

New Media's Impact on Society

by

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The “Brave New World of Marketing and Communications” has heightened my awareness of how new media plays a role in impacting societal change. In my reflection of what I have learned in the course, I will attempt to relate to the cultural changes that have taken place due to in good part to the technological advances, but more importantly the way in which new media is shaping our culture because of the transformation in which we receive our information. I will also express how new media can influence our social appearance, values, and behaviors through the specific use of several new media channels and how marketing communication programs can leverage this phenomenon.

The enlightening piece that opened my eyes to the changes in mass communication thanks to the technological advances in communication devices was the explanation that Chris Anderson describes in his book [The Long Tail](#). He states that “the theory of the Long Tale is that our culture and economy is increasingly shifting away from a focus on a relatively small number of ‘hits’ (mainstream products and markets) as the head of the demand curve and toward a huge number of segments in the tail” (Scott 18). Recognizing this phenomenon, the purveyors of new media explored and then exploited their

creative juices into the delivery of the message to the users of the devices. These new channels provide segmented audiences that now consume media rather than be a part of a demographic. Because of this consumers of media have evolved into a more educated and informed creatures that consider themselves to be unique and special as Jaffe alludes to when he hints that “consumers aren’t as stupid as they used to be” (Jaffe 18). Every product has a market and every market has a channel. The new media in combination with enhanced technology has changed the way we see others as well as the way we see the world.

Anderson’s portrayal utilizing the world of scarcity model in respect to the economic viewpoint that supply and demand is governed by available channels to provide a good in a profitable manner. He surmises that “as demand shifts toward the niches, the economics of providing them improve further, and so on, creating a positive feedback loop that will transform entire industries – and the culture – for decades to come” (Anderson 26). In essence, the advent of the internet has opened a completely different profitability model that has influenced marketers into revamping the marketing strategy from mass appeal to a segmented approach.

The internet has burst the “one-size fits all” bubble that we have been accustomed to (Scott 19). And as Bianco expresses in his Business Week cover story, customization and diversity has created the shift from mass marketing to micromarketing. Newer technologies such as the world wide web and continued separation from the original three big networks morphing into literally hundreds of

new channels of media presentations, has augmented the once “universal audience” dividing groups away from the known demographics of the past into a fragmented array of consumer markets. To best answer this question, I believe that this profound comment by Bianco best explains the diminished range of prime time network advertising: “However, it no longer makes economic sense to send an advertising message to the many in hopes of persuading the few” (Bianco et al. 66).

With this in mind advertisers need to create completely different marketing communication strategies to effectively spread the brand message to a culture that has turned to the internet for social networking, informational searches, and other forms of entertainment such as imaginary avatar communities. As Scott relates to content rich Websites as being important, the importance is elaborated upon by recognizing that each individual buying persona has individual needs (Scott 122). Therefore, the content needs to be divided up accordingly by creating separate messages specifically designed for separate audiences within the media channel that it applies to. In the social network designations, it would not make sense for the executive and professional career service like The Ladders (theladders.com) to advertise on Facebook which is a friend network site, as opposed to the more appropriate Linked-In professional social network site. The more appropriate advertisements on Facebook are geared to the individual as the profile is created in the social ‘sharing’ process.

As with any ‘norm,’ however, the playing fields may become diluted as the economic downturn and subsequent recession marches on. More and more

people are turning to the internet to either create a network of people to assist in the search for a job, or build their professional networks to maintain a steady status of employment. Linked-in has been growing at a rate of over 200% a year and is mainly comprised of professionals that were hard hit from the financial sector, but millions are beginning to tune into Facebook and the friend relationship may be convoluted as people seek out new ways to connect to others to gain an edge on employment (Dutta and Frasier 2).

Keeping in mind that the writing (the message conveyed) is designed for the buyers not the ego of the editors, a marketing communications plan should create an editorial plan that is plotted for each persona. The objectives that should be aligned to an organization, as Scott alludes to, are to create compelling Web content to reach targeted audiences. In other words, it is important to lead Web site guests and targeted audiences to “where they help you reach your actual goals” (Scott 128).

Goal seeking organizations can benefit from viral marketing communications programs. Viral Marketing is perhaps the most compelling of the new media channels in because of its alluring, compelling, and infectious nature. It is, however, most difficult to replicate for all of the same reasons. Back in the summer of 2006 two fellows by the name of Fritz Grobe and Stephen Voltz performed a radical video experiment with Mentos candy and Diet Coke on their eepybird Web site. What followed was truly a blessing for Mentos and Diet Coke because the advertising dollars that would have had to be spent to get this type of exposure from traditional means would have been astronomical. However,

thanks to exposure of over four million people who subsequently viewed the video in a three week period, this classic viral phenomenon drew in the mainstream media as everyone wanted to see the geyser-like eruptions caused by the reaction of the candy and the soft drink when combined in large quantities (Scott 91).

After describing the phenomenon of viral marketing by describing the Mentos and Diet Coke/Eepybird experience, Scott captured its definition as “having others tell your story for you” and that it is “one of the most exciting and powerful ways to reach your audiences” (Scott 100). Scott continued by relating that Perfetti Van Melle, through Pat Healy their VP of Marketing, recognized that there was a huge opportunity to exploit the phenomena created by Grobe and Voltz’s Diet Coke / Mentos video. Healy linked the video to the Mentos site and offered creators support and launched a video contest that included prizes that was targeted to the very audience that in all likelihood would participate. The new videos were viewed by close to a million viewers and one can conclude that Perfetti Van Melle were very tuned into what was going on and capitalized in a big way (Scott 95).

Our society has been directly impacted through the new media channels created by the advancing information technologies. We as a society have become immune to a seemingly endless barrage of commercial messages that we endure from the moment we wake until the time we bed down for the evening from all media channels. As Jaffe describes, we have grown accustomed to these signals and found ways to ignore them, much like “white noise” (Jaffe 14).

Advertisers in the new age that we are immersed in will have to emerge from the waters of the egocentric branding and begin to deviate from messages that are not properly equipped to navigate through the vast and infinite challenges that cyberspace and its technology presents. We are learning that our culture shifts with the technological changes that are available. Therefore, marketing communications programs must also morph accordingly in a mode of constant transference to properly promote ideas within the proper web content.

Organizations that cannot move in this direction will eventually fail because I believe that they will become socially unacceptable in that they will not fit into the technologically evolved culture.

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