

Film review for "an
anthropological
introduction to
youtube" essay
sample



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Film Review for “ An Anthropological Introduction to YouTube” Essay Sample

Michael Wesch’s short film “ An Anthropological Introduction to YouTube” does exactly what the title entails- he introduces YouTube from an anthropological point of view. While many may have issues thinking of YouTube as anything other than entertainment, Wesch does an exceptional job of connecting these two subjects. Wesch begins with introducing YouTube; that is, he explains how YouTube really got big. From the beginning of YouTube, he goes into demographics for YouTube. After this point in the video is where Wesch starts to talk about communication, particularly in social media. Anthropology is the study of human nature and human society. Anthropology aims to describe what it means to be human in a broad sense. Wesch, all from an anthropological stand point of what it means to be human, covers how YouTube became a part of today’s community, how it has the potential to destroy community, and how it builds community.

First, it must be understood how YouTube has become a part of today’s society. Wesch marks the “ Numa Numa” video as the mark of the start of YouTube. This video gets popular in Italy. From Italy it goes to Europe in general, after this video heads to Japan and somehow lands itself on a computer in a suburb of New Jersey. According to Wesch, most of the videos on YouTube are homemade and intended for less than 100 people; however, he also states almost 100, 000 of the 200, 000 videos on Youtube are addressed to a YouTube community. This community can range from anyone to anywhere. Wesch references Robert Putman, author of “ Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital”, who’s idea is that community has been

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lost over time. Over time, locally owned mom and pop grocery stores turn into Wal-Mart super stores on every corner. The face to face communications has been lost over the years, but people are starting to replace it with social media online.

Social media has been growing and growing in present culture. Websites like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter are popping up and becoming increasingly popular. The Associated Press did an article in 2012 titled " Number of active users at Facebook over the years". In this article it shows drastic jumps in the number of account holders. In 2004, the article reports only one million users, but by 2008, there are 100 million users. The numbers in September of 2012 are reported to have been a total of 1. 01 billion users. Now thinking about Facebook, it is a site where people can manage their friends, family, and anything else worthy enough to have a profile page. Anne McClard's article " Focus on Facebook" explains " We find Facebook shifts identity-making on the web away from the individual...in a new way, enabling low-maintenance, and automatically generated, interaction-based content creation" (2008: 1). This low-maintenance communication on Facebook is similar to other social media websites, including YouTube. With YouTube, a person is able to sit isolated and entertain themselves for hours with videos on the web. This new social media culture should be destroying communication, right?

Well, ladies and gentlemen, the fact is that YouTube is also building communication through videos. As Wesch describes, there is this idea of cultural inversion, where one thing is expressed and another objet is valued.

One example he uses is that while individualism is expressed, community is <https://assignbuster.com/film-review-for-an-anthropological-introduction-to-youtube-essay-sample/>

valued. Community, in this instance, is something that is being longed for in many individuals, including those on these social media sites like YouTube. Wesch expresses the idea that when a person talks into the camera on or in their computer, the talker is in a sense talking to everyone that is in the world. The talker has no idea of who will see their video or when it will be seen. In addition, the viewers have a sense of being able to watch these videos without anyone knowing who they are. This, as Wesch describes it, anonymity gives the viewer the ability to watch. This viewer can stare at the talker and admire human nature, whereas in reality, viewers cannot stare at someone without being judged. Talkers have a chance to create a new identity, possibly an identity closer to who they feel they are in real life. Viewers can watch these videos with the freedom to experience this humanity without fear or anxiety of being judged, and that is a beautiful connection.

YouTube is often thought of as a social communication site that has nothing more than silly videos to make people laugh or video blogs done by a random nobody. The truth is, YouTube is an important tool to today's communication. Although this media communication is not as standard as the face to face communication of older times, it is still a communication source that is used and touched by many. Wesch connects this new age communication and ties it into the anthropological standpoint. He does an excellent job in covering how YouTube became a part of today's community, how it has the potential to destroy community, and how it builds community.

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