

Terrorist attack on world trade center media essay



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This paper is about how media cover and communicate important events. The term communication is strongly bound with mass media in a way by which the coverage of the media can change the information itself. In this paper I am going to analyze how media covered and communicated the terrorist attack of 9th September 2001 at the World Trade Center in Manhattan downtown and to inform the reader of this paper the role that mass media had. When I say, how media communicated this event, I mean which were the images that media showed and how explained them to the audience, also what kind of language media used and what were the emotions that media conveyed to the audience.

Introduction

Through history, all over the world had been many terrorist attacks. Some of them we know and still remember because of the extensive coverage from media. For the others, the large amount of people does not know them because media did not communicate them, thus mass communication which is a tool in hands of media can change viewpoints, believes or even shape cultures.

What happened the day of 09/11/2001

A normal day had just started and nobody could possibly new what it was going to happen that day. The flight 11, from Boston to Los Angeles, took off at 7: 59 am with 76 passengers, 5 terrorists and 11 crew members on board (AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 11). While in the same time another plain was getting ready for takeoff, it was the flight 175, from Boston to Los Angeles. The second flight, which had 50 passengers, 5 terrorist and 9 people crew personnel, was in the air at 8: 14 am (UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHT 175). At 8: 19

am was the first alert from flight 11, when flight attendances inform ground personnel that the plain had been hijacked, and the American Airlines notified FBI. At 8: 24 am Mohammed Atta one of the five hijackers, of the flight 11, communicated accidentally with the ground personnel. Sixteen minutes later, at 8: 40 am, the North American Aerospace Defense Command and Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS) were informed from the Federal Aviation Administration about the hijacking in flight 11. The response of NEADS was, to send two aircraft to locate and to escort the flight 11. Unfortunately the two send aircrafts did not found flight 11 in time and at 8: 46 am the north tower of World Trade Center was struck by the plane between the floors 93 to 99. 9: 02 am Port Authority officials ordered to evacuate both towers from public address system, while the next minute the south tower of the World Trade Center was struck by a second plane, flight 175, between the floors 75 to 85. Few minutes later the Federal Aviation Administration stopped every takeoff and flight around Manhattan and at 9: 21 am the Port Authority closes every tunnel and bridge in the Yew Your City. At 9: 42 for the first time in US history the Federal Aviation Administration decides to land all aircrafts all over the US airspace for security reasons. For two and a half hours 4500 flights from which some were commercial and others were private, were guided from US to Canada. At 9: 59 am the south tower of the World Trade Center collapsed and twenty-nine minutes later the north tower also collapsed. The mayor Rudolph Giuliani at 11 o'clock ordered to evacuate the Lower Manhattan south of Canal Street, an area which includes more than 1 million people (9/11: Timeline of Events). The official report of this terrorist attack was that in both towers the number of victims was 2016. Also, 403 victims were found among firefighters, NYPD officers

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and port authority police officers and the vast majority of the victims were between 35 to 39 years old (September 11 by Numbers).

How media covered this event

Television

As we know television is the most massive channel among the media which brings instantly the information to the audience by providing live images, comments, sounds, emotions, interviews from eyewitness' and different viewpoints. All these together contribute to shape an opinion and convey it to the audience. The terrorist attack on the world trade center became instantly the number one news almost in every country of the world.

International and local TV stations stopped their fixed program with breaking news and started broadcasting live images and information from the world trade center.

CNN

CNN stopped its program and started with a full screen of the flaming tower and at the down side of the screen the title " WORLD TRADE CENTER DISASTER" and also below the title were the live stock market price of Dow Jones, S&P 500 and NASDAQ. Few seconds after the first impression that people perceived the presenter of news started explaining what was happening and provided additional information that were not confirmed yet while her voice tone was calm and clear. The CNN covered this event with two presenters explaining the event, providing information and asking questions to interviewers. The pattern was to contact with people who were in different places and saw the first impact on the tower. The first eyewitness, who talked and gave the first information about the event, was a <https://assignbuster.com/terrorist-attack-on-world-trade-center-media-essay/>

CNN producer. With calm voice, he first talked about a plane which crashed on the world trade center. Immediately the title changed and became “ PLANE CRASHED INTO WORLD TRADE CENTER TOWER” while, the camera stayed frozen on the flaming tower. The other interviewers were every-day people who saw the impact from their home, work and from the street. They were under emotional strain, distress and shock. In the mean while the presenters were mention frequently that the images were live. When the second plane crashed into the second tower the cameraman zoom out and after while we saw in slow motion the second plane hitting the tower and getting burned in it. After the slow motion, the camera zoomed at the flames and the smoke that was coming out of buildings. When the towers started collapsing one after another the CNN covered it live and from a camera down on the street started broadcasting images from the place of the tragedy. The images were from people who had been injured and had blood everywhere on their body, while their faces were black from the dust and the blood, they were scared people under shock who were screaming and looking for their relatives (Cnn 09 11 2001 Live Unedited Cnn News Coverage Of Wtc Attacks From 8 50Am To 11 30Am 911 Cnn Footage)

BBC

BBC covered this event in a totally different way from CNN. On BBC the first thing that the audience saw was the presenter who started explaining what had happened. For a while she was repeating the same and the same that an aircraft had crashed into the WTC and the worlds that she was using were dramatically, such as explosions still taking place, something that we could not see, chaos and panic. Furthermore, the presenter was saying frequently

that “ a plane has crashed into the WTC”. BBC also had a helicopter coverage in a long distance from the WTC and they lost the second hit, and BBC showed just the result of the hit and nobody could understand what had happened. After a while, BBC showed the second plane crashed into the second tower, and the presenter characterized the timing and the area that the attack took place “ busy time and in busy blocks”. BBC showed many times the second plane crashing on the WTC and in every time the presenter was using dramatic language which convey panic and terror to the audience. A BBC correspondent also said that the WTC had been targeted by terrorists in 1993 when a bomb had exploded. The first eyewitness was Ash Rajan, who was in the lowest floors of the WTC at the time of the first impact. With clear voice he demonstrated the events as he had experienced them but he was using dramatic words such as “ panic, huge explosion, tremendous pole of smoke and looked like a tornado”. The presenter interrupted him just few times and asked him a few questions like, if he saw the plane and what people thought when they saw fires to come out of the building. The second interviewer also explained what she saw and experienced in dramatic tone and language, by using words like people screaming and panic. Additionally, the angle of the camera or the camera lens or both of them were set up in a way that the images were dark and the camera was zooming just the two flaming towers and the dark smoke in the background was. In the same way were the images that BBC broadcasted when the towers started collapsing one after another and the dust went everywhere and covered everything but because of the camera lens the images looked like the whole downtown Manhattan was under attack (BBC World - FULL TV Coverage - September 11, 2001 - Part 1, 2, 3, 5, 8)

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Newspapers

Another important medium for mass communication are newspapers.

Newspapers come the next day of every event and covered it in depth, by providing additional information and stressing details. Newspaper is considered as a portable medium which its audience carries it around and spend time and effort to read it. Thus this mass communication medium can also shape or even change viewpoints of an event.

The Arizona Republic, published in Phoenix, USA

In the front-page of this newspaper the first thing that the audience will see the word "TERROR" in capital and bold font. Then the two pictures, the first one which was the main picture of the front-page depicted the moment just before the second plane hits the second tower and the other depicted some people running away from the dust when one of the two towers collapsed (TERROR "Thousands" dead as hijacked jets slam Trade Center, Pentagon).

Los Angeles Times, published in Los Angeles, USA

Los Angeles Times had into their front-page as a heading "TERRORISTS ATTACK NEW YORK, PENTAGON" and just below this a subheading in smaller font "Thousands Dead, Injured as Hijacked U. S. Airlines Ram Targets; World Trade Center Is Destroyed". In the front-page there were also two pictures at the same size from which the first illustrated the moment before the plane hit the tower and the other picture illustrated the moment just after the impact, the explosion, and at the background we could see the fist-shaken tower. Additionally, article-titles that we could see just below of the two pictures were "A Struggle to Escape Fiery Chaos", "President

Shoulders Historic Weight” and “ the Choreography of Carnage Was Precisely Timed, FBI Says” (TERRORISTS ATTACK NEW YORK, PENTAGON).

San Francisco Examiner, published in San Francisco, USA

This newspaper had in its front-page just one large photography which illustrated the moment that the plane crashed into the tower and get burned in it, when the smoke and the fire was coming out of the building as one entity. The newspaper had emphasized on the colors to make the image more impressive and alive. Also, we could clearly see the debris falling from collision point. The main title, which was placed above this photo, was the word “ BASTARDS” and just below the photo another title colored in red stated “ A CHANGED AMERICA” (BASTARDS!)

Hartford Courant, published in Hartford, USA

The first thing that the readers could instantly see on this newspaper was the large heading in capital font which stated “ ACT OF WAR”. Then the main picture of the front-page depicted a man who was holding a fire extinguisher and was walking in the middle of the debris and at the background were two segments from the towers that had collapsed. The colors were blurry and the only thing that was distinguished was the fire extinguisher which was vivid red. Then the subheading, which was between the main title and the picture, and stated “ WITH CHILLING PRECISION, TERRORISTS DELIVER DEATH AS AMERICA WATCHES HELPLESSLY”. On the bottom of the front-page was the indexed-content and at its right side were placed article related with the terrorist attack and in which page each article was (ACT OF WAR).

The Washington Post, published in Washington, USA

Washington Post had as its main title “ Terrorists Hijack 4 Airlines, Destroy World Trade Center, Hit Pentagon; Hundreds Dead” and below it in the center of the front-page we could see two pictures one below the other and text at the two sides. The first picture illustrated the second plane just before it hit the second tower, while the other tower was in fire and black smoke was coming out of the shaken spot. The second picture was about the hit at the Pentagon, both pictures were very dark and the images were not so clear. At the right side of the pictures there was the subheading “ Bush Promises Retribution; Military Put on Highest Alert” and below it follows the article. At the bottom of the front-page there were three different articles by which the first has as a title “ On Flight 77: “ Our Plane Is Being Hijacked””, the second one has title “ U. S. Intelligence Point To Bin Laden Network” and the last one has as a title “ I Saw Bodies Falling Out- Oh, God, Jumping, Falling” (Terrorists Hijack 4 Airlines, Destroy World Trade Center, Hit Pentagon; Hundreds Dead).

Daily News, published in New York, USA

Daily News had in its front-page just a large picture which depicted the second plane just before it hits the second tower. The main title was on the picture in red font and it was stating “ IT’S WAR” (DAY OF TERROR).

International Herald Tribune, published in Paris, France

This newspaper’s front-page we could see in the main picture the point just before the second shaken into the second tower and just below it we could see a picture of President Bush when he was talking at the media about the terrorists attacks. In the right side of the Bush’s picture there was another

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picture which illustrated the two towers and it was giving detailed information about the height and the impact side of each plane in each tower. Also, this newspaper could be characterized as grayness because its front-page was just black and white (TERROR STRIKES AMERICA).

The Times, published in London, UK

This front-page has nothing more than a photography in which we could see what was happening in downtown Manhattan minutes after the first tower collapsed. We could see the city being disappeared within the smoke and dust (10. 02 am September 11 2001)

The Daily Telegraph, published in London, UK

The Daily Telegraph a Britannia newspaper had as a title in its front-page “War on America” and the image below illustrated the moment that the second plane exploded into the second tower of the WTC, while from the other tower was coming out dense black smoke which had covered the upper floors of the tower. The colors used to illustrate the explosion were keenly, and cause awe and fear (War on America).

INTERNET

The last five years the internet has faced a fast and unstoppable growth and development, and as the internet became cheaper, more and more people could afford it and thus the users’ community was enlarged. Internet became gradually ‘ the channel of the people’ because everyone can access in it, there are no limitations and borders, and everyone can express his /her thoughts and brings people together in a mental way and they can exchange their thoughts and viewpoints freely without any editing. A variety of

websites, blogs, videos and images covers every event, independently from the other channels.

The first scenario of 9/11 attack

As I have already said the internet is accessible to everyone so someone could find in the internet a variety of different viewpoint. One interesting website is the “ 9/11 MEMORIAL”. A website in which the internet-users can find information about the museum which is constructed in the memory of the victims. You also, can find the names of the victims and in which tower they lost their live. Additionally in this website you can find information about the volunteer activities within the museum (9/11 MEMORIAL).

Another website which is the “ 9/11 Health”. In this website the user can find information about the injured people of the attack, can learn how life changed for the children in the low Manhattan, how many people lost their relatives and how many people lost their occupation or their business just in few seconds. Moreover the user can have a clear view about the chronological order that those facts took place (9/11 Health).

However, except from the information-websites about the facts of the tragedy there are other websites in which the content is totally different. For example “ Engineering Laboratory” is a website which examines the structure and the constructions techniques were used to construct the two towers and how they collapsed in just a few hours after they were stricken (World Trade Center Disaster Study).

Also, for that day there are many websites and blogs developed just to remind to the world what happened that day and why the people of the

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world should remember that day. For instance the website “ NEW MOBILITY” has two stories about two different people who were working that day within the WTC.

Furthermore, in the internet we can find videos that people made and uploaded for that specific day. One of these videos is showing the moment that the first plane crashes into the first tower (Original footage of the 1st plane hitting the WTC). Another shows the emotions and the reaction that a group of students who were in their apartment and capture the second tower (RARE HOME VIDEO OF 2ND PLANE WTC 2 IMPACT). Moreover, there are many videos which shows people jumping from the towers just to escape from the hellfire inside the building (9-11: People Jumping from World Trade Center (Warning: Graphic)), or one other got out of the building and started to climb down when he lost his equilibrium and fell in vacuo (WTC - person that tried to climb down wtc). Finally, we also can find and see videos at the WTC territory during the attacks, then officials and rescuers were working within the smoke and dust and they were wearing masks to breathe, we can see the difficulty of their work in order to rescue someone and to pull him out of the building (Inside World Trade Centre During Attack - 9/11 before & after North Tower).

The second scenario of 9/11 attack

As I have already said everyone have access into the internet and they can write freely their viewpoints. In the internet the user can find other thoughts, rumors and illustrated evidences to prove that the terrorist attack was an inside job. Thus the user can find videos in which there are evidences such as the flash at the second plane just before it hits the tower, a shadow at the <https://assignbuster.com/terrorist-attack-on-world-trade-center-media-essay/>

bottom of the second plane (Slow motion of second plane crashing into south tower) and the way that the towers were collapsing, by examining how the debris were falling. By using these evidences and other more they are trying to prove that the “ terrorist” attack was not a work of terrorists. (The world was lied to on 9/11/2001 by the U. S. Government and the Media. 9/11 INSIDE JOB!). Also, in the internet there are some questions that had been unanswered by the officials and these questions generate speculations and rumors. For example, it is officially recorded that the passengers of the Flight 11 had informed the ground about the hijacking, and the question that appears is how is this possible a passenger or crew personnel to use its self-phone, while the plane was hijacking? The answer that is found in the internet is that the plane was remote-controlled (The Attack on the World Trade Center Towers).

Books

By the stimuli of the WTC attack the book industry published several books which were dealing with this historic event. Some of these books are by titles “ The World Trade Center: A Tribute” (November 2001) by Bill Harris, the “ The 2001 World Trade Center Attack” (January 2007) by Taylor booten - Goodreads, the “ Another world is possible” (2001) by Jonathan Cromwell - Goodreads, the “ The World Trade Center Attack” (2003) by Cengage Gale and the “ 9/11: The Simple Facts — Why the official story can’t possibly be true” (August 2011) by Arthur Naiman.

Communication effect

Television

The purpose of every communication is to convey information, emotions and viewpoints to the audience. Thus the communication of this specific event was made to accomplish communication's principles. In this case, the fact was the terrorist attack on the world trade center but the information and the emotions that the audience perceived were quite different depending the channel that they chose to get informed. Now let us examine how the two main TV channels (BBC and CNN) covered and communicated the facts.

The first different comes from the beginning and is the way that the two channels started broadcasting the event. CNN started by showing the flaming tower with a title which was referring to a disaster, while on the other hand the BBC started its breaking news with the presenter who briefly said what had happened and then broadcasted images from the flaming tower. In both TV channels the shown images were more or less the same but the main difference was during the presentation of the event, for example in CNN the presenter was saying frequently that the images were live, while on the BBC channel we did not hear it at all. CNN immediately started providing information about what was happening, while on the other hand the BBC presenter stated the event, that a plane had crashed into the WTC, and continuously repeated it without saying something new. This repeatability means two things firstly that the BBC had nothing new to say about this event or the presenter was shocked by this event, which is the most reasonable speculation. Moreover, BBCs' presenters were using dramatic language and were referring to words " chaos and panic, busy time

and busy blocks". These words when are heard by a news-presenter have greater value and people terrorized, while CNN presenters were calm and with a clear voice they were presenting the facts without terrorizing their audience as much as this was possible. Both channels contacted eyewitnesses from different places of the lower Manhattan area, and the presenters were asking questions about the event and how they experienced and perceived what had happened earlier in the day. Each channel continued the same pattern and with the eyewitnesses that each channel had invited for interview. On CNN the eyewitnesses were not using dramatic language as much as it was possible but they were expressing their emotions and what they had experienced and how. In contrary to the CNN, BBC invited eyewitnesses who did not conceal their panic. Moreover, the first interviewer referred to another terrorist attack on the WTC in 1993. Both channels had their cameras concentrating on the flaming towers. Here is the main difference between these two channels: On the one hand the broadcasted images from BBC when the towers started collapsing were so dark that for people who had just opened their TV they reasonably could thought that Manhattan was collapsing and a huge area was totally destroyed, and because of the dark images you could not distinguish the smoke from the dust. On the other hand, if the same individuals switched on their TV on the CNN they would probably perceive the fact that a tower had just collapsed, because the broadcasted images were clear and the dust distinguished from the smoke. Furthermore, BBC was repeating the video which showed the second plane crashing into the second tower.

Newspapers

In the vast majority of the newspapers we could see more or less the same picture, which is just before the second plane hits the second tower of the WTC or the second just after the impact which illustrates the explosion. The main differences were in the main titles and the colors used which provided emphasis on different elements. The heading that Los Angeles Times used was "TERRORISTS ATTACK NEW YOURK, PENTAGON" and as a subheading "Thousands Dead, Injured as Hijacked U. S. Airliners Ram Targets; World Trade Center Is Destroyed". This newspaper wrote about thousands of dead people and this title made various impressions and generated anger to the reader, especially when it was accompanied with pictures that showed what happened just before and after the moment of impact. One more newspaper which generated anger and made people look for revenge is the San Francisco Examiner, which had as a title the world "BASTARDS" and also placed emphasis on the colors of the main picture, making it look alive. Moreover, The Daily Telegraph is one more newspaper which caused fear to its readers because the main title stated "WAR IN AMERICA" and the picture that depicted the explosion of the plane into the tower also caused awe. Another newspaper which had used the same pattern of terrorizing people is The Washington Post. Its main title was "Destroy World Trade Centre" and "Hundreds Dead" and was followed by two dark pictures at the time of the impact. Also in this newspaper the reader could read about the promise that president Bush had given for retribution as well as other articles by using words from eyewitnesses which generated terror, such as the article with title "I Saw Bodies Falling". However, some newspapers such as Hartford Courant emphasized on loneliness and uncertainty. The main picture

illustrated a lonely man walking in the middle of the street among the ruins holding a bright red fire extinguisher and the title above this picture was “AMERICA WATCHES HELPLESSLY”.

Internet

On the internet as I have already said there are two different scenarios about this event but everyone admits that this event was a lesson and everyone who experienced this event have to remember these people who lost their lives on that bloody bay for humankind. Every video, picture and text are displayed in this way that it does not matter who was responsible for that tragedy. The important thing is that innocent people lost their lives at the WTC and nearby blocks. Images and words are placed in such way that people who experienced that day will remember it and for them those who lost their lives are appeared as heroes in some way. However, in the internet we could also read the conspiracy theories which make this event ambiguously.

Conclusion

So what is finally mass communication, a science or an art? The answer is quite simple. Mass communication is a science by which people get informed by different media and at the same time is an art because the way that the information is transmitted could change the information. In this case the event was straightforward. Two aircrafts crashed on the WTC and after the impact the crashed towers collapsed. But the information that the media broadcasted were the huge number of dead people which by itself generated anger and hatred, the lack of security, the fact that terrorists can hit every target that they want and finally the media proposed that this event was a

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reason for war and revenge in memory of the dead. Thus people in America were in favor of the war in Iraq and nobody can accuse them for these beliefs that they had, because they experienced terror that the media launched and grew this feeling.