

Narrowcasting is a
term media essay



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Narrowcasting is a term which means it spreading information or signal to a particular audience. It usually used by radio or television. In old time people use broadcasting to disseminate information to general public but now narrowcasting is more preferable because it can narrow media messages at specific segments of the public. Narrowcasting, in other word which is called niche marketing, through proprietary equipment and encryption it become easier to reach target audiences. The examples of narrowcasting are cable television, satellite radio and internet. We have chosen Astro as the example of narrowcasting in Malaysia.

All-Asian Satellite Television and Radio Operator also called as Astro is a Malaysia direct broadcast satellite (DBS) Pay TV service. Astro service was launched on 1 June 1996. It owned and operated by Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad, a leading integrated consumer media entertainment group in Malaysia and Southeast Asia. Astro is used to transmit satellite television and radio to the households in Malaysia and Brunei. Astro has provided 156 TV channels, including 68 Astro-created and branded channels and 22 HD channels. Household with Direct-To-Home satellite TV, Internet Protocol television (IPTV) and Over-The-Top platforms (OTT) can enjoy this service. Pay TV as mentioned just now is a kind of linear broadcast channel which only available for customer who paying an additional subscription fee. People are allowed to select particular channels and watch it on their television for a fee. Astro has become media preference for advertisers due to the media message can be spread out more accurately to target audiences.

Discussion

Astro subscribers can access to hundreds of channels worldwide through Astro channel. Astro channel has the ability to receive and send broadcast signals using satellite technology, this increases the possibilities of gaining access to channels from other countries like HBO, ESPN, CNN and so on, audience will not restricted to the channels on cable network and they can expose to more worldwide information. For example, during football match and Olympic season, Astro will open a lot of sport channels like Astro Super Sport, Astro Super Sport 2 and 3, Astro Arena and so on. Astro subscribers can enjoy the different live matches with high-quality audio and picture. They able to know the updated live score of the team they supported. Besides watching on the television screen, Astro subscribers also able to watch live football matches through smartphone, tablet or computer through Astro On-The Go web. For those viewers who can't watch the program on time, this is good news for them, they can watch the live matches through their smartphone or tablet.

Advertising on narrowcasting is effective, marketing experts are often interested in narrowcast media as a commercial advertising tool, since access to such content implies exposure to a specific and clearly defined prospective consumer audience. Advertisers can better target by identifying particular demographics viewing such programs their markets. For example if the energy drink company Red Bull wanted to target 18-25 year old action sport athletes, they can purchase commercial time on sports channel of Astro like ABOS, thus making their message more valuable by marketing to a concentrated audience.

In this advanced digital era, most of the people having at least one smart technology device in their living lifestyle. Smart mobile devices have become the most basic device that people using every day. To bring a non-stop entertainment for Astro valued customers, Astro has introduced a new service for them which is Astro-On-The-Go. Astro-On-The-Go provides an application for Android devices, Astro customers just need to install this application from Android market, and so they can enjoy by watching Astro channels at anywhere or anytime. There are four main features of this innovative service. It provides 19 Astro channels for subscribers. When you feel boring at somewhere else, Astro-On-The-Go can bring a lot of entertainment for you. You will be able to watch latest news, educational and entertainment programs to pass the time. Secondly subscribers are may catch out the programs they missed. Astro-On-The-Go has given a chance for them to choose the program from their TV subscription package. Third, Pay per View service is available for subscribers to select TV program from a library on anytime. Lastly, subscribers are able to watch live events regardless of where they are. They are never missing out any live sport, live concert or others live events by using Astro-On-The-Go service. In addition, Astro-On-The-Go has bringing advantages for advertisers. Because of smart mobile device could be one of the device that people attached the most in daily life, advertisers can spread out their messages to target audiences easier and more effectively.

There are number of gain of Astro channel however, miss are also there. The only miss of Astro is weather distraction. Due to the reason of Astro channel works on digital signals, weather is playing a very important factor for its

operation. When bad weather is happening, it could interrupt the signal of receiving Astro channel. Viewers will lose the connection and thus they are going to miss out their TV programs. Satellite dishes are located outdoors, it becomes susceptible to malfunction as a result of weather conditions like snow, very strong winds and lightning.

Medium (Astro)

Audience

Message

Message

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Audience

Medium (Astro)

Feedback

There is a relationship between Astro channel, message and its audience. Astro disseminates the message or information to the audience through different channels. For example, Astro channels consist of different categories like entertainment channel, news channel, knowledge channel, HD channel, music channel, sports channel, premium channel, kids channel and radio channel.

Through these different types of channels, audience can receive the latest information of entertainment, news, music, sports. For example, for news, audiences are able to know the latest news or information through CNN or BBC which are worldwide. Audiences are able to know the latest news from other countries instead of only the news of their own country. For

entertainment, audience can get to watch the latest Hong Kong drama through Astro On Demand. Besides for those audience who love to watch English movies can watch their favourite English movies through HBO.

All the Astro subscribers are active audience. Active audience is the one that who actively engages with the text, they do not simply accept every media message. They will question what they see and develop their own interpretation of a media product based on their life experiences, education, family and cultural influences. Audience become gatekeepers and decides on what they want to know. For example, Astro subscribers will choose the channel they are interest and pay for it. Besides that, audience can look for further sources of information from their friends, families, through internet, books, and so on instead of only depends on the information sources from television. They can also stop consuming particular media content by simply switch the television off. This will prevent channel hopping.

Audience and Astro are having two-way communication. The audiences will also giving feedback to the medium which is Astro. For example, Astro subscribers can make a complaint through Astro hotline if there is any problem faces. This feedback is useful for Astro to improve their services in the future. In addition, the act of Astro subscribers vote for their favourite candidates in " Astro Talent Quest" singing competition through mobile phone short message service (SMS) shows that they are having two-way communication. This can help to improve the interaction between Astro and its audience.