Uses and gratification theory

Before undertaking any form of production, or even to monitor the output of media text that has been generated, some sort of audience research has to be undertaken to measure the output of that particular product, for the purpose of this essay, I will be focusing on uses and gratifications, and the availability on the internet and the ability to record programs.

Uses and gratifications theory first came to light in the 1940s, with the height of radio broadcasting, but later developed further in the early 70s with Katz, Blumler and Gurentich.

The sudden interest came to light with having the first generation to grow up with a wider range of media abundance, the opportunity to have, print, radio and most of all television. The majority of the research that was conducted in the ' audience research' environment was more focused on the effects of media exposure rather than what is done with the media text to the environment it is broadcasted to. Having this open question allowed for researches to have the ability to look in to the way the people deal with this text and what in turn is done with it.

" the social and origins of needs which generate expectations of mass media or other sources which led to differential patterns of media exposure, resulting in need gratification and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones"(Bulmer, j, Katz, E, 1974)

Uses and gratification theory was developed to ask how mediated text is used by the consumer, rather than what media dose to the consumer (Katz, E. 1959), the theory asses the users as a active audience member rather than a passive one, this mean that the user will use specific text to gain the

valuable knowledge that they are actively seeking from the program or text that they may be consuming for a purpose (Katz, E et al 1974)

" The approach suggests that people use the media to fulfil specific gratifications. This theory would then imply that the media compete against other information sources for viewers' gratification." (Katz, E., et al, 1974)

The rise of media available to the general public has become overwhelming, from newspapers to the internet, In turn the audience becomes more dependent on media and the consumption of it, this also means that there is no specific scheduling and timetabling of programs, with the rise of being able to " plus" or record programs allows the independent user to be able to watch programs that they feel interested in and in turn to use this to generate the gratification method, through the information that they have gathered from the consumption of that text.

Blumler and Katz believed that the media text available was used in many different ways, all depending on the individuals preferences to as why they have chosen to openly accept this information that has been generated by the producer, this in short shows that the user has the ability to chose what they want to be exposed to, and in turn this gratify the users need, be it social or informational. (The Uses of mass communication; current perspectives on gratification theory, Katz, E et al 1974)

Critics use to refer to the audience as passive, ignoring the fact that they are more able to chose what they what to consume, uses and gratifications sees them more as an individual and able to reject information that they see as not to be necessary to their daily life, knowledge allows the user to be more

socially accepted, having information to use in streams at work or social gatherings. The flip side is that, the individual uses the role of media to generate some sort of escapism, to substitute part of time to immerse them self's in text that may in some ways resemble their life's, and generates satisfaction to be portrayed in a mass text, this is where the programming timetable that they have made using the plus system comes in to play to create a personal stimulation or enjoyment through the content that has been gathered for entertainment purposes, with the technology that is available in this day and age. (Morley 1992).

Either way the information that each individual may receive from the information that they may have seeked out or stumbled upon can be decoded in different ways, this is all down to the way each person interprets that information to meet there needs (Blumler and Katz 1974). The content that is put together by the produce to send out a specific meaning can be decoded in many ways, this is down to many aspects of that person(s) life, it could result in the way they are bought up and the influence that are attaché to that upbringing, also added to the social class that they are from and the people that they may be associated with, and finally the more wealthier they are can also result in what they may be exposed to and how they take it in, (www. rlwclarke. net).

Uses and gratification is a method that allows for a progressive approach in audience research, but with limitations, this area focuses more on the individual, and the way they are affected by the text that they are exposed to, allowing for the individuals point of view, but with the internet and the more use of recorded programming, the over sighting of scheduling has

changed, this could mean that the exposure to material is down to the persons preference, and the dismissing of others, i. e. sops because they may feel as though it is a waste of time and references them in no way.

With the rise of the internet and the ability to record shows, allows for the user to generate their own gratifications from the chosen exposure of material, allowing the individual to immerse them self's in the word of their choosing, social escapism is the way that everyone can be in there little cave and gather information that will become useful to their daily life's, be it for work or social interaction. With the availability of multiple media platforms, allows for the individual to become more dependent on their expose to their specific media preference, this means that the person will become media oriented to be knowledgeable in their social environment, also at the same time dismissing those that do not portray them (Ball-Rokeach, et al 1973)

Altered the structural relations among traditional media such as print and broadcast and unites them around the defining technologies of computer and satellite (Carey, 1998)

To end it will be easy to say that, every day the choices available seem overwhelming to an individual that, but searching for the information that you may be interested in is not, have the ability to have a internet enabled phone or, a broadband enabled pc, will allow for quick and on the move dosage of knowledge. This builds for a framework to start the daily day of before being socially intractable with the foundations of things to talk about, or with feeds being directed to your mobile then accessing face book to arrange meetings and gathering information of others. For example I like

dance music, so I might access the internet to find new information on musicians or DJs, and this will then in turn be repeated in my social group as a conversation started.

To match one's wits against others, to get information and advice for daily living, to Provide a framework for one's day, to prepare oneself culturally for the demands of Upward mobility, or to be reassured about the dignity and usefulness of one's role. (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974)