

Impacts of the world wide web media essay



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Commonly known as WWW, the World Wide Web, as the name suggests, is a massive wireless interlinked connection that is supported by a series of URL links, and which has made the world to become a global village as the common adage goes. This is because it has come with such a great and felt impact that has revolutionalized communication, business, travel, networking, not forgetting socializing. Introduction into the WWW technology began way back in centuries gone, but the impacts, advantages and disadvantages that came with it are now greatly felt in this day and age of the twenty first century. WWW is commonly referred to as online, wireless communication, or as a majority of people would say- the internet. However, it is important to note that there is a big difference between internet and WWW. While internet is a large system of interconnected computer networks linked by the Protocol Suite and is what supports the use of World Wide Web, the WWW is a dependent factor that relies on the availability of internet to transmit information (James and Cailliau 2000 p. 27).

Some of the impacts that World Wide Web has had so far especially in communication include speeding up of instant messaging, facilitation of internet forums, social networking online, blogging, online shopping and e-business has also been boosted in terms of marketing and advertisements. Specifically, on the study of communications, the World Wide Web has played a significant role in creating a channel in which people can do online research, get reviews on what the technology users have to say about the innovation and establish any existing loopholes in online communication and how they can be bridged. The World Wide Web provides information that creators and innovators of communication channels can make use of in the

quest to provide cheap, effective, reliable and state-of-the-art gadgets for communication purposes. One of the most world-wide felt impacts of WWW on communication is rapid instant communication that affects almost every other aspect of life be it social, economic, political or educational. Rapid instant communication implies that communication is no longer one way. It is no longer necessary to wait for days on end for a reply on some issue from a receiver of your message, but on the other hand, communication between sender and receiver of the message has changed from being receiver oriented to both receiver and sender oriented. How is this possible? This question shall form the basis of the study and feedback projected in this paper (Wendy, 2010 p. 46).

Rapid instant communication

According to Samuel in his book *Clarifying McLuhan: an assessment of process and product*, rapid instant communication implies a one-on-one setting in sending and receiving of messages. In other words, it refers to a situation whereby communicators no longer have to wait for a long period of time in order for their message to be replied to by the receiver of the message. This therefore means that a person in one continent can easily communicate with another in a totally different continent as though they were communicating face to face. This has been made possible by services like chat, face book and emailing. Such connections make it possible for people the world over to relate and form forums in which they can even hold discussions on diversified issues which are happening way far away from where they are located. With use of facilities like the web camera, it is even

possible to see someone with whom you are communicating on your computer while they are on the other side of the world (Arthur, 1995 p. 28).

This kind of communication is what has rapidly converted the world into a small village whereas in years gone such was just a dream for many innovators. There is now improved rapid communication in various sectors and this is supported by an old theory proposed by one Marshall McLuhan. His theory, titled Technological determinism, put forth that the changes that occur in the ways in which human beings communicate go a long way in determining the course our existence takes. The proponent of the theory feels that culture is highly dependent on the way in which we are able to communicate as human beings. This in other words is to say that innovations in communication cause a cultural drift. Secondly, changes in communication methods and modes shape human life. Media, as the greatest channel of communication, is considered as anything that affects human ability to communicate (Samuel and McLuhan 1967 p. 37).

Consequently, it goes without saying that innovations that affect media as a channel of communication also affect human culture and communication. He looks at the transformation of communication from mere word of mouth, to literate age that could read and write to print media and eventually to the electronic age where society is at now.

Today, people tend to believe printed information or that which they can collect from the web pages, more than they believe in information passed through the word of mouth. The theory also proposes that for any information to be accepted or rejected, it must undergo a series of stages

which are awareness creation, persuasion or evaluation, decision making on whether to accept the information and lastly confirmation. These processes take a shorter time depending on the means of communication that are being used, meaning that word of mouth communication would take a relatively longer period to pass through all these stages than information posted through the web pages. This goes on to explain what happens to ideas suggested to one community from another, and how their evaluation and final acceptance or rejection ends up shaping the culture, values and beliefs of the recipient community. According to McLuhan, individuality has been removed from culture and instead, what matters today to society is the method of communication that is deemed important for communication as that will be what society will flow with (Arthur, 1995 p. 34).

Impact of World Wide Web on Businesses

As explained above, the greatest impact of WWW is the speeding up of communication. How then does this form of communication impart of businesses? The most important thing about WWW is that it has enabled businesses and organizations to establish a presence. Businesses that want to explore great heights and to establish themselves the world over can only ignore the importance of the World Wide Web at their own peril. Creation of websites in which firms can market themselves is dependent on the WWW linkage. With the creation of a website, a company can rest assured that its services and functions can easily be read about any time of day seven days a week. Another impact is that the World Wide Web has made it possible for organizations working in the same line of industry to network, form

partnerships and learn from each other all through the web (Stanley and Dennis 2008 p. 37).

This is also true for netting of potential clients, suppliers, donors and other stakeholders. Use of the World Wide Web has become a very easy way of passing business cards and maintaining contacts with clients. Needless to say, a website can be used as an additional source of income. This is possible by making your website an online sales point in the sense that visitors to the website can order and purchase your services online and pay through their credit cards without necessarily visiting your stores physically (Stevenson, 1995 p. 54).

One more result that can be associated with instant communication as a result of the World Wide Web is the fact that it is now possible to have employees placed outside the office area and still have business going on as usual. This is because through the firm's website, information can be passed to and from the employees consistently and from anywhere (Stanley and Dennis 2008 p. 89)

Impact of World Wide Web on Social Networking

It is not a new thing for many people that with social networking websites and electronic mail communication websites like twitter and yahoo mail respectively have played a great role in bring people together in terms of spontaneous and rapid communication. It is possible to chat with friends online and even date with the intentions of getting married, all by logging into some special websites that offer such services. On this social networking websites it's not only about making friends but also about keeping in touch

with various other happenings around the world. One can get the latest news, download the latest music and movies and younger people and children can play online games or download them. In addition to socializing, it has now become very possible to get political views and stay informed on the most current news around the world, all by staying connected to the relevant websites. For example, a person in America is now very able to track let's say for example the election results of a country in Asia as it happens, all of which has been made possible by the World Wide Web (Arthur, 1995 p. 43).

Today, people cannot imagine themselves without logging into websites to check the latest mails, breaking news, weather reports and even to shop for holidays online, all because of the WWW technology. The Web cannot be traced, it cannot be pinpointed, all because it is growing by the day. Its growth and expansion is a gradual process that is ongoing, and which is not likely to stop any time soon (Ramesh, 2004 p. 78).

Negative impacts of World Wide Web

There is much that can be said about the impacts of World Wide Web, and especially about the positive impacts, but we cannot just afford to overlook the negative impacts associated with the same. One of the major negative impacts associated with World Wide Web is that some people are now creating websites that contain misleading, addictive and false information, which when it falls in the hands of unsuspecting information users, may end up damaging their outlook in life (Ahuja and Shakti 1978 p. 23).

Just to give an example, an article published online and written by one Allen Alberson says that there are a number of websites that have been created with the intention of providing suicidal persons with information on how to go about killing themselves. This website as actually helped take away the lives of quite a number of youngsters who were feeling suicidal at the time they took away their lives after reading trough these websites. More information can be found here; <http://www.helium.com/items/1223307-suicide-chat-rooms> .

Much more can be said about the negative impacts of WWW but just to mention a few is that the World Wide Web is addictive and many people find themselves spending much of their time on social websites instead of doing other more constructive things. One more thing that is happening is that more and more people now tend to make decisions based on technological advance. In other words, decisions are based on the outcome of a result given by a computer, more than common knowledge. For example, it is not uncommon to hear that an organization is not giving a certain service to clients at a given time, simply because the systems are down. One is left to wonder how clients used to be served before the innovation of websites and online services (Allen, 2010 p. 1).

Conclusion

From the findings above, it is evident that the World Wide Web has played a great role in changing communication from analogue to digital and this has revolutionalized the world in so may aspects. The network society, as it has popularly come to be known as, now need to take control of the advancing

technology so that it can be able to organize itself on the basis of what people of various diversities share in common in a non-hierarchal manner. The World Wide Web is an avenue through which the public and the private can be merged together for better cohesion. Just to site an example, the revelation of the affair between the former US President Bill Clinton with Monica Lewinsky came out in a big way to influence how he would perform in politics after that. Since technology has no ethical or moral restraints, it has in itself become all important for such happenings that would otherwise have remained unknown. It can thus be said with such finality that such new communication technologies like the World Wide Web will continue to make people feel more connected and to help them mainstream aspects of life such as politics, socializing, commerce and well as entertainment (Stevenson, 1995 p. 38).