

# Digital video made everyone into a movie maker media essay

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## **Abstract**

The emergence of new technologies for digital video making like user-friendly video editing software as well as affordable digital video cameras has made it possible for a common man to produce and distribute their own video such as short films, music videos and public service announcements. In addition to this, social networking websites such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and other numerous sites are facilitating users to distribute and share their videos with others and get responses immediately. Yet, the question is, whether it is possible for anyone to create a Hollywood movie/pop video/TV movie with the help of these technologies. Digital video making is not only a way to express one's creative abilities, it is also being used to educate. Current research papers discuss this topic in depth. Students are using their talent to express their ideas and emotions. This helps them to use print, music, dialogue, visual and moving images in their films in an intelligent way.

## **Introduction**

" The early twenty-first century is seeing new transformations and combinations of communicative modes in the Internet, the rapidly-changing screen-based technologies and the combinatorial possibilities of new digital formats for still image, moving image and sound..." (Burn and Parker, 2003 p. 9) It is difficult to imagine any aspect of modern life that did not get impacted by latest and frequent technological advancements during the last few decades. Technology in the early days, in particular computer and internet was a symbol of prominence and significance. A few decades ago

every person who held know how of the computer was considered a nerd or a social outcast. This stereotype broke in 1990s as by than people started knowing the value of computer as a source of communication, data processing and information retrieval as well as online community formation. Today, the Internet has become a part of our daily life and we can access all types of information easily. Similarly, cellular technologies have made communication easy for its users. Technical skills are a plus point for getting employment in all fields (Snaveley and Copper, 1997). Even relatively low paid jobs have a requirement of using computerised systems. At present sophisticated technology is being used for basic societal activities such as paying a bill, filling in an income tax return, casting a vote for a political candidate etc. Like other aspects of life technology has also had its impact on film making and cinema. Current essay is a discussion of how far technology drives change in narrative construction. The author will evaluate the relationship between technology and narrative, focusing on genre.

## **Film Making and Digital Technologies**

Film making has also been influenced greatly by technology. Many methods have been embedded in film making including special effects, 3D technology, modern techniques of camera and lighting (Willis, Holly, 2005; Ulrich, Brian, 2004; Thomson, Patrica, 2005; Telotte, J. P, 2001). Friedrich Kittler bases his book *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* on the premise that the media technology emerging around 1900 represents: "A decisive historical and discursive caesura that alters the structure, placement and function of cultural production". (Kittler, Friedrich, 1990; p. 12) Similarly, digital computer technology has brought us to the next decisive historical and

discursive caesura. We are in the backlash. Digital technologies are changing the possibilities of cinema. Now days we cannot described cinema by a 90 minutes movie in a theatre. Digital computer technology changes the study of any medium infected by it, in the data storage and transmission to become part of the story. Cinema is now more than ever a networked medium and partakes in global flows of information and multi-media. A movie is no longer just a movie, but exists in a social world of understanding and exploitation from the ordinariness of the fast-forward to the invasiveness of the remix. (Kirsner, Scott, 2006; Martin Adrian, 2002).

## **Video-Editing Software**

In September of 1995 Sony shipped its first digital camcorder together with FireWire, a new cable technology that made downloading of video and audio files to a home computer easier and faster. In April of 1999, Apple came out with Final Cut Pro, high-end (\$1, 000) video editing software aimed at the growing "presume" market. And in October 1999 Apple debuted iMovie, free video editing software aimed at consumers. Recently, DVD authoring software, such as Sonic's MyDVD Studio Deluxe and Ulead's DVD Movie Factory, has become reasonable and even formerly proprietary or expensive production software like budgeting and scheduling software has become available to consumers (EP Budgeting and Scheduling). Movies can be completely staffed online through websites like Craig list, Strongeyecontact.com, and Mandy.com. Director Gus Van Sant cast his most recent movie Paranoid Park (2007) on MySpace. Casting try-outs can be done virtually with software called Life Size, where directors and producers in one location can interact with and see, in high definition, actors in another location in real

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time. (Carly Mayberry, 2006) Funding can be raised online. Final draft screenwriting software has a "collabowriter" function that allows screenwriters in different locations to co-write screenplays. Lowering of costs has been one of the most apparent and commonly discussed aspects of digital production. Movie cameras and editing equipment have become cheap to free. Disposable digital video cameras are available at pharmacies for \$25. Flip Video has introduced a video camera similar to this disposable camera that costs \$125 and with which you can directly download using a flip-out USB port, to any computer. The editing function to edit clips is available in the device and can be used once the camera is plugged into the computer. Film and video centres offer low cost digital filmmaking classes all over the country covering everything from lighting to editing marketing. Digital film schools are popping up across the world in Ireland, Cuba, Uganda and even Iraq. Scott Perry, an instructor at the Motion Media Arts Centre in Austin says, "When I was learning all we had was Super 8mm film that cost \$15 for three minutes of raw film, no sound and no way to edit. Now, \$15 buys five hours of digital tape, and the cameras and editing system are everywhere." (Acohido). Increasingly, cameras are recording to hard drives, making even the purchase of tape unnecessary. HD (high definition) cameras have dropped in price as has the ability to edit in HD. Digital technologies have brought down the cost of the moviemaking tools to a point where they are increasingly available to a more general public. In moviemaking magazines, one increasingly finds movies referred to as a "no-budget." This is an example of how free movie-making technology is creating new communities around new forms of cinema.

## **New Trends in Film Making**

Previously one couldn't imagine a movie without cinema or theatre but with the advent of computer and digital technology as well as internet now movies are available to us into our houses and on the move. Now one can watch a movie on TV, on cell phones, on computers, on Gameboys, and on posters. So many versions are available due to facility of editing for a common user of computer and internet that it is our choice whether to see an original version or an edited one. No more is there a need to stare " at cinema screens for hours at a time, alert and motionless, backs straight and arms at (our) sides," as has been described by Ken Kalfus about the early twentieth century moviegoers. Computers have an impact on modern cinema. Media theorist Peter Lunen Feld has argued that " media made by computers is always unfinished". He says that " unfinish" is the beauty of digital media. Viewers turned users are exploring the digital nature of movies and reshaping, reforming and remixing them. Thus, a cinematic object becomes a continuing project of reconstruction, entering a discourse network where different users and viewers can use it to express unintended ideas. When Star Wars: The Phantom Menace (1999) was released, it quickly made its way to the Internet where it was modified by numerous fans and could be found in various radically different from George Lucas's theatrical version. As the movie its object becomes more accessible, it also becomes subject to revision. The relationship between the viewer and the cinematic art object cannot help but be changed by this modularity and variability. One might argue that although there are thousands of homemade versions of Star Wars to be found on YouTube, this does not affect the original art object of Star

Wars, recognized and revered but I argue that this variability has seeped into even our expectations of the "original" so that we are not surprised to find it changed or to not know what constitutes the "original" or if there needs to be one. Movie (2005) 2046 is an example of this new mode of unpredictability. This movie was directed by Wong Kar Wai. Film 2046 was shown in pieces at its premiere during the Cannes Film Festival. Opening of the film was postponed as the last few reel arrived. This movie was shown to reviewers in the middle of the editing process. The movie is based on the story of writer who writes stories about the future, the year 2046. Wong Kar-Wai says that he created this movie at the time when Hong Kong was turned over to the Chinese and they assured that nothing will be changed in Hong Kong for fifty years. This ridiculous idea gave director the motivation of creating the story of a writer who writes about 2046. 2046 is the story of a time and place you can go there nothing ever changes there. Everyone can go there but only writer can come back. There are numerous copies of 2046 available now. Film critic Nathan Lane called it both an "epic remix" and a "phenomenon." Film was finally released after five years of its initial idea and also as was commented by reviewers, there were various versions variable in different countries in the form of the published and imported DVDs. Subject of the movie is memory and loss and the genuine movie has itself made its share in that story, existing and being lost in different forms. (Prince, Stephen, 2004; Punt, Michael, 1995; Sky, Sitney, 2005) Lane (2005) writes, "And it isn't difficult to imagine other versions surfacing some day: a pure sci-fi, an experimental montage, a wordless pantomime, a melodrama in Japanese, a half-dozen self-contained romances. 2046 portends, both in

narrative and in the actual movie experience, cinema's change from a representational art producing art producing finished objects to an increasingly tele-cultural form, with social interaction and mutation preventing the formation of an authentic original. Instead of the nostalgia and sense of loss with each viewing of a film print, as expressed by Vogel, the viewer in the digital world is left with an untethered relation to the movie which can exist in uncountable forms and formats, none more authentic than the next." (p. 31) Movies have now come out of its limited theatrical or cinema view. Now we can watch movies in our homes, on computers, cell phones and TVs, Gameboys, and on posters. (Leggat, Graham, 2004; McKernan, Brian and ebrary Inc., 2005; Martin, Adrian, 2002). Different versions are available with variety in quality. Now there is no need to stare " at cinema screens for hours at a time, alert and motionless, backs straight and arms at (our) sides," as has been described by Ken Kalfus. Trends of watching movie in theatre or cinema have been changed. (McKernan, Brian and ebrary Inc., 2005; Morris, Keiko, 2006; Notaro, Anna, 2006; Shaw, Jeffrey, and Peter Weibel, 2003) As was pointed out by Motion Picture Association of America, a trade group of the film industry, in 2004 that a common American spends 78 hours watching videos, DVDs and video-on-demand, while he or she spent only 13 hours in the movie theatre. This has been a progression in the organization of the " time and space of spectatorship" as D. N. Rodowick refers to it. He describes how the collective audience of the film projection was organized in " unified space and linear time" (Ken Kalfus, 2003. p. 303) whereas the audience of broadcast media became dispersed into " serialized space and unified time." Now, he stresses,



the distributed computing model is increasingly characterized by "automized space and asynchronous time." (Rodowick, . p. 303)

## **Conclusion**

With the emergence of video editing soft wares, common users of internet are able to produce their own videos and edit existing ones. We have digital prints readily available to us in various forms, many of which will be sharper than the available film print. I have listed these technologies and processes simply to show that moviemaking is affected by digital technologies at a number of levels and in ways that are not obvious to the viewer and that do not necessarily change the " product" in obvious ways. Yet, each of these very available technologies has the potential to open up processes and make moviemaking easier and more mobile at all levels from Hollywood to home-movie.