

# [Social media and loser generated content term paper examples](https://assignbuster.com/social-media-and-loser-generated-content-term-paper-examples/)

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With the advent of the Internet, creativity has exploded and given people much wider opportunities to express themselves through art. Given the affordability of Internet access, laptops with webcams, audio/visual equipment, and the like, it is easier than ever to become a legitimate filmmaker or musician with real, sizable audiences through content created from your home. However, how far does this influence extend? Corporations, smelling profit in the air, have also jumped on the social media and crowd-sourcing bandwagon, bringing their marketing teams and PR firms to bear, creating content for the Internet that can overshadow the efforts of others. In order to mask these efforts, corporations piggyback on 'loser-generated content,' archiving it or benefiting from it through things like Google AdSense, which tailor advertisements to users' search histories. 'Loser-generated content' can be defined as user-generated content that is extracted from gullible civilians and amateur filmmakers, who follow the instructions of a company to create content for them - they are 'losers,' ostensibly, because they are not actually getting paid for this effort, and only rewarded with the meager promise of greater exposure. While this may provide a way for companies to benefit from the chance for creative unknowns to get their content seen, it also potentially dilutes the quality of the media being put out by marketing and advertising firms.

The central question at play is whether or not it is justified for the subjective or artistic quality and production value of a company's advertising and marketing efforts to suffer in exchange for involving consumers in on the process. The Internet has permitted nearly everyone with a camera and an idea to reach an audience of, potentially, millions; companies are using that to ostensibly get free content, with firms asking people to film their families performing their scripts or film themselves enjoying their product to use in ad campaigns. On the one hand, this seems very generous - aspiring artists and filmmakers get to have their content on a wider stage, as these corporations have the money to either compensate them or offer their content to all those who would see the ad. However, this also presents a problem in that the ads themselves, instead of being the creative efforts with production value and clear messages that these marketing executives are ostensibly paid for, are technically compilations of home videos of people many of their audience have never met.

With so much content being created, whether for corporations or not, it can be difficult to discern what is quality and what is not. Furthermore, media and culture becomes much more ephemeral; Internet memes light up like a flash in the pan, only to dissipate two weeks later, forgotten by all in exchange for the newest lip-dub Youtube video or new-parody image macro writing song lyrics onto a picture of Barack Obama. This type of media is meant to be ephemeral, transparent, transitional; it is much more focused on the present instead of following a tradition and indicating possession (Enzensberger, 1965).

Nothing is built to last anymore, at least on the Internet; things are designed to not stand the test of time, but to gain the maximum amount of attention possible. To that end, Enzensberger notes that " it is wrong to regard media equipment as mere means of consumption. It is always, in principle, also means of production." Instead of thinking of new media in the Internet age as something flash-in-the-pan and temporary, thus sacrificing the need for quality, it is necessary to create more lasting change from within and offer higher quality content that moves beyond advertising to addressing social conflict and the like.

One of Enzensberger's most important points made in his works is the damning of the idea that becoming a producer of content for corporations allows one to have control over it. " Anyone who imagines that freedom for the media will be established if only everyone is busy transmitting and receiving is the dupe of a liberalism whichmerely peddles the faded concepts of a preordained harmony of social interests" (Enzensberger). In other words, using this new expanded ability for everyone to become a producer of media for anything other than important works like social conflict and social movements - issues that the anti-capitalist individual are actually invested in - is a waste of time. In other words, this kind of content would not be 'loser-generated,' as it would provide a true utility that is not being covered already by paid advertisers.

Baudrillard has a different idea of what should constitute media than Enzensberger's; he argues that an inherent technological structure to media existed - media is supposed to serve a function in society, wherein real objects are reduced to models and parroted in front of the public. According to Baudrillard's perspective, linguistic and visual communication of this kind is simply inadequate to actually exchange ideas and concepts, as it is always one way. There is no real reciprocity involved in the creation of content; it is transmitted, and the recipient receives. However, this problem is not solved with the creation of loser-generated content - that just creates reversibility, creating two one-way streams of information being sent between company and individual. There is no true communication or reciprocity; all the same, they do at least move the exchange beyond consumer and producer, as every single entity involved is a producer. Instead of a mass network as Enzensberger suggests, fighting social injustice, the sheer amount of media present would serve to dilute whatever message was being said, making this content irrelevant.

In order to find more conversational media, reversible media, we have to look to Youtube and social media. Its concept of creating 'conversations' through Facebook statuses, video responses and reviews of Youtube videos, retweets and the like permit us to create mass content while still contributing to a direct conversation. To that end, Baudrillard's thesis of media not being truly 'reciprocal' can be said to be ended with new media - just as he believes graffiti transgresses this thesis because it immediately " responds, there, on the spot, and breaches the fundamental role of non-response enunciated by all the media" (p. 287), so do retweets, video responses, and Facebook statuses. These contribute to the discourse and contribute to the conversation.

However, what value does the conversation have if it is not private? Also, with the injection of corporate entities on Youtube and the like, any piece of media can become a commodity or a piece of advertising; Youtube ads for partners and more obscure the bottom of the picture, shilling for whatever product is randomly generated. This turns personal messages and responses, parts of a conversation, into only part of a conversation that also now includes advertisements. The companies no longer need to solicit loser-generated content to integrate with their own ads; they move forward and do it themselves. A Youtube vlogger never knows what they are advertising for at a particular moment, which means the content itself is not meant for a specific product. The ad is just a bumper sticker that intrudes upon the viewing experience momentarily in order to impose a corporate mindset upon them.

This is not to say, of course, that the Youtube partner, for example, minds the presence of these advertisements. In exchange for the permission to place the ads, partners receive a certain percentage of revenue. They do not receive it from specific companies, but from Youtube, who aggregates all of these advertisements through Google AdSense and allows algorithms and search histories to dictate what is being sold to whom. To that end, the vlogger or Youtube partner can benefit from this exchange of 'loser-generated content,' but they are not being necessarily coerced into a pattern of behavior (other than those rules or guidelines necessary for being a Youtube partner, none of which involve specific corporate slurs or endorsements). In today's age, much of marketing and loser-generated content seems to be companies paying for the chance to leech off an established Youtube celebrity's audience.

Looking at these pieces of media as a text, the spontaneously-generated advertisements, made and created independently of the video that one is watching out of genuine interest, also contribute to the text and are imposed on its meaning. Is a Youtube response to a cat video, complete with a 3-second banner ad for ringtones, suddenly including ringtones in its message? What does that say about the video itself? The presence of these advertisements in particular brings back Baudrillard's concepts of media no longer being 'reciprocal,' as the text is not wholly about a response to a video anymore, but also has a corporate element to it. Despite the lack of authorial intent, it is there; furthermore, the author implicitly endorses this change by allowing oneself to become a partner. This takes complete authorship away from the vlogger and partially into the hands of Youtube and whatever corporations have ads that are placed on those videos.

In conclusion, the presence of loser-generated content has many different implications to the quality of both corporate advertising and user-generated content through new media. The presence of digital cinema has allowed everyone to express themselves creatively, but in order to monetize it, many succumb to crowdsourcing for corporate advertisements or permitting pop-up ads to contribute and change their own works. The result is a diluting of media on either side to prevent both sides from sending a clear message from a unified source. The advertisers are diminishing their production value in exchange for presenting the illusion that consumers are in control of what is being marketed to them, while artists are allowing randomized elements out of their control to change and obfuscate their texts. In order to change this, a certain separation or unification must occur in order to create truly reflexive and reciprocal media that presents complete authorship from either party. This would create corporate advertisements that truly come from them, as well as user-generated content that does not end up standing in for corporate advertisement without their explicit knowledge.

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