Examining the definition of modern technology media essay

There is no real definition for Modern Technology. That is a tough one as it is so based on context. I would say that any technology that has not been superseded OR is more than 20 years old cannot be thought of as modern but that is a purely arbitrary date and you could say 5, or 10 or 25, or 50 years. Even Jet flight can be considered old technology. There is nothing better but it has been around since World War II. The influence of modern technology can easily be seen in the entertainment and advertising industries.

The rise of modern technology of new media, especially internet, has increased the activity of communication between people all over the world. It has allowed people to express themselves through blogs, websites, pictures, and other user-generated media. Internet as a new media has changes the role of the audience. Nowadays, Interactive websites and kiosks have become popular. The advertising industry has capitalized on the proliferation of new media with large agencies running multi-million dollar interactive advertising subsidiaries. Public Relations firms' also taking advantage of the opportunities in new media through interactive Public Relations practices. This diversity of media carriers appear under the influences of new communication technologies. Hence, the audience can take advantages over the media in more flexible and various ways and integrate new and old media into their daily lives (Virginia Nightingale & Karen Hoss, 2006). According to Denis McQuail, the open context has realized revolutionary liberations due to advanced communication technologies.

The audience has turning into " searchers, consultants, viewers, reflectors, dialogists, and chatters" from " passive receivers, consumers, accepters, or target objects".

Audience is the one who receives information passively in certain special scope. As the receiver in communication, the audience may be individuals, groups, or " mass". A communication expert, McQuail, said in his work that: the " mass" concept was firstly advanced by Bloomer, a sociologist of Chicago school of sociology, in order to differentiate it from former " group" or " public". The mass is incapable of discrimination or rejection. Only if receive information from media, the mass takes them completely just as a target being shot down (Denis McQuail, 1997).

Generally speaking, the audience would accept all information from influential media. The powerful influences of media even impact the form of people's values. In 1938, a broadcasting play edited from Wells' fantastic story Star Wars, produced by Columbia Broadcasting System, caused a common panic for " Martian Invasion". This event effectively illustrates the theory.

Social Impact on Internet Audience

With the advent of technology, a host of opportunities and dangers have opened up with the use of social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo groups, Linkd In and other virtual communities that bring people together. Modern technology allows strangers to communicate openly and without hesitation, many believing that their identity is safely hidden behind a monitor and no harm can come to them. Social networks have become

surrogates for communities with a failure to first develop personal relationships and then allowing a social network to be an extension of an already formed relationship.

In regards to online relationships, survey research indicates that online social relationships are weaker than off-line relationships (Parks & Roberts, 1998), that people who use email regard it as less valuable than other modes of communication for maintaining social relationships (Cummings & Kraut & Attewell, 1996) that people who use email heavily have weaker social relationships than those who do not (Riphagen & Kanfer, 1997) and that people who use the Internet heavily report spending less time communicating with their families. (Cole & Jefrey, 2000).

New media audience develops a new culture of Do-It-Yourself or customisation. Whereby the audience either decides what information they desire or how a discourse that shapes how consumers have deployed those technologies (Jenkins, 2002: 280). Downes states that as Internet media institutions are established, the cynical view of the audience as a source of consumer behaviour and preferences will inevitably give way, to some extent, to a view of the audience as participant in communication (Downes, 2000). The audiences of the Internet are both consumers and produces. Pavick & Dennis defines the new media audience, as no longer even refer to audiences as they speak of users or consumers (quoted by Downes, 2000). Internet platform allows people to create their own content and distribute it widely (Barr, 2002: 244) examples of this are blogging and forums.

In addition, audience will filter and select the contents of their own special interests and as a result, cultural and political life become increasingly polarised. Walter Bender cites technology empowers consumers to have a voice and the voice of consumers is growing exponentially (Quoted in Rao, 2003: 79) The development of this new culture is seen towards online news. As online news is heading towards a more interactive approach where audience of the online news are different; they pull what are of interest to them as the internet " incorporates radio, film and television and distributes them through ' push' technology" (Denis Mc Quail, 2000: 119).

Advantages of Internet as a New Media Medium

New ideas will emerge only if old ideas can be challenged that leads to latest communication revolution the Internet. This new era is so significant that it seems it may soon be a main source for information. John Givens however argues that new media technologies and services supplement rather than replace their predecessors, radio threatened newspapers but did not destroy them. Television threatened radio and the cinema, but left them standing. (Given, 1998: 46).

The convergence arises out of growing linkages between media, information technology and telecommunications. (Flew, 2004: 10) hence digitization of tradition formats such as newspapers or photos. Technology is making life more convenient and enjoyable. The advantages of the Internet as a new media enables the building of the world biggest virtual shopping mall reduces the hassle to queue up in the bank or searching for news and information. The Internet is a global network of interconnected computers.

The Internet allows online communications for example the popular internet

messengers or internet replay communication, Flew points out that when compared to other media the Internet stands out because it is networked, interactive, enables two way communication, and allows its users to be both producers as well as consumers of content.(Flew, 2004: 1). The Internet acts as a public sphere where is dominated by mass media conglomerates or oligopolies. (Devereux, 2003: 66).

Technological convergence of industries of media, computer and telecommunication creates new audiences. This new audience is the area of focus, how has the Internet as a form of a new media effects society today. The nature of the media audience is not very well understood. Commercial concerns interested in creating audience and media analysis often judge wrongly the nature of the audience. As a result audiences in Asia and America may experience either the same or different views after watching the same movie. An action film is prone to be experienced the same way, but comedy films may be interpreted differently due to cultural representation. That is why it is important to study audiences. According to Devereux, audience may have differing expectations about different media genres (Devereux, 2003: 7). Sue Turnbull argue that the major problem for media audience research is how to pin the audience down, just how can the entire range of media practices in which people engage be limited and defined.(Turnbull, 2002: 86). In other words the audience is not one big mass. Rather, it consists of very different groups of people with different expectations of the media, different backgrounds and age groups, and different media consumption.

In the past the media producers thought audiences were passive receivers of relatively discrete media messages, it is increasingly apparent that people today encounter many different and often contradictory media messages in wide variety of different context. A passive audience is one that accepts everything, and is easily manipulated by the media. Internet material is heading towards a more interactive approach where audiences are different; they pull rather than push media. According to Madanmohan Rao surveys found that online audiences go to the internet news sites to get more information about subjects that specifically interest them rather than to seek out general enlightenment. (Rao, 2003: 80). Hence, Internet has resulted in a radically changed on media landscape for media audiences.

Stuart Hall and Denis Mc Quail are key theorists in the field of understanding media audience. Stuart Hall proposal a model of encoding and decoding that suggest the examination of the producer and the reception of media messages. The model outlines four main codes, dominant/hegemonic code, professional code, negotiated code and oppositional code. Denis Mc Quail provides an overview in diverse array of important media situation and discussing on media audience. Media research on what the audience uses the Internet and the gratification they receive. Mc Quail summarized uses and gratifications theory into four general areas, information, personal identity, integration and social interaction and entertainment.

Disadvantages of Internet as a New Media Medium

Although the Internet has proven to be a valuable asset in the new era, it has also presented negative effects. Internet is a poor substitute, with no doubt it has broken geographic barriers, and however has created barriers of its own.

The Internet has the potential to further deprive individuals of social contacts such that the unintended consequences of social isolation and its implications cannot be excluded. The individualisation of leisure time becomes a further source of increased social isolation. It is natural that with an increase in time people spend surfing the net, the less time they spend with friends, neighbours, and family members. Thus, in addition to shopping in the biggest virtual mall, to find a bargain will not require the exchange of information with friends and relatives but rather a good search engine that provides all the details.

The technology that has allowed people to keep in touch with distant family members and friends, to find information quickly and to develop friendships with people around the world apparently is also replacing vital, everyday human communication. Internet cannot provide intimacy. Turkle (1995: 235) pointed out the absurdity of the notion that community can arise from among people sitting alone, typing messages to virtual friends Nie and Erbring (2000) found that as Internet use increased, users were more likely to report a decrease in time spent talking to family and friends and attending social events

Barnes states that the disadvantage of online dating is exceptional (quoted from Mathews, 2002). Online relationships may develop less interdependence, understanding, and commitment than comparable off-line ones do (Parks & Roberts, 1998). Furthermore, they argue that contacts developed or maintained via the Internet by electronic mail lack the more involving quality of face-to-face contacts. Survey research indicates that online social relationships are weaker than off-line relationships (Parks &

Roberts, 1998), that people who use email regard it as less valuable as other modes of communication for maintaining social relationship (Cummings & Kraut & Attewell, 1996). The anonymity that is offered by the Internet permits people to create their own identity. Joe Schwartz believes that people cannot trust each other in a relationship until time has proved that person reliable (quoted from Mathews, 2002).

Another area of concern is children and the Internet. Interaction with other children is essential to develop social skills. Internet and video games lack a great deal of abilities that children need to develop their social skills properly. When the child loses the motivation to interact with friends it is much easier for him or her to become addicted to the Internet (Monoroe, 2001). However, a child who does not learn to socialise when they are young rarely learns how to socially interact when the child becomes an adult. Both savoury and unsavoury contents are available on the Internet. Access to these materials such as pornographic at an early age will cause harm to children behaviour in future. However, legislation and censorship tries to controls the access to these sites through firewalls to restrict the access of children to sexually explicit materials on the Internet.

Key Theorist on Relationship between Media and Audience

Mc Quail (2000) summarized uses and gratifications theory into four areas: (1) The first is information, where we use the media to educate us in certain areas, such as learning more about the world, seeking advice on practical matters, or fulfilling our curiosity. (2) The second factor is " personal identity™, where we may watch television to associate an actor™ character with our own. For example in the comedy Friends™ all the actors have

different personalities, we as the audience imagines or desires that we were them or resembling them. (3) The third usage of media is integration and social interaction™, and refers to gaining insight into the situations of other people, in order to achieve a sense of belonging. For example, when watching a movie, we may get very emotional because we experience a sense of connection to the movie, and experience symptoms like crying, or covering our eyes. Television also facilitates us in our personal relationship with friends as we are able to relate and discuss details of media texts that we like in common with our friends. And (4) the fourth usage of the media identified by Mc Quail is Ëœentertainment™, that is, using media for purposes of obtaining pleasure and enjoyment, or escapism. For example when we watch TV shows or movies we end up going into a new world of fantasy, diverting our attention from our problems, wasting time when we are free and even sometimes acquiring sexual arousal or emotional release.

However, there are criticisms to this approach, as not all media is related to the pursuit of gratification and it has been taken for granted that audience accept the content of the media. James Lull claims the problem is because the uses and gratifications perspective assumes that people willingly engage the mass media and benefit from the experience, it is often associated with the highly criticized notion that mass media function positively for society. (Lull, 2002: 111).

Many theories concerns the impacts suffered by the audience from influential media, including the audience as targets, agenda setting theory, culture normalization theory, and significance constitution theory.

Researchers focus on influential media communication and define the

audience as being passive and flatten. The study perspective is fixed on the powerful effects of media. Television is a classical representative of influential media in mass communication. A special communication form in mass culture comes into being.

Conclusion

Lastly, the network communication reflects information exchange and feedback, and the characteristics of bilateral communication. Not only the effects of network but also the coming of new science and technology revolution, and the emergence of mobile phones, televisions, and other communication ways have driven the changes of communication form and defined a new concept of audience. The appearance of new audience concept drives researches on the paradigm of audience. In Audience, Abercrombie and Longhurst cite Kuhn's paradigm concept, classify studies on audience into three paradigms, and advance the spectacle/ performance paradigm that consists of spectacle, performance, imagination, and image, forming a new study perspective under the convergence of new media. As media image impacts the daily life, the convergence of media makes everyone directly or indirectly become an audience, as well as a performer. By this way, the contents producer in communication and the receiver integrate together. As the audience employs the media initiatively and interactively, the media will help the audience realize the search or construction of self image.

People's subjective and objective integration is the base for bilateral communication studies. Just as what was concluded in Mc Quail's Audience Analysis: " Reviewing the history of audience studies, we notice that the

studies are continuously developing from being controlled audience to self-governance. The evolvement of audience theories vividly shows us the changing route from the media disseminator perspective to the receiver perspective. The audience study tends to emphasize on the " re-discovery" of people (Denis Mc Quail, 2006).

From the ethnography perspective in media studies, no matter what it is ideology machine or communication media, it is not based on communication technologies or disseminators but originated from a group's daily life. There is a continuously creating relationship between " creators" and " creations".

Under the impacts of media convergence, the audience gradually forms the subjectivity. Due to the continuous changes of the relationship between the audience, and media text, individuals construct self media centers. In today's media convergence, the audience constitutes the personalized media center and becomes the performer who shows himself or herself by texts, which breaks the border between producers and passive receivers, forming a multi-dimensional space for information exchange. Social networking is indeed the modern, efficient and effective way to communicate but it must be tempered with proper decorum, caution and purpose. Yet, the relationship between the media and the public has changed tremendously over time. Media production, indeed, is the primary unit in the process of message Modern Technology.