows the structure of knowledge being stored on the online space. It shows the information and the relationship of the overloaded information available out there. With the strict knowledge management online, learners are more likely to manage their knowledge systemically. However, there is one main point to be attended. Quality E-learning required computer-efficacy, which will eventually lead to good learning score and good learning satisfaction(J.N., 1986). The computer system has its complication that requires solid foundation in order to maximize every hands-on experience with it. By lacking of good understanding of how to use the computer and its methodology, learners' perception towards its usefulness may promptly shift into the negation.

   With the freedom to learn, people are stepping forward to the area where they have their full attention together. Knowledge absorption and participation level are found to be in height. Online platform changes the way people learn as well as the values regarding learning.(Turkle, 1995). Within the online context, spaces are being fragmented. People with matching interest are assembling in so called virtual communities. There is a term called 'The Jigsaw', which was created in 1978. It is one of the most well-known techniques that is use to foster cooperation and discussion among member within the virtual communities both face-to-face and online context.(Aronson E, 1978). The result of this technique is the production of quality learning and knowledge. When an individual chooses and manages the way to learn by himself upon curiosity level and area, this create such structured activity resulted in best learning results.

The consumption of mobile phone technology

With the growth access and the extensive use of internet everywhere not just on the desktop computer, people are now able to go online just anytime and anywhere with the mobile phone technology. This technology allows communication without the surveillance of anyone. It has the fast growth of consumption goods in recent years and put dynamism of productivity to people everyday life.

According to the research made by Morgan Stanley(Stanley, 2009), wireless options are growing rapidly. Information being transmitted via mobile phone is getting faster and greater than normal desktop computer. In a very near future, users of mobile phone are expecting to be always 'on-access' with extremely fast processing time. This tool allows people to do old things faster, better, and in cheaper rate.

In term of education, mobile phone is being banned in classroom everywhere. With the rapid change in educational institution and the learner, people may have to reconsider about the prohibition. The phone is found to offer an opportunity to connect students in new ways, providing a ready-made linkage between students and information. (Lynne Schrum, 2009) Children are learning outside the traditional classroom and using more cutting-edge education options pervasively. Virtual is the new classroom that is emerging more in the online platform. This term was first introduced in mid 1990 before it became the topic of interest among educational advocates. This virtual classroom does not limit the age of the participants. Successful learners are proved to have independent orientation towards learning, highly motivated by intrinsic sources, and have strong time management, literacy, and technology skills. (C.Reeves, 2009)

Conclusion

To this end, many case studies have been made to support the new form of classroom. It is radical to answer whether the traditional classroom where there is the intensity of face-to-face educational interaction will be dismissed or will be less chosen by learners. At this point, it is interesting to look and consider the convergence and the synergy of technologies and social changes that enable the representation of ideas in many media forms. Learners have their own opportunities to customize their learning environment and their learning content upon their preference. As many researchers pointed out, to gain the quality learning, it should move responsively with the learning needs of an individual. With the growth of mobile technology that moves in parallel with the change of learning pattern through time among learners, this option of learning may no longer be left in the utopia, but then the reality of our present and future time. This points us to reconsider whether this new type of classroom is the possible intellectual environment alternative to be enhanced in the future and is the appropriate response to our learning need. While virtual communities online are on the rise, it is important to contemplate about the quality of future learners, who are increasing moving to be online users. Lastly, it is critical to examine the quality of knowledge on the online space where there is found to have intense and quality circulation of information. People with the same area of interest are gathering

together on the open-space. They dynamically and instantly contribute their thought online in a significant higher level than they traditionally do in the physical space where limitation is outstanding. The outcome of their contribution is found to be in distinctive quality.

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The free download in China

By Lu Deng
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

Early this year, Google announced to shut down its operations in China made the Chinese internet censorship famous for its strict policy. The citing on New York Times is what Chinese government doing is to limit free speech on the Web (Andrew Jacobs & Miguel Helft, 2010). Actually, in China, under the premise of harmonious society, there is enough free on the web such as the free download.

Recently the free download in China is flourished without precedent. The main reasons result in this phenomenon can be reduced in three areas: the technique, commercial and the education support. In the following of this article, these reasons will be analysed step by step. Besides, the article will also point out the potential problems behind the flourish phenomenon of the free download in China.

keywords

FREE DOWNLOAD, FLOURISHED REASONS, CHINA

Background

The free download in China is different from that in other countries. It does not mean there are some free sources. In China, except for the pornographic video or arts□since the premise is to ensure the harmonious society□, the cyber citizens can download nearly all what they searching for free, not only the latest movies, popular songs, games and books, but also the office software.

Take Twilight as an example. When you search "Twilight free download" in Baidu, 4,550,000 related websites will come out within 0.067 second (Baisu search, 2010), including the novels, movies or even the music used in the movies, and etc. Furthermore, when you search "Microsoft office work 2007 free download" on Baidu, you will find the free download in China is ubiquity. The result for this search is 3,760,000 sources in 0.111 second (Baidu search, 2010).

According to the latest statistics of China Internet network information centre (CINIC, 2010), there are 420 million cyber citizens all over China. This figure is even larger than most of the countries over the world.

With the numerous numbers of both cyber citizens and the free sources online, the free download in China is flourished without precedent. Therefore, it is necessary to consider what are the main factors contributed to this flourish? Personally, I concluded it in three respects: the technique, commercial, education support.

Flourish reasons

1.   The technique support

1.1   The development of native website and search engine

·Sohu & Sina

Sohu was found on February 1998 (Sohu milestone, 1998). Sohu is one of the Chinese premier online brand and indispensable to the daily life of millions of Chinese. Sohu provides a broad array of choices regarding information, entertainment and communication to its users.

Sina was founded on December 1998 (Sina milestone, 1998). The introduction of Sina on its own page said that: "Sina is an online media company and MVAS provider in the People's Republic of China and the global Chinese communities. With a branded network of localized websites targets the Greater China and overseas Chinese."

In the early 21st century, people considered Sohu, Sina, NetEase and Tencent as the four major Chinese portal websites.

·Baidu

Nowadays, Baidu is well known as the largest Chinese search engine. Baidu was incorporated on January 18th 2000. During the last 10 years, it has already grown to a fast, comprehensive and accurate Chinese search engine. The development of Baidu also reflects the process of the internet construction in China.

According to the Baidu milestone (2000~2010), from 2000-2002, the first three years after Baidu founded, it has gained the opportunity to provide service for Sohu, Sina and NetEase, initially formed as a comprehensive search engine.

July 2003, Baidu launched two technologies search—news and pictures. Till new, these two search categories are still on its homepage. December the same year, Baidu launched "paste bar". It is a kind of online community. People who have registered a member of Baidu can found and join the paste bar according to their interest. At the same time the paste bar is also a platform for ordinary users to easily upload resources online. All sources there are free posted and download, the register of baidu member is free as well. The typical example for the paste bar can be the bar of "international students of the Sydney Union 2010" which converged a lot of international students and provided detailed information such as the price of home stay, where and how to do the orientation and etc. In a world

the paste bar has made an outstanding contribution to the prosperity of free download in China.

On June 23, 2005 Baidu launched "Baidu knows". It is a kind of online question and answer service. With "Baidu knows" you can get the sources which have already online and which are not.

On November 2002, Baidu issued the search of Mp3 after that on July 3, 2007, Rock Records and Baidu announced that they have found a two side's comprehensive strategic cooperation to expand the digital music market in China and provide online music service to the144 million Chinese Internet users. This cooperation made sure that most of the audio sources you free download through Baidu Mp3 search are legal download. It is a distinct banner in the chaos of the free download market in China.

Baidu categorised its sources into 57 different categories which cannot be introduced one by one. However, this kind of specific category make sure Baidu can provide a comprehensive database with an easy and accurate search service for free download.

1.2   The popularity of broadband

According to the 16th investigation& statistics report of China internet development condition (CINIC) (CINIC, 2005), due to June 30th 2005, the number of the broadband internet users exceeded the dial-up internet user at the first time. In the following 17th report of CINIC (CINIC, 2006), the number of broadband internet user increased to 64.3 million and accounted for 57.9% of the total internet users. Furthermore, in the 18th, 19th and 20th report of CINIC (CINIC, 2006 & 2007), the number of broadband internet user accounted for 62.6%, 66.2% and 75.3%. Therefore, the broadband became the mainstream to access the internet among the cyber citizens.

Compared with the dial-up access the advantage of the broadband is its speed. Nowadays, the common speed of the family used broadband in China is 1Mbps. It is much faster than that of the dial-up access internet which is just 56kbps.

Before the popularity of the broadband though there are well-designed search engine and lots of free sources online, the free download in China is not flourished. The speed is a vital problem. Few people would like to take hours and hours to download a source. Therefore, the popularity of the broadband increased the download speed and laid a solid foundation for the prosperity of free download in China.

1.3   The update of the download software

The Thunder, familiar known as Xunlei can be a good representative for the update of the download software.

According to the introduction of the company of Thunder on its website, the Thunder was founded in Silicon Valley at the end of 2002. At the end of January 2003, promoters went back to China to develop his business. In May 2005 officially renamed as Thunder.

The feature of Thunder is fast and simple. Nowadays in China, Thunder nearly becomes the pronoun of high-speed download. The software of Thunder is free to use. It can be downloaded through Baidu. The Thunder operates a member system both prepaid and free member. The download concept of Thunder is the more you download the faster you can download in the future.

To summarise, Thunder provide a simple and fast free download tool for the cyber citizen to download sources. Together with Baidu and the popularity of broadband, Thunder promotes a vigorous flourish of the free download in China.

1.4   The development of the editing software

The development of the editing software played an important in the flourish of free download in China. The simplicity of the audio & video editing software operation made every computer user could work as a professional editor. The VideoStudio can be a representation of this simplified software. The cyber citizens' comment of the VideoStudio is if you can do some basic operation on the computer you can use the VideoStudio.

The simplicity of the editing software is a kind of technique support for the cyber citizen to produce more and freer audio & video sources.

2.   The commercial support

No matter how well developed the technique is without a computer or internet how does the free download happen that is a question.

According to the report of the Chinese State Statistics Bureau the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of China in 2009 is $498 trillion (Commerce Department, 2010) which is the third of the world only after Japan and America. The annual per-capita income of China in 2009 is $3600 (Commerce Department, 2010). Though this statistic is only permutated 124 of the world we have to affirm the positive improvement. The annual per-capita income of

China in 2006 was only $2000 and in 2002 it was just over $1000 (State Statistics Bureau, 2006, 2002). From this we can see that the national living standard of China is gradually improving. Our Chinese people have the ability of support the fees of both the computer and the broadband. Therefore the number of the computer owner grows faster than before. More and more family and persons have their own computers or even laptops. This is a hardware support for the free download flourished in China, since without a computer people cannot download anything.

Furthermore, compared with the fee of the dial-up access, the plan of broadband in China is more convenient. According to the charging standard of the China Unicom, the dial-up access is charged by minute and □0.02 per minute (China Unicom). On the other hand in the light of the introduction on the website of China Unicom, there are lots of different plans with the translate speed from 1Mbps to 8 Mbps focus on month, half year, year and two year. Take the plan with 1 Mbps as an example, for a month plan the broadband fee is □100 which is just AU$15.38, for a half year plan it is□600 (AU$92.28), for one year plan it is □1000 (AU$153.84) and a two year plan is much cheaper only cost□1800 (AU$276.92) (China Unicom). All these plans have no limitation for both using time and quota.

However, an important factor which cannot be ignored is the speed. The speed of dial-up is only 56Kbps and the lowest speed of the broad band is 1Mbps. Due to the speed limitation if you download a movie online through the dial-up access the telephone bill of that mouth will be a huge price. Besides, there are three dominance companies—China telecom, China Unicom and China Tietong which provided broadband internet service in China. They all aim to help the consumer to enjoy the most favourable network service with the least money. It is in certain extent promote the development of the free download in China.

3.   The education support

The 21st century is the era of information. Computer operation is the necessary skill for both daily life and employment.

According to the report of Chinese Research &Teaching network (2005) the computer education started in 1982 and on that year only 5 middle schools join this test. As time moves on, the statistic enlarged to 26294 in 1194 and reached 60000 in 1998. The primary school junior middle and senior middle all accounted one third of the statistic. Furthermore, from 2001, most of the senior high school in China began to offer IT Curriculum, following

by 2005,on that year all middle school in began to offer IT Curriculum, at last in 2010 all primary school began to offer IT Curriculum. Following this trend, in a few years, the computer education can become popularity in China. More and more people can master the basic operation of computer.

In addition, besides the computer education offered at school, nowadays, there are lots of distance education and autonomous learning of computer techniques. At the same time, since 1994 the Test centre of the National education committee has launched the national computer rank examination (NCRE) (National education committee, 2005). The NCRE covered the visual basic, java, C++, network engineer, database engineer and etc (National education committee, 2009).

With better education people can get a better use of the free source online also they can produce more free sources and post them online to help others. Anyway, better education push the free download in China to a higher floor.

Potential problems

Lawrence said in his book Free Culture (Lawrence, 2004), "no country can be part of the world economy and choose not to protect copyright internationally." Obviously, China is not exception.

According to the ordinance of information protection through network communication (China state council, 2006), published by the Chinese state council, "organizations or individual who offered other people's works, performance, videos or recordings to the public through internet, should obtain the permission from the copyright owner and pay compensations to them". This ordinance was put in force since July 1st, 2006.

The punishment of these regulation violations was also written in this ordinance. However, it is just targeted to the people who aimed to achieving economic benefit through the illegal spread of others' works. The other actions without gaining profit can be tolerated and the punishment is just a warning from relevant department or deleting the posted sources.

The key word of free download is free. Therefore, though free download is a kind of copyright infringement, without gaining money it is within the tolerated area of the Chinese government.

On the other hand, free download also reflects an ethical issue. Although the free sources

posted online is in a good willing to share information and provide convenience with others, we all know, most of the free download sources are a kind of copyright infringement. With the knowledge of the relevant legal ordinance, people still post and download free sources. It is a kind of knowingly breaks the law. This phenomenon points out that our Chinese people lack the responsibility and morality of copyright protection.

Besides the legal and ethical problems, the commercial problem is another thorny issue of the free download in China. As mentioned before, people can easily download the software online, such as the Microsoft office work 2007. The imported software in China is not cheap. Once people can free download it online few people would like to buy it again with a large amount of money. This results in unfair competition imperceptibly. Since most of the Chinese software are essential free but the foreign software company are selling their products to making money. The free download, in a certain extent, hindered the imported of the foreign software into the Chinese market.

Conclusion

To conclude, the flourished free download in China is a result of the joint action of three main factors. They are the technique, commercial and education support.

If every cyber citizen who stays at home is an islet then the development of native website and search engine would a continent occurred 100 miles away from them with lots of free sources. The broadband would be a wide and straight bridge connected their home to the continent. The development of the download software would be the melioration of the traffic tool drive on that bridge such as form the bicycle to a BMW which improved the speed. Furthermore the commercial support made sure that the cyber citizen can afford the fee for the road and the car though the sources on the continent are free. Finally the education support taught people how to use all these tools around them. There for the relationship towards the main factors which contribute to the flourish of the free download in China is symbiotic and complementary.

Behind the flourish, there are still some potential problems to hinder the development of the free download in China. They are the issues of copyright infringement, knowingly breaks the law and the unfair competition. However, though there are so many problems, the free download in China will continue to be flourished since the Chinese people get used to share what they have for thousands of year.

Words account:

2718

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Ushahidi and Crowdmap: micro-streaming as time-binding media

Andra Keay

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Abstract

Ushahidi is a Web 3.0 open source crisis-mapping application, developed in 2008, which is being used for humanitarian purposes around the world. Cultural studies calls for a critical approach to 'the internet' and its applications. This article considers whether or not Ushahidi could be a 'liberation technology' or a 'disruptive technology' using Harold Innis's methodology and compares Ushahidi and Crowdmap with Foursquare and Facebook, to describe how the differences in the applications at the material, semiotic and sociopolitical levels, could help categorise and understand them. This involves a broad appreciation of many fields including the rapid technological shift from Web 2.0 to Web 3.0. An ethical evaluation of the balance of time-binding and space-binding characteristics in these applications is beyond the scope of this article, however attention is drawn to the ways in which life-streaming or micro-streaming applications like Facebook and Ushahidi are performing time-binding to great cultural and political effect.
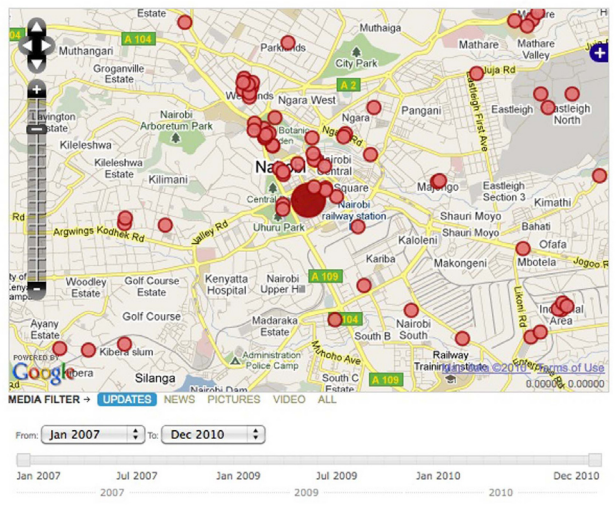
Keywords

WEB 3.0, LIBERATION TECHNOLOGY, DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGY, HAROLD INNIS, DIGITAL MEDIA, CRITICAL THEORY, CULTURAL STUDIES, SPACE-BINDING, LIFE-STREAMING, MICRO-STREAMING, TIME-BINDING

Ushahidi is more than just a successful crisis-mapping tool. Ushahidi, and its new platform Crowdmap, are amongst the first Web 3.0 technologies using both mechanical and human means to order information and present it in a layered personalisable visual tapestry. The ethical framework of seminal media theorist Harold Innis is a good starting point for analysing the cultural change potential of a new technology. As Ushahidi is a free open source technology, which is now incredibly simple to access and use through the Crowdmap interface, there is also potential for Ushahidi to be used for unethical, repressive, banal or commercial uses.

Ushahidi means 'testimony' in Swahili and is an African built open source mobile crisis-mapping technology, using crowd sourcing. When Kenyan journalist Ory Okollah wanted someone to help her 'mashup' maps of the election violence, which killed hundreds of people in early 2008, she connected with Erik Hersman, an expatriate African innovator. Together they created a website where journalists, activists and citizens could text, tweet or upload reports of violent incidents. Ushahidi displayed colour coded dots on a map and

a timeline for immediate data visualization, which in turn was linked to more detailed reports, including the level of validity or authentication. This collected information could be viewed online by anyone. In its first month of operation, 45,000 people used the Ushahidi website, for reporting and viewing reports to help them avoid violence and provide assistance. (Ushahidi 2010)

Erik Hersman says that the goal of Ushahidi is to decrease the impact of a crisis:

"By crowd sourcing this crisis information, we hope to bring more data, information, from ordinary people on the ground, rather than just the top-down hierarchy of how disaster management was handled in the past, and how early warning was handled in the past as well." (Hersman 2010)

Okollah and Hersman then formed a non-profit organization and received funds from humanitarian organisations to build a stable technology enhanced by greater compatibility with a range of mobile phones and social network services. As open source software, Ushahidi is not simply free of charge. The Ushahidi code is available for customisation, allowing Ushahidi to be adapted to any situation. Ushahidi has been used from Africa, Russia, and India, to Haiti, Chile and Washington.

Within hours of Haiti's devastating earthquake in January 2010, Patrick Meier, Ushahidi's operations manager, had started a deployment of Ushahidi to help coordinate aid efforts. Governments, aid organisations and large technology companies (like Google) all struggled to provide assistance in a situation where everything had changed. There were no maps, little centralised communication but many people willing to help in any way they could. Ushahidi's strength lay in its ability to convert small amounts of information from a wide range of simple technologies, including word of mouth, into a cohesive visualisation. Ushahidi also provided a two way information flow, allowing workers on the ground to receive alerts for the specific areas they were working in, information ranging from calls for help to logistics, whether or not there were first aid supplies, the bridge was broken or the road blocked (Meier 2010).

US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton in Washington DC just after the Haiti earthquake:

"The technology community has set up interactive maps to help us identify needs and target resources. And on Monday, a seven-year-old girl and two women were pulled from the rubble of a collapsed supermarket by an American search-and-rescue team after they sent a text message calling for help. Now, these examples are manifestations of a much broader phenomenon. The spread of information networks is forming a new nervous system for our planet." (Clinton 2010)

Hillary Clinton recognised the changing nature of global technology transfer, epitomised by Ushahidi, an application moving in postcolonial directions from Africa to Silicon Valley. This may be the sociopolitical reflection of the democratising 'many to many' relationships of Web 2.0 applications, where centres and peripheries are in flux. Marshall McLuhan, who was deeply inspired by Innis, concluded his 'information as new nervous system' metaphor by predicting the abolition of space and time (1964, 2000). Manuel Castells has refined this idea as a collapse or simultaneity of time due to the expansion of space through media and internet in the 'space of flows and timeless time' (1996). But if, as Clay Shirky puts it, 'these days the internet is becoming less a source of information and more a source of coordination' (2006), then the actions over time of internet/communications media are increasingly important. There is a shift away from Innis's description of space-binding empires to a balance with time-binding cultures.

METHODOLOGY:

A new technology is frequently mistaken for a cultural change, says media theorist Mark Deuze (2006), who cites the implicit conflation of the shared norms, values and practices of a certain group with its communication technologies. Deuze also calls for a critical reflection on the values and expectations expressed in digital culture (2006). In 1999, Jonathan Sterne (1999, Bell 2007) called for a theoretical approach to inform studies of the Internet, considering context, construction and knowledge production. Sterne suggested mapping media theory onto digital technology, to 'effectively describe and analyse cyberspace and cyberculture' (1999, Bell 2007).

Both Chris Chesher (2009) and Caroline Frost (2003) have positively evaluated the relevance of pioneering media theorist and economist, Harold Innis, to the digital communications of today. At the start of the twentieth century, Innis described the

importance that a communication technology has in determining the structures possible for a particular culture. Innis wrote that cultures are shaped by their 'media bias' or choices of media, which are either time or space binding technologies in their materiality, encoding and their sociopolitical purposes. (1972, 1991, Chesher 2009).

Innis proposed an ethical measure determined by the balance of space and time binding in the dominant media of a culture. A time binding media, which is long lasting like stone, books, or the spoken word in oral communities, favours cultural continuity, priestly and civic structures. A space binding media, which is light and mobile like papyrus, telegrams, or electronic communications, favours conquest, trade and expansion. The breadth and depth of Innis's empirical research allowed him to draw these inferences from his detailed observations of industries as diverse as the fur, cod, railway and dairy industries. He concluded that difference between media at the material level, the encoding or language level, or the sociopolitical level caused the different features of each industry and the culture that developed around it (1972, 1991).

Innis's 'soft technological determinism' has returned to critical favour in this period of rapidly evolving technological change, now that the issue of the agency of animate and inanimate objects has been turned into an issue of relationality. Or, as Deuze puts it, that humans and machines are implicated in one another, rather than one influencing or directing the other (2006). The difficulty faced by cultural and sociological studies is to achieve the breadth of Innis's approach, which straddled history, economy, politics and technology (Chesher 2009). The commercial and engineering fields, which provide most of the analysis of emerging technologies are also limited by lack of breadth and scope. This highlights the need for a critical analysis of the complex and simultaneous relationship between the materiality, the 'nuts and bolts' of a technology, the coding, languages or standards and the socio/political contexts.

TRANSFORM, LIBERATE OR DISRUPT?

It is necessary to have a framework to understand the hype that accompanies any emerging technology, to understand how Ushahidi may be both a 'liberation technology' politically speaking, a 'disruptive technology' economically, and potentially transformative or simply part of the 'hype cycle'. The hype cycle, as described by Gartner (2007), moves from a technology trigger through inflated expectations to disillusionment, gradual enlightenment and eventually reaches an adoption 'plateau of productivity'. Technologically, Ushahidi is

currently at the peak of the inflated expectations curve, along with activity streams and cloud/web platforms, with a projected mainstream adoption, generically, of 2 to 5 years. Ushahidi, the actual organisation, is one of thousands of new technology startups that have more than 60% chance of failure in the first two to four years according to the US
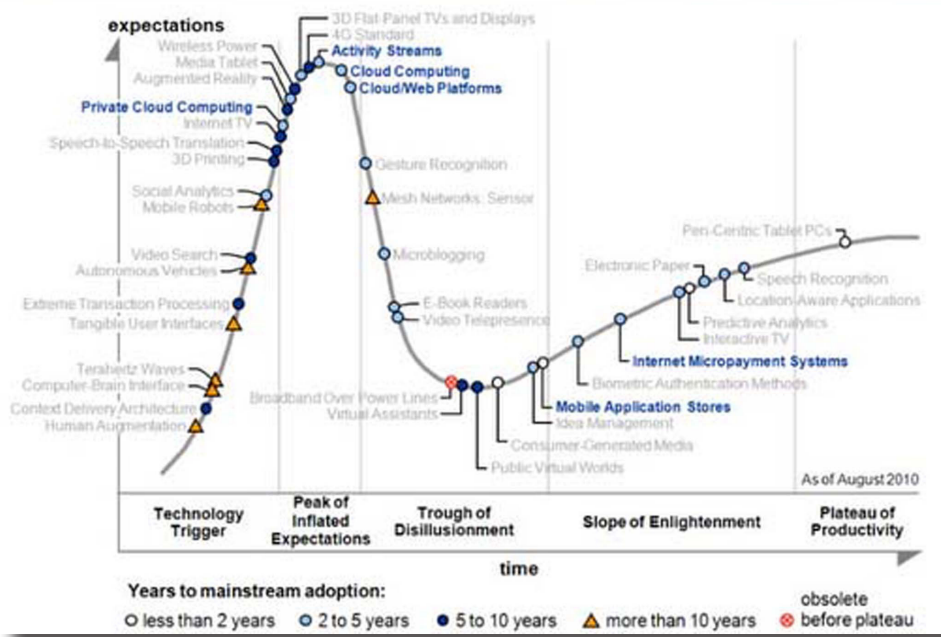
Bureau of Labor Statistics (2007).

The recent unveiling in August 2010 of Crowdmap, Ushahidi's hosted cloud service, may do for Ushahidi what Blogger did for blogging. By lowering the barriers to participation, Crowdmap, which is the simplified online version of Ushahidi, may become hugely popular. Early blogs required technical expertise and your own website or membership in a community that had blogs or bulletin boards set up. The arrival in the late 90s of several free, hosted blog services allowed anyone to 'just add content' and contributed to the 'disruptive' or transformative effect of blogging on digital culture.

A 'disruptive technology' is Clayton Christensen's term for what happens when successful innovation blindsides existing businesses, which tend to be risk averse and customer focused (1997). Ushahidi's expansion into Crowdmap may be for altruistic reasons or for pragmatic business ones, but causing a 'disruption' may well see Ushahidi being used for many innovative things outside of its original scope. Clay Shirky believes that a technology must become 'boring' before it is truly innovative and culture changing, when the unusual uses become the norm (2006). In that case Ushahidi would need to lose its initial strong

use case as a crisis-mapping tool before becoming a disruptive technology and it would no longer be a 'liberation technology'.

Stanford Professor of Political Science and Sociology, Larry Diamond, has coined the phrase 'liberation technology' to describe information technologies that can expand freedoms, 'the computer, the Internet, the mobile phone, and countless innovative applications for them, including "new social media" such as Facebook and Twitter' (2010). The new Program on Liberation Technology at Stanford attempts to understand the ways technologies are implicated in social practices, and recognises that a liberation technology can also be repressively used depending on the circumstances and affordances.

PUTTING INNIS INTO PLACE - WEB 2.0 to WEB 3.0

Chesher points out that the real complexities of digital media refuse simple classification due to the many ways in which they are configured and reconfigured in their process of production (2009). Although Frost attempted to analyse the internet, or at least the section of the internet known as the web using Innis's framework, Chesher points out that the incredible variety of media remediated on the internet today make the 'web' a useless category. Ulrich Beck calls this a 'zombie category', a term like the 'household' which has become so pervasive as to be everywhere and yet so vague and accommodating as to have no consistent definition (2001). Zombie categories have life but not meaning.

Chesher suggests that applications be considered as media for analysis in the Innis's framework as material, semiotic and sociopolitical objects, where 'each Web 2.0 internet application configures space and time in its own way, arguably constituting a new medium in its own right' (2009). Ushahidi, Crowdmap, Foursquare, and Facebook seem very similar at first glance, with the most obvious difference being that Ushahidi is used as a crisis-mapping application in disasters, whereas Foursquare and Facebook are used everyday to record some of the most trivial aspects of life.

Foursquare and Ushahidi are also emerging Web 3.0 applications, technically using new forms of encoding, which in turn afford new outcomes and have material impacts. The rapid dynamic interplay of digital media between levels of Innis's framework complicates analysis, as does the rapid change from one application to another, requiring cultural theorists to have a thorough understanding of the difference between technologies that may appear the same. For example, mapping or geo location is already a feature of social media

Web 2.0	Web 3.0
Apps	Augmented Reality
Tags	Semantic
Sharing	Filtering
Maps	Layers
Social	Personalized
Blogs	Visuals
Shopping	Signing In
Micro-blogs/finance	Mobility
APIs	Standards
Wikis/collaborative	Machine-read/write
Crowd-sourced	Cyborg
TABLE: Comparison Web 2.0 and 3.0 features.	

however layering of information, visualization, unmediated filtering and mobility are characteristics of the emerging Web 3.0 'internet of things' (IoT EU 2010).

Ushahidi specialises at turning small chunks of data into information by using mapping. Web 3.0 is the start of the visual web. A large chunk of human brain is devoted to visual processing (Wright 2008). Visual design pioneer Edward Tufte has been waiting for us to 'escape flatland' by better utilising visual strategies to display complex, dynamic and multidimensional information (1991).

Human vision can compare small and large-scale structures at the same time, deal with layers and separations and intuitively find patterns. Foursquare and Ushahidi are really 'social apps' with added visual and filtering function rather than fully fledged machine to machine Web 3.0 applications. Similarly, Wikipedia was transitional between the original web and the social web 2.0.

COMPARING USHAHIDI, CROWDMAP, FOURSQUARE AND FACEBOOK:

At a material level, each application turns a wide range of inputs from a variety of devices into a life stream. This can then be read from a variety of devices. Ushahidi and Crowdmap centralise the stream to an issue or topic, whereas Foursquare and Facebook have a multiplicity of streams for each individual and place. Which devices are tied together is mirrored at a socio political level by which people are. Facebook and Foursquare have clients for a wide range of comparatively high socioeconomic devices, whereas Ushahidi and Crowdmap are limited to the cheapest most accessible technologies. Ushahidi, Crowdmap and Foursquare incorporate place more thoroughly than Facebook.

At an encoding or language level, Ushahidi can be translated into any language at setup, Facebook is also crowd sourcing translation into more than 60 languages, whereas Crowdmap allows you to change language within the English framework and Foursquare is in English. The code to Ushahidi is free, open source and you can customise it however

you like. Crowdmap, Foursquare and Facebook are all privately hosted services with their own terms and conditions. At the API, or 'application programming interface', all programs have read/write capability, using published communication standards if not actual open standards. Design features are news oriented in Ushahidi, mobile and game oriented in Foursquare and photo and friend oriented in Facebook.

At a sociopolitical level, issues of ownership, access, control and use are all valid. For example Foursquare is a privately owned, free 'app' which encourages game playing and aims to monetize through advertising to the users who provide most of the content for free. Ushahidi is a nonprofit free application, which is issue based and reliant on community support to set it up and generate content in exchange for social benefit. Crowdmap falls in between these two. Hosted services offered for free require the user to also become the product, marketed to advertisers.

IS USHAHIDI REVOLUTIONARY? MICRO-STREAMING AS A TIME-BINDING DIGITAL MEDIA

This brief outline demonstrates the applicability of Innis's framework to a deeper understanding of the differences between applications, however ethical conclusions dependant on an interpretation of the balance of time-binding and space-binding in the dominant media of a culture require a more thorough analysis, if indeed it can be done at all. Innis became very pessimistic, perceiving an increasing bias towards space-binding media at the neglect of enduring value objects, such as archives, universities and books (1991). Stuart Brand reflected on this trend more recently in 'Escaping the Digital Dark Ages' (1999).

Chesher points out the increasing improvement in the time-binding capabilities of digital media as accessible storage media, whether as archives or instant messages (2009). It is at the micro-streaming level of applications like Twitter, Ushahidi and Facebook that the time-binding properties of new applications are actually most powerful. Instant messages, status updates, news reports and snapshots are traditionally instant or ephemeral. Fixing them in place for even a short time extends their meaning dramatically and changes the ownership of private or controlled information. In Facebook, this might manifest as photos that can't be erased or private information sold to advertisers. In Ushahidi, it is 'testimony' or bearing witness to events usually concealed, which changes the balance of power towards the grass roots, amplifying the voice of the powerless, magnifying the small event.

The impact of hypertext on the book was greatly overrated, as narrative structure was not compatible with digital. At the same time, the publishing industry was revolutionised in other areas due to digital technology. As John Thompson describes in 'Books in the Digital Age', lack of focus on the structure of technological change blinds us to the real impacts (2005). As Chesher puts it, "Innis read cultures from the ground up, seeing spatial and economic patterns emerging from the properties of agents, environments and lines of movement at various speeds." (2009)

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