

# Reading response

Literature, Russian Literature



Reading Response on Affiliation In Lievrouw and Livingstone's work (as cited in Flew & Smith, , they deem that the determination and study of forms of new media is underlined by three basic principles. First is a detailed analysis of the tools and gadgets that create the ability to communicate. These tools may vary from mobile phones to computers and CD-ROMS. The second element of new media is a look into the communication behaviors, and the procedures that we undertake in the process of using these gadgets. Lastly, there is a consideration of the resultant social implications of the use of the communication gadgets, and the manner in which they are used. The social framework that forms around the use of the communication tools is an important component of the approach to new media. With every change that takes place in communication technology, the way in which society operates changes. This can be best expressed by the radical changes in social relations from the days when there were no computers, mobile phones, and the internet, in sharp contrast to today's scenario, where such devices are almost a basic need in every household and for every individual. Keywords: New Media, Communication, Technology Introduction The definition of new media involves a blended look into 4 factors; " computing and information technology, communication networks, content, and digitized media arising out of another process and convergence" (Flew & Smith, 2011). Computing and information technology form the core of new media studies. The technological devices that are used in computing and in communication facilitate the process of information transfer, and the resulting social interactions. Communication networks are the channels over which the information exchange occurs. The widest communication network in the

globe, which is the internet, relies on the worldwide web and provides a wide platform for communication from almost any part of the globe. As long as a computer is connected to the internet, it can communicate to any other connected computer regardless of geographical distance and time. The third element of focus is the content, which is the nature of the information communicated over the network. The digitized media involved in the communication process refers to content that incorporates and merges various forms of data and text, multimedia data such as sound and images of various formats which are then stored in digital form. The dissemination of such media content is carried out by use of means such as satellites, microwave transmission, and broadband fiber-optic cables (Flew & Smith, 2011). Convergence in the context of new media refers to the interconnection between the previous three elements. According to Zettie (as cited in Flew & Smith 2011) it may also be used to refer to the continuous evolution of communication gadgets; that is, giving them an increasingly multipurpose functionality. For example, a smartphone like the Samsung Galaxy S4 can be used for mobile communication, internet access, and games simultaneously. Characteristics of New Media The characteristics of new media as put forth by Flew & Smith (2011) include: Can be manipulated: changes can continuously be made to new media and digital information at its different phases, be it in its conception, storage, conveyance, or utility. It can continuously be adapted to fit the information and communication needs of users. The use of networks: another property of new media or digital information is that it can be conveyed over networks to a huge number of users in different locations at the same time. The property of density: new

media or digital information exists in enormous forms that can be condensed into network servers or small storage spaces, such as flash disks and CDs.

Can be compressed: the amount of space that new media or digital information occupies within a network can be controlled by continuously being compacted and de-compacted. The element of impartiality: new media or digital information is uniform and does not bear any reflection that may distinguish its creators, owners, users, or how it is denoted. The form of new media that will be focused on in this paper is websites. In addition to the websites bearing all the above characteristics, they provide a medium for communication between people in different locations over a network; that is, the internet. Accessible over various forms of technological devices such as computers and mobile phones, websites use the platform of the worldwide web to provide for this connectivity. The web was developed in 1989 and its significance in the evolution of communication began with the development of web browsers, such as Netscape and Internet Explorer that provided a stage for access of content found on the internet (Flew & Smith, 2011).

Social Implications of the Development of Websites Following the conception of the web, the internet ceased from being just a one-dimensional source of information, to a platform where media could be shared. This was as a result of development of websites such as Wikipedia and YouTube that acted as hosts for content posted by users and search engines such as Yahoo!, Google, and Alta Vista that provided services to users and enabled them to search for content across the internet. Development of websites has redefined the way that people search for information online. The creation and subsequent improvement of websites that act as search engines has

seen the rise of a culture that is almost second nature to many users of the internet; “googling” an adoption from the popular search engine website Google (Flew & Smith, 2011). The first instinct of any internet user trying to find anything on the internet is to use a search engine to locate it. This has done away with the need to store any information on sites accessed or to bookmark any sites of interest as they can always be found by searching and re-searching through search engine websites. Websites have also enabled ordinary people with no prior expertise in fields such as the creation of encyclopedias and recording of videos for online distribution to create content and share it on the numerous online platforms. The popular online encyclopedia is a perfect example of a site that has enabled many contributors, amateurs and experts alike, to participate in the formation of an online encyclopedia similar to the traditional hardcopy encyclopedias that characterize libraries and learning institutions in the world over. YouTube, a popular website on which internet users can create and share videos has redefined the acceptance of the role that amateur videos play in the society. This was specifically highlighted in 2005 during the underground terrorist bombings in London, where numerous videos were uploaded to YouTube following the event. Amateur videos, particularly those uploaded to YouTube now also play a vital role as preservations of record of serious events in daily life of the society (Flew & Smith, 2011). Facebook and Twitter are also examples of sites that have revolutionized social interactions among people across the globe. They emphasize the formation and expansion of social networks among people by providing an avenue on which people from completely different parts of the globe can socialize online. This socializing is

coupled with the provision for commercial advertising by external businesses on the social networking sites, and the propagation of political views and affiliations through sharing opinions on an open, online, and public domain. The effects of social sites on society go beyond re-shaping social interactions to altering the very language that is used in online communication. ‘ Friend’, ‘ status’ and ‘ following’ have completely different meanings in social networking spheres from the conventional dictionary meanings. Through a practice known as micro-blogging, people are able to exchange ideas about their own personal lives, world views, and even the basic happenings of everyday life from any part of the globe (Flew & Smith, 2011). Globalization is yet another effect of this new media though a more generalized impact of the proliferation of the internet within society today. Websites have continuously empowered the processes that constitute globalization, such as international trade made possible by e-commerce websites, international movements of people, and international law made possible by the availability of information across websites on the internet, as well as facilitating international conflict resolution and solving global problems such as terrorism (Flew & Smith, 2011). The evolution of websites as a form of new media however has negative social implications. Key among them is the issue of protection of privacy of the users of websites as noted by Flew and Smith (2011). Some tools on the websites may push users to share too much content or reveal too much about themselves on websites; a risk which cannot be adequately protected by the requirement on most sites that users log in via protected user accounts that are password protected. More generally, the spread of internet use has resulted in the phenomenon of a

digital divide, a term used to loosely refer to the difference between people who have access and the ability to use information technology and those who do not (Flew & Smith, 2011). This is propagated by differences in geographical location, as well as social differences such as race, age, income, and education levels. Conclusion New media is undergoing a rapid and continuous evolution process, and is gradually being incorporated into various aspects of life; from communication, to business, to socializing, and information access. It changes the core elements of social interaction, but like a double edged sword, has both positive and negative impacts on the social framework of a society. Reference List Flew, L., & Smith, R. (2011). New media: An introduction. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.