Emerging Trends in New & Digital Media

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Introduction

New media is a broad term given to the emerging trends of media overshadowing previous forms, newspapers, books or other written variety. With the mass production of home computers, newer, better and more intelligent forms of software and technology, our lives have simplified significantly. Tasks requiring manual skill can now be done more efficiently, and in a sophisticated fashion involving lesser time and energy. New promises have been established with more portable versions of technology, such as handheld PDA's and OS dependant cell phones, thus making new media more accessible even on the go. Most people who have an internet access are familiar with the concept of new media, which includes face book and twitter, and video blogging sites such as YouTube. New media has greatly evolved with the invention of micro processors, such as used in hand held devices, with the help of interactive applications on smart phones. As new media is constantly evolving to connect to as many different platforms and people as possible, one of its most defining characteristics is interactivity. The prime difference between traditional media and new media is the digitalization of written or oral communication into electronic bits and bytes. Real time conversions have made this process of conversion seamless. Cyber-chatting has become an instant hit among the general public especially the youth, evolving to include audio-visual abilities with the help of a webcam in the late 20th century. Online encyclopedias and visual interactive dictionaries such as Wikipedia and Carib respectively are the best examples of traditional media converted to new media. Wikipedia is a by reader for reader multimedia based free online encyclopedia, which provides audio, video and other graphical interface for better understanding of a concept. Blogs are a form of new media that have expanded our notions of the levels of interactivity made possible through new media. The ability for anyone to post any text, photo or video was seen as a breakthrough in communication, particularly the emerging population of cyber journalists. More personalization exists today, with custom results delivered to every user, tailor made to suit every preference.

Assumptions about New Media

There are eight different assumptions about New and Digital Media:

1. **Cyberspace and culture**- Cyber space refers to the imaginary place where online communication takes place, and cyber culture is associated with the internet and other new forms of network communication, such as online communities, online multi-player gaming, and email usage. New Media on the other hand, is concerned more with cultural objects and paradigms (digital to analog television, iPhones).

2. **Parallel expression of Similar Ideas Art and Modern Computing** - Post WWII Art involves creating images by systematically changing a single parameter. This leads to the creation or remarkably similar images and spatial structures. The set of rules, the most important part of new media, do not depend upon technology, and are controlled by humans.

3. **Computer Technology Utilized as a Distribution Platform** - New Media are the cultural objects which use digital computer technology for distribution and exhibition, e.g., Internet, Web sites, compact disks, flash drives etc. As technology keeps

constantly changing and becoming obsolete, the definition of "new" must be revised every few years.

4. **Faster Execution of Algorithms Previously Executed Manually** - Computers are a huge speed-up of what were previously manual techniques. E.g. calculators. This also makes possible of many new forms of media art such as interactive multimedia and computer games. Not only can more detailed algorithms be processed, but a drastically faster execution adds another layer of creativity.

5. **Digital Data Controlled by Software** - New Media is based on the assumption that, in fact, all cultural objects that rely on digital representation and computer-based delivery do share a number of common qualities. New media is reduced to digital data that can be manipulated by software as any other data. Now media operations can create several versions of the same object. An example is an image stored as a vector based graphic, can be altered and stored in any system.

6. **Cross between cultural caucus and reunion of software** – The computer is merily equal to the position of a technician, the key creative decisions are still taken by a personnel. New Media today can be understood as the mix between older cultural conventions for data representation, access, and manipulation and newer conventions of data representation, access, and manipulation.

7. **Early Stage of every modern Communication Technology** - While ideological tropes indeed seem to be reappearing rather regularly, many aesthetic strategies may reappear two or three times. In order for this approach to be truly useful it would be insufficient to simply name the strategies and tropes and to record the moments of their appearance; instead, we would have to develop a much more comprehensive analysis which would correlate the history of technology with social, political, and economical histories or the modern period.

8. **As Meta-media** - Meta-media is an example of how quantity can change into quality as in new media technology and manipulation techniques can "recode modernist aesthetics into a very different postmodern aesthetics." New ultramodern media "is about new ways of accessing and manipulating information" (e.g. hypermedia, databases, search engines, etc.).

New Media and Globalization

The rise of new media has increased communication between people all over the world and the Internet. It has allowed people to express themselves through blogs, websites, pictures, and other user-generated media. While this perspective suggests that the technology drives – and therefore is a determining factor – in the process of globalization; arguments involving technological determinism are generally frowned upon by mainstream media studies. Instead academics focus on the multiplicity of processes by which technology is funded, researched and produced, forming a feedback loop when the technologies are used and often transformed by their users, which then feeds into the process of guiding their future development.

History

Up until the 1980's, analog signals were used to broadcast television and radio signals. Printing was used only in commercial levels, or typewriters remained for private use. The last twenty five years have witnessed a boom in digital production, from video games to animated

TV shows. A shift from mass and only commercial production to small scale private home level production was fueled by cheap home computer systems. Primarily launched to support game play, education and productivity such as word processing, with the onset of microprocessors, computers became smaller and faster.

The Internet and electronic communications (also called computer mediated communications, or CMC) doesn't just mean new tools for communication; it means new ways to communicate. Today your organization interacts with its various constituents differently - employees, board members, customers, partners and others - depending upon the nature of the message, the goals you are trying to achieve and the strengths (and weaknesses) of the available media - telephones, voice mail, fax machines, print, etc. This is significant also in print media, where mass production became easier, cheaper and much faster. Image manipulations Software such as Adobe Photoshop, Vector editing software such as Corel Draw have made the tasks easier beyond imagination.

W. Russell Neuman in his book *The Future of the Mass Audience* argues that New Media will:

- Alter the meaning of geographic distance.
- Provide opportunities for interactive communication.

- Allow forms of communication that were previously separate to overlap and interconnect.

- Provide the possibility of increasing the speed of communication.

- Allow for a huge increase in the volume of communication.

Internet

Originally designed as a military computer network, Internet technology has made the globe accessible in a few clicks. With commercialization of the same, Internet has drastically changed modern communication methods. Books and newspapers proceeded in the form of blogs and websites. Human interactions are accelerated through Instant messengers, forums and social networking. The emergence new forms of media, including but not limited to digital art, manipulated photography, e-books, music, video etc needed a platform where users can show and interact with fellow peers. Advice and suggestions, with feedback is available at a click away and this has helped boost creativity of budding teenagers.

E-mail is the most significant change brought in the field of media in the 21st century. Data which would physically take days to reach can be sent as a digital or 'soft' copy in seconds, saving valuable time and making ecologically greener, since it involves no paper. Environmental variables no longer affect communication, and where wireless telephonic lines can be disrupted through rough weather, internet is considered more stable. Whereas phone calls can be more easily tapped, internet lines can be made highly secure with freely available software, up to military levels. Multimedia attachments and embedded content has added another layer of interactivity in emails.

Print Media vs. Electronic Media

Mass communication bombards readers on a daily basis in the form of both print and electronic media. While each of these types of mass communication has its own character,

they both share much in common. In fact, the newspaper industry relies on both print and electronic media to disseminate news to its readership base.

1. **Readability**

   While both print media and electronic media endeavor to convey textual content, each of these two types of communication must attend to unique concerns in order to deliver readable content. Spell-check and auto-suggest functions in word processing programs often assist authors in writing electronic texts. Additionally, online audiences tend to respond more enthusiastically to images than to text. Thus, sentences in electronic media are often simpler in structure than text contained within printed literature. Factors such as screen glare, font size and website layout can considerably affect the readability of internet text. Similarly, printable text can be corrupted by aging paper, wrinkling, torn pages or stains.

2. **Searchability**

   Browsing content contained within print and electronic media requires readers to employ different search strategies. With minimal knowledge and software, computer users can create searchable PDF documents at their homes or in their offices. Similarly, they can also search emails, photos and virtual bookmarks with the aid of search tags. Print media can be disassembled and organized into folders, such as newspaper sections. Depending on a reader's level of comfort, he or she is likely to exhibit a preference to one type of media over another. Thus, searchability of documents of mass communication is deeply related to a reader's own psychology.

3. **Mutability**

   A level of interactivity is inherent to both tangible as well as intangible examples of mass communication. While electronic documents can often be modified via copy-and-paste options, print media can be manipulated by hand with scissors and glue, and can be easily annotated.

4. **Accessibility**

   Print media is available 24 hours a day, as long as a reader owns a copy of the printed material in question. By contrast, electronic media may only be available to a reader for part of the day, often depending on whether she is able to access the internet.

5. **Emerging Trends**

   A curious symbiotic relationship appears to exist between print and electronic media. Both of these forms of mass media must attract the support of advertisers, while establishing a solid base of readership. News outlets have recognized the massive popularity of electronic media, and many reputable publishers such as the New York Times and Wall Street Journal have substantially modified their long-term business models as a result.

Criticism

Society being naturally resistant to change has drawn some ethical and social issues against this invasion of newer forms of media, particularly the World Wide Web. Anybody with an internet connection is open to criticize, publicize or plagiarize any person, organization or situation, which was the founding principle of the web that a free mode of expression without censorship Is every one's right. Due to vastness and complexity of the web, detection or removal of anti-social content is delayed, if not impossible. Cyber-bullying, hate speech, violence and nudity goes unchecked in an ocean of content, and due to the large range of this medium, it reaches in all corners of the world, especially targeting the youth.

As they say, originality is the ability to hide your sources, the newer digital publications and works can easily be cloned, with parts or complete theft of creativity. With E-books, blogs, and even newspapers been available online, it is impossible to trace the authenticity of any publication, and the mass piracy of audio/visual contents have left original authors furious. Instigated by the power of partial or even almost full anonymity, every single individual has a temporary sense of power to criticize, which can make the authors feel dejected.

Conclusion

The hybridization of different types of new media has given way to some concerns over privacy in recent years. The potential to combine different forms of new media into one source, such as connecting to social networking email, phone, and web banking through a hand-held device, renders one more vulnerable to identity theft via hackers and spyware. Also factual information, such as news can be twisted and bent in any way convenient and manipulated to brainwashed readers. This misuse of information, which has magnified by the onset of digital media, can make or break any person within a short period of time. Images can be digitally edited to make a completely different illusion. In conclusion, the shift to modern forms of media was a slow and gradual one, which has connected the world to a click of a button. Despite its several out comings and failures, it remains as a progressing and advancing innovative new mode of communication, and new media is a global language that is easy to adapt.

About the Author

Rustam Singh is pursuing his Bachelors in TV, Film Production and Mass Media from the Punjabi University in Punjab (India).

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