Effects of mobile media on work cultural practices

Mobile media and work

Mobile media have facilitated a reconfiguration of both time and space. Discuss how mobile media have transformed the cultural practices of work.

Introduction

Over 2. 7 billion people worldwide use smartphones and more than 5. 13 billion people have their own mobile devices nowadays. According to statistics (BankMyCell. 2019), about 66. 53% of the global population now has mobile devices, and this percentage is still growing at an amazing rate. Mobile devices have gradually entered every household, people use mobile media every day, not just in our daily life, but in our work and in our study, we are unknowingly using mobile media to enrich our lives, to entertain, to share, to build intimate relationships, to communicate in real-time. It has to be admitted that mobile media is participating in and changes everything in people's daily life and work and becomes an essential component of people's life and work.

This essay focuses on the impact of mobile media on work and mainly discuss three aspects of work, workplace, people's communication mode and work efficiency, have transferred by mobile media, I will also illustrate the changes with concrete case studies.

More options for the workplace

In the past, people's workplace was confined to fixed office areas and could only communicate and cooperate in specific places. For most people in the workplace, work is a place with an office or cubicle, a computer on their

desk, surrounded by staff and all kinds of office facilities, either around with various cable, which connected to the corporate network, telephones system, or a special meeting room, their collaboration will be reduced and communication will become difficult once they leave this particular area, which could lead to the reduction of work efficiency. Now, mobile technology can address many of the barriers that may hinder people from working remotely (Deerr, A. 2017). People are increasingly using their mobile devices to connect and access the Internet, mobile media helps reduced physical boundaries and facilitate communication between remote individuals, and also provide employees with the opportunity to overcome space constraints (Bargh, J., & McKenna, K. 2004). In mobile work, the entire environment in which work takes place helps to use mobile technology (Hurme, P. 2005). Therefore, more and more mobile media and applications are appearing to help people to work remotely so that employees can work effectively without interruption.

According to the survey, the number of U. S. employees working remotely increased from 39% in 2012 to 43% in 2016 (Browne, R. 2018). In 2015, about 3. 9 million Americans were telecommuting half of the week, up 115% from 2005 (FlexJobs. 2017). After all, no place is as comfortable as home. The concept of ' workplace' has changed, mobile media gives people a new definition of physical space experience (Cabalquinto, E. 2018), now people can choose to work in their office, home, or in a ' third places' (Lindgren, S. 2017). Imagine if a person needs to look after a child at home at a particular time, then he is likely to miss the important meeting of that day, but today's mobile conferencing technology makes it no longer difficult to do both. There

is a lot of great software that supports teleconferencing, such as ezTalks. People can synchronise their work schedules with their calendars in advance so that they do not miss important meetings. With the help of these applications, people can easily deal into video meetings from their laptops, tablets, or simply use their mobile phones to easily connect to mobile media at home. Since now web conferencing has high definition video and audio quality, so people do not have a big difference in perception. During the meeting, employees can use the function of sharing the screen with annotation to visually demonstrate their ideas and presentations to the participants. Besides, the conference holder can also organise voting to collect attendees' feedback and responses. After the online conference, if some participants want to review the content or miss part of the meeting, they can use video replay to get the information they need. The capability to record also ensure that the meeting content and processes can be well documented and saved, almost all of the staff's work in the office can be done at home. With ubiquitous mobile devices, more and more cloud applications and internal software that supports remote work provide employees with greater flexibility, not only in the workplace but also in more flexible working hours, allowing people to work more actively. Studies have shown that flexible working hours can significantly increase employee satisfaction with their jobs (Orpen, C. 1981).

Changed the way employees communicate at work

More and more social networking sites are being accessed and used on mobile devices, which means that it has become daily for people to communicate with the world via mobile devices. In the past, the

communication was mostly two-dimensional or on-one-on mode, and information could not be multi-dimensionally transmitted, teamwork usually occurs on the whiteboard of the conference room. Now, mobile media solves this dilemma, allowing information to be disseminated in a divergent form, with mobile technology, people can interact and work with others who also use mobile technology, collaboration can occur in documents edited by multiple people around the world, providing employees with more efficient communication options.

For today's employees, e-mail is the most popular means of communication, with about 79% of respondents saying it is their favourite way to communicate with their colleagues around the world. Instant communication such as social media is the second most popular mode of communication (Miller, G. 2014). In addition to the above methods, the classic office software, such as Microsoft's OneNote and OnDrive, now also has mobility. They support the real-time synchronisation of files to the cloud, so that people can log in from different devices, and also support file sharing, so people can share their documents with their team members and invite them to create file online, or allow each other to annotate, propose their own ideas and modify the content. These surveys indicate that most of the communication methods in the workplace are implemented via mobile media.

Besides, there is also a lot of specialised working communication platforms, such as ProofHub or Slack, which are designed for the employees to bring team communication and collaboration into one place. These mobile applications help employees to communicate one-on-one or create

discussion groups for brainstorming. People can drag and drop their documents, images, PDFs and other files directly into groups to share with other colleagues and get feedback instantly, and also, they can exchange their ideas in real-time via text, video or other forms. Today's mobile media can ensure the timely delivery of information, thus saving a lot of unnecessary time. Mobile media as a communication and dissemination tool is critical for team members working at a distance. It is common to have team members in different time zone and on different working schedules, so this kind of mobile media help people get their work done in the required time, reducing communication barriers, makes information transmission more timely anddecentralised, and greatly increases the efficiency of internal teamwork in the working environment.

On the other hand, mobile media, such as today's social media with strong presence, also promotes interpersonal relationships at work to some extent. Although social media was originally designed for personal use, they are increasingly common throughout one's professional area (Mergel, I., & Bretschneider, S. 2013). Social media platforms provide employees with a rich virtual environment where they can socialise, communicate, collaborate andshare information with others(Treem, J., & Leonardi, P. 2013). For instance, by logging in to their personal social platform from mobile devices, they can release and share any content they like to let others know their interests and life status, which can increase the contact and communication between colleagues who share the same interests or have a common language. The use of social media for both work and personal can lead to communication with colleagues (Fusi, F., & Zhang, F. 2018). And mobile

media connect the employees into a virtual network of colleagues and contacts that is invisible from observation (Julsrud, T. E. 2005). This type of mobile media, therefore, offers new interaction and the potential to promote connections and collaboration among corporate members (Vaast, E., & Kaganer, E. 2013)

Improved work efficiency

As mentioned above, mobile work is possible now, employees can move and carry out works ' anytime, anywhere' (Vaataja, H. 2012), as long as they have mobile devices. If the work is no longer restricted by working space and time, it will undoubtedly improve the productivity and employee satisfaction of the enterprise.

On the one hand, the increase in work efficiency comes from the diversity of mobile locations. Instead of spending a lot of time on the road for just one meeting, employees who frequently travel the world can simply use e-mail to report the process to their superiors and collaborate with their colleagues through mobile software. Enterprises can choose qualified candidates through an online interview, which not only saves interviewers' time but also saves interviewee's time and energy. The company can keep in touch with customers and understand their requirements in a short time, so as to come up with better solutions and projects to meet their needs, thus reducing customers' waiting time, improving customer service and achieve satisfactory cooperation. Mobile technology enables companies to achieve unprecedented connectivity between employees, suppliers and customers (Concepts, S. G. 2013), and provide immediate feedback and response based

on the information made by others. Working people no longer have to waste a lot of time in the process of inquiring and waiting for a reply. In the digital age of mobile media, asking and answering is just a snap of the fingers. Employees can focus their time on substantive brainstorming and discussion to improve productivity.

On the other hand, the improvement of productivity is also due to the fact that mobile media changes of fixed working hours, making individual working hours more flexible and reasonable. People can do fragmented work at their preferred times, such as checking e-mails or organising work schedules while waiting for their coffee. Meanwhile, the increase in efficiency in the era of mobile media is inseparable from professional efficiency software. There are a large number of mobile calendar software with time management, people can use it to keep work content organised and plan ahead. For example, Dida application, it allows people to sync work plans, memo reminders and meeting schedules into their calendars by simply entering the time and place of the event, and allows location and reminders so they do not miss any important agenda. This kind of software also allows the schedule to be shared with colleagues, with multiple people preparing together, greatly enhancing teamwork and efficiency.

Conclusion

Mobile technology has not only changed people's daily lives but also changed the work culture. However, this change has both advantages and disadvantages. Even if mobile technology enables people to work anytime and anywhere, studies have found that these technologies help blur

boundaries, upending the practice of allocating work and personal lives to strictly defined times and places (Caporael, L. R., & Xie, B. 2003), which results in a lot of pressure and burden.

It is no longer strange for people to reply to their client's messages in the middle of the night and stay up late to discuss work plans. The silent nature of mobile e-mail does not require the recipient to be out of context, but it can still be considered rude or disruptive, means it is necessary to read and respond immediately (Spiegelman, J., & Detsky, A. 2008). Unbalanced work and personal life can have a variety of negative effects, including absenteeism, increased stress levels, reduced productivity, and the inability of some to maintain friendly relationships (Hobson, C., Delunas, L., & Kesic, D. 2001). What's more serious is that some employers use mobile phones for surveillance and harassment, which clearly shows that mobile phones are a new way of controlling (Wallis, C., Ling, R., & Horst, H. 2011). Mobile media is always there, it is 24-7 service, which does not have the feature of ' off work' so that people can use it even when they should rest, which is likely to break the balance between work and life.

Although mobile media optimises some aspects of the cultural practice of work and brings convenience and benefits to employees and enterprises, a clear line should be maintained between work and personal life. We need to acknowledge that mobile media can bring two sides to work, so companies and individuals should use mobile media moderately, the negative consequences of mobile media must be considered.

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