

BA Communication Arts

Rhizomatic & DIY Media

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1 Rhizomatic and DIY Media

1.1 Introduction - DIY Media

Not all alternative media is activist or oppositional. Instead a significant contributing part of what is often called alternative media can be classified as DIY Media. According to Kevin Howley, DIY media can include “publications such as zines and personal Web sites that may have little overt political content,” but which gains much of its relevance from the way that DIY media shares “organisational structures and cultures of production associated with alternative media practice.” These practices are based on “non-hierarchical, nonprofessional, and non-commercial modes of cultural production,” that “blur the line between media producers and media audiences,” and are thus a “critical step toward democratising communication” (Howley, 2010, p. 18). However, as David Gauntlett points out, the everyday idea of DIY is also associated with “home improvement – putting up shelves, assembling flat-pack wardrobes, and fixing drainpipes oneself, without professional help.” Gauntlett calls this a “suburban kind of phenomenon,” and a mundane practice that has little to do with movements of political radicalism (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 49). Moreover, in the purist concept of DIY culture, that is often associated with the New Left, DIY culture is an outcome of *the gift economy*, which as Fox describes, is the “absolute antithesis of the commodity,” (Fox, 2005) and therefore a significant challenge to the dominance of the market economy. In this utopian form, according to Fox, in the gift economy “there could be no compromise between tribal authenticity and bourgeois alienation,” because “after the social revolution, the potlatch would completely supplant the commodity” (Fox, 2005). Such utopianism is said to have inspired many radical activists to underpin their efforts at sustaining community, alternative and DIY forms of media, because its simple presence would signify an alternative to the dominant state or market economies that are usually formed around positivist forms of transactionalism, rather than the simple act of people rubbing along together and working in their mutual interest. The apotheosis of this view comes with the new economy of cyberspace and the proposal that the networks of association that are available through the Internet will advance a different form of social democracy, but as Fox notes, “money-commodity and gift relations are not just in conflict with each other, but also co-exist in symbiosis.” (Fox, 2005).

1.2 Anti-Consumerism

DIY culture, as David Gauntlett notes, is often manifest in the “lo-fi” music and zine culture, influenced in part by the punk scene.” This is a scene that rejects the

Glossy, highly produced, celebrity-oriented mainstream of popular culture, and its replacement with a knowingly nonglossy, often messily produced alternative which is much

less bothered about physical beauty, and declares an emphasis on content rather than style (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 53).

DIY media, furthermore, has a stimulating ethos that challenges the blandishments of celebrity culture, and the consumerist pop that is championed by “independent and creative minds who care enough to go against the grain and produce music, art, magazines and literature that is truly unique – whether it is likely to sell or not” (Gauntlett, 2011; Spencer, 2005). Much of which is produced not knowing if it will be bought or not. This is a form of cultural production that clearly draws on passions for craft and individual projects that depends on peoples willingness to “make, fix, and repair things for themselves,” and therefore has a good deal in common with “sustainability and environmentalism.” As David Gauntlett notes, it “connects with anti-consumerism – the rejection of the idea that the answer to all of our needs and problems can be purchased from shops” (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 57). Indeed, the ethos of DIY culture might be said to run even deeper, as Chris Atton attests, “better than ‘DIY culture’ we should [perhaps] call it ‘DiO culture’ – Do it Ourselves” (Atton, 2002, p. 120), because there is an essential element of communal production in the process of making things. Furthermore, as Alexander Halavais suggests, DIY culture can be a “bridge between the personal and the communal – between do-it-yourself and do-it-ourselves,” because DIY culture offers an experience that can be “found across different forms of participatory culture.” “Creative work,” according to Halavais, has to “walk a line between public interaction and isolation” (Halavais, 2013, p. 113), and as a result makes a “declaration” of “self-identity” that invites “others to engage in a dialogue about that identity.” The communities that are formed around self-produced publications, like fanzines, address the idea that audiences and cultural production are seen in their “totality,” and instead indicates that there are “sub-groups” who can talk across topics, and who can declare their interest in common, that is separate from the dominant repertoires of cultural production (Waltz, 2005, p. 80). As Mitzi Waltz points out

Fanzines are small, self-produced magazines. They’re usually a non-commercial venture, and can cover almost anything that those who make them find interesting – although music (especially punk rock) and science-fiction fandom are probably the biggest topics (Waltz, 2005, p. 29).

Therefore, as a community of interest, DIY media is a mechanism for representing a community to itself, a form of self-representation that informs and instructs members and newcomers of the aims and dominant ideas of the community, and which serves to “develop common identities and shared purposes.” DIY media is therefore “used strategically to project the message and image of a

community outside itself into a specific public sphere as part of a campaign to achieve a predetermined set of goals” (Fontes, 2010, p. 383). Putting people as producers onto an equal footing through the networks that are developed, and the discussions that take place, DIY media emphasises the autonomy of the different producer groups and suggests that the organic development of the “democratic process, shared resources, and the use of multiple languages,” all help to enhance the collective accomplishments of the people involved (Fontes, 2010, p. 378). In DIY culture, transparency, freely given core material (i.e. Open Source and Creative Commons copyright licences), are maintained on the basis that they can be freely accessed and archived. The Internet has enhanced this collaborative potential and is creating a cultural space in which the publishing environment can be seen to be changing from one of scarcity to one of information overload. As Mitzi Walz suggests, this is leading to problems of fragmentation and implosion as people’s attention spans are dominated by increased use of electronic media, such as television and the Internet. According to Waltz,

We are in an atmosphere, an immersive environment, though television, the internet, street signs – we’re inundated with a huge mass of emotionally overwhelming brand names, and it’s too much to process (Waltz, 2005, p. 83).

DIY media, therefore, represents a strategy for coping with these overwhelming forces, the sheer volume of information, the diversity of its sources, and the unrelenting pressure of commercial media culture, means that people have to find alternative and novel ways to make sense of the mediascape they are embedded in, are expected to cope with, and thereby develop strategies as independent agents. Chris Atton suggests that DIY media, as an organisational principal, and as a set of cultural forms, such as *culture jamming*, act as “commentaries, critiques and satires on aspects of the mass media” (Atton, 2002, p. 44), and therefore grasp the potential for political or social transformation. As Duncombe attests,

The content of many zines is hardly politically or socially transforming in itself. Their value proceeds not simply from their content – that is, not from the work’s ‘attitude toward the oppressive relations of production that mark our society, but [from] the work’s position within these relations’ (Atton, 2002, p. 23; Duncombe, 1997, p. 315).

DIY media hence celebrates the *craft* of production, the skilled practices of individual producers who are engaged in making media for small-scale and traditional audiences. David Gauntlett

characterises craft as something often “associated with traditional and rather twee,” which as Gauntlett argues, might suggest a “newer, cool approach to making things yourself, as seen in the recent rise of knitting, ‘craft guerrilla’ fairs, DIY culture, and other trendy craft activities” (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 22), hence accounting for, and explaining the growth of media that is posted online to sites and services like YouTube. Being ‘creative’, moreover, has acquired social cachet, and has become a signifier of taste (Bourdieu, 1984), with the accompanying *anti-sensibility* that not everything that people consume has to be polished and professionally produced. Instead, DIY media suggests that there is a desire for content that is imaginative and which may challenge the norms and expectations that people have about what creative forms of production are (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 78).

1.3 Rhizomatic Media

As has now been established, alternative and community media can be viewed from a number of different perspectives, both as an oppositional form of media and as a form of participatory media. Baily *et al* suggest that “alternative media are articulated in many different ways – not only in relation to the mainstream media, but also as community media, as civil society media, and as rhizomatic media” (Bailey, Cammaerts, & Carpenter, 2008, p. xii). The concept of the rhizome is most closely associated with the work of Deleuze and Guattari, who suggest that rhizomes are a useful metaphor for the “juxtaposition of rhizomatic and arbolescent thinking.” An arbolescent structure is said to be linear, and relies on “hierarchical and sedentary” thinking, and is said to resemble the “tree-like structure of a genealogy,” with “branches that continue to subdivide into smaller and lesser categories” (Bailey et al., 2008; Wray, 1998). The arbolescent is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the attitude of the mainstream, whereas the rhizome is “non-linear, anarchic and nomadic” (Bailey et al., 2008; Deleuze & Guattari, 2013, p. 19). So, while the rhizome connects different points at any other point, the arbolescent structure, in contrast, must follow its established linear connections. Underpinning alternative, collaborative and community media, then, are links with civil society that form *intersection points* with other structures. So, rather than viewing community media and alternative media as fixed, it becomes possible to see these as “organisational structures where alternative media organisations can remain grounded in local communities and become simultaneously engaged in translocal networks.” These translocal networks are fluid and diverse, and have been established so that they avoid the “dichotomised positioning of alternative media in relationship to the local and the global,” or the market and the progressive, or the consumer and the producer. Thus the rhizome highlights a different way to speculate about how the “local and global

touch and strengthen each other within alternative media” (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 27). As Chris Atton suggests, this “points to non-deterministic perspective with regard to media, technology and society, as well as a breaking down of the dichotomies between different kinds of media, as implied by the metaphor of the rhizome (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 146). Which render “rhizomatic enterprises fragile and make them liable to collapse, disruption and incoherence” (Atton, 2002, p. 149), and which itself gives way to “open (discursive) spaces for the more fluid aspects of mainstream media identities.” This is a process of *detritorialisation* in which the mainstream media acts in a linked relation with alternative media, because the process is more fluid, more problematic and vulnerable, and with increasingly sequestered base positions. As Bailey *et al* suggest,

The rhizomatic approach can help to support a more agonistic relationships with mainstream media and with the market and the state, reducing the antagonism that has for years hounded these media organisations (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 33).

Community and alternative media organisations, moreover, tend to promote a working orientation that is non-hierarchical rather than vertical, and as a result those organisations that are horizontally structured have to incorporate more widespread and continuous deliberation. This would appear inefficient to a traditional, corporate and vertically managed organisation, but as Bailey *et al* point out, communities that are committed to participation “have to deal with a certain degree of inefficiency sometimes,” as long as this inefficiency is not seen to be undermining their functioning and the realisation of their objectives, or perverting their objectives” (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 25). Rhizomatic clusters, moreover, are focused on diversity, heterogeneity, ad-hoc organisational arrangements and network interconnections. They use a wide variety of different forms of technology, and are agnostic about standards, so they are able to recognise a wide range of positions, while also utilising the multiplicity of identities and sense-making routines that people use to steer through community life. Those organisations that are rigid and homogenous are not likely to be able to adapt and respond to changes in the social world, such as the relationships between the local and the global. Nor are they able to respond to, or “overcome the confinement of locality,” and as such have very little to say about the “elusive and diversified” forms of engagement that are typical of alternative forms of media (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 124). The point is, according to Bailey *et al*, that “creating an arborescent structure would simply imply the creation of a copy of mainstream and large-scale media, and would not generate a map, with its multiple entryways and adaptability” (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 124). The rhizome emphasises “connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, and a signifying rupture,” that allows for complexity, and which makes no attempt to smooth community

and network relationships into simplistic structures or bonds. This means that community-based media can “remain grounded in local communities and become simultaneously engaged in translocal networks characterised by the fluid articulation of media organisation.” This approach, therefore, becomes key to avoiding the “dichotomised positioning of alternative media in relationship to the local and the global,” (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 124), as each are recognised for the role that they play in opening up ways to think about how each can strengthen the other within alternative, collaborative and community media fields.

This is about transgressing boundaries, and subverting or parodying the mainstream, i.e. culture-jamming and other forms of “structurelessness” that deny the sense of control that is usually associated with arbolic media. Direction isn’t going to come from centralised control, but rather from the freedom to create, and so the rhizome can be thought of as emblematic of the freedom that emerges from disinvesting in structure. However, as Chris Atton suggests, that “freedom from structure” is no “guarantee of freedom from the creation of elites or stars within the movement.” According to Atton these will “arise without the movement taking deliberate, rational action to create them,” which suggests that it will be more difficult to disperse these elites “since they are already outside its control” (Atton, 2002, p. 99). Hence, the variety of actors in the rhizome gives rise to a multiplicity of “political strategies adopting cultural and political jamming,” (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 147) that test the conceptual boundaries of the mainstream media forms, and which subvert the dominant meanings that are prevailing. Culture-jamming, however, and according to Bailey *et al*

Simultaneously shows the instability and fluidity of meaning, and the impossibility of fixed meanings, whether they are hegemonic or counterhegemonic. Secondly, at the level of social networks, jamming shows the complexity of these social networks, and the many fluid interconnections between civil society actors, state actors and market actors (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 138).

Old forms of media give way, therefore, to network based forms of media: the meme, the virus, spreadable media, and such (Clay, 2011; Shifman, 2014). Media is shared between participants in the network and the community, so the Internet plays a pivotal role in adding to the sense of fragmentation and discontinuity. Meanings resonate as parody while “reversing, transgressing or subverting” (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 139) the established approaches to meaningful accomplishments, such as “using/accepting and partially abusing/rejecting the tools of communication from the state and the market” (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 141). In these circumstances emphasis has to be given to

improving the fluidity of communication and to cultivating flow through the networks so that it will enhance the independent, unplanned and diverse accomplishments of different alternative media producers and activists. As long as these producers are making content that is attractive and comprehensible, as it is understood under the mantle of DIY media, then there is every chance that it will spread a sense of dissent formed through “just plain old independent thinking” (Atton, 2002, p. 127).

1.4 Widening the Scope

In anticipating the importance and role of alternative and community media, then, a number of concerns might be raised that are illustrative of the general state of understanding of scholarly studies of alternative and community media, because, as Simon Order suggests, “theorists should look at alternative media for what it is, rather than what it is not” (Order, 2012, p. 74). In the first instance there is a concern that “alternative media coverage largely speaks only to its own community” (Order, 2012, p. 71) and that there is a tendency for accounts of alternative and community media to focus on “only one aspect of community media activity” (Rennie, 2006, p. 24), rather than looking at a broader range of examples and experiences. Faris & Meire suggest that this is because there is a “lack of mixed methods research in the study of digital activism” (Faris & Meier, 2013, p. 203), which inhibits research in the field. And as Carlos Fontes suggests, it isn’t

Productive to theorise alternative media solely on the basis of their capacity to effect major social changes or challenge, reform, or preplace mainstream media, because such analysis leads to defeatist conclusions and overlooks the real tangible impact alternative media practices have on the social, political, and cultural fabric of communities (Fontes, 2010, p. 382).

As has already been stated, the context of studies of different alternative media situations is of crucial importance, especially as they are relevant to the experiences of activists and producers creating content and negotiating intersubjective meanings. Fontes suggests that media scholars should pay attention to how alternative media “challenge, at least implicitly actual concentrations of power,” in order that they are able to build a wider picture of an

“Alternative media theory to inform broader media practices in any relevant manner and understand the significance of key events within the context of prospective views of different media landscape” (Fontes, 2010, p. 382).

This stress on context is about assessing the practical and pragmatic *impact* and *value* of strategies that do not achieve traditional publication outcomes, but are instead invested-in for their ability to “make alternative stories visible and to suggest possibilities for innovation in [media] conventions” (Dreher, 2010, p. 149). Keeping in mind, meanwhile, that as Kevin Howley states, social “movements require press coverage far more than the press needs social movements” (Howley, 2010, p. 234), it is important to recognise that the purposeful democratic undertaking that alternative and community media seeks to achieve can be, as Ellie Rennie suggests, a cohesive undertaking “in its own right” (Rennie, 2006, p. 51). An undertaking that moves beyond the simple binary of micro and macro issues, and instead views “alternative media as a broad spectrum of practices with a set of common principles that are expressed to different degrees in small group settings, communities, specific publics spheres, social movements, and larger national and global arenas.” The challenge, therefore, is to overcome scholarly inertia and to maintain an observational presence in the field of experience, and to report on the “interrelations, breaks, and continuities between alternative media practices taking place at various levels in a given conjecture” (Fontes, 2010, p. 382). This means drawing on some central themes and issues that signify and encompass alternative media as a recognisable area of study. Carlos Fontes identifies how these can be ordered: firstly, alternative media is about access to production technologies and a full sense of participation in the routines of production; secondly, alternative media pursues “democratic social relations of media production and decision making” in the way that it is used and in the way that content is produced; thirdly, alternative media focuses on “issues and perspectives that are neglected by the mainstream; which means, fourthly, that at its centre, alternative media practices are steeped in an ethic of social solidarity and resistance to oppression; and finally, that in order to differentiate itself with commercial media, alternative media have a “not-for-profit orientation” (Fontes, 2010, p. 383). Fontes suggestion is that alternative media can help attend and build individual and collective identities, and therefore serves the function of consciousness-raising that leads participants on to other forms of political activism.

1.5 Hybrid Voices

It is against this backdrop, then, that alternative, collaborative and community media can be recognised as having a great deal to offer, despite the fact that the media in general remains “an enterprise dominated by commercial considerations” (Waltz, 2005, p. 132). The challenge for alternative and community media, as such, is to carve out its own identity separately from other

forms of access and collaborative media, to move beyond the purely local to become a “masterful promoter of itself and global community” (Rennie, 2006, p. 52). For, as Simon Order suggests, “if alternative media are to produce critical content that truly challenges the mainstream, they must improve their public visibility and audience reach” (Order, 2012, p. 76). Mitzi Waltz suggests that this isn’t necessarily about seeking to counter the “work of some all-powerful elite conspiracy,” but rather, it is an opportunity to recognise the active role that participants in alternative media make, and the contributions that will be appreciated. As Waltz suggests, this is because

Alternative media workers are usually active participants, because of their propensity to reflect and promote whatever’s fresh and exciting. Those in the activist media, too, play the game in their efforts to express radical ideas to more people. The alternative and activist press is a key factor in popularising new ideas and formats; indeed, that’s one of the main reasons some media products in this category are published at all (Waltz, 2005, p. 110).

So, alternative media is constituted by a hybridised set of voices that have been “constructed from a range of contributions,” including, as Chris Atton suggests, the “movement-intellectual, the activist, the native reporter, the everyday narrative, the ‘guerrilla semiotics’ of the collage; collecting writing and editing and anonymised multiple contributions.” Taken as a whole these different roles represent an effort to “de-homogenise alternative media as a single field of production,” and instead to shape a consolidated view of a “single alternative public sphere.” (Atton, 2002, p. 151). A public sphere in which alternative media is able to “bring together critical perspectives that exist in [our] community in a positive, useful way” (Waltz, 2005, p. 107). This takes the idea of the audience away from the singular and bounded, toward the sense that audiences are active, starting from an individual vantage point and place of engagement, and which are themselves defined by the types of “everyday social action” that a “creator and communicator” can muster then producing “symbolic materials,” especially those materials that are “out of that everyday,” and which recognise that the audience for alternative media is also “at once a media producer, a witness and a media critic,” and that audiences are now expected to be “diffuse and divergent” (Atton, 2002, p. 151).

1.6 Audiences

Central to the study of media forms, practices and institutions is the concept of the audience. Much has been written about audience composition and theory, such as the influential work of Ian Ang and Sonia Livingstone (Ang, 1996; Livingstone, 2005), which suggests that mass media forms are not

simply a homogenous 'bloc,' but are instead an area of "considerable audience activity" that "vividly demonstrates tangible audience power" (Howley, 2005, p. 3). Mainstream scholarly debates about audiences often suggests that viewers and listeners of mass media are "united through their shared consumption of broadcasting media, film, music, advertising, and the Internet, and are the target of mainstream hegemonic media institutions (Gillespie, 2005, p. 2). Moreover, this discussion can be divided into two further traditions, as Bailey *et al* suggest, on the one hand is the "effects" tradition that "considers audiences as passive consumers," and television, radio, the press, etc., as powerful mediums "with the ability to influence them." On the other hand, however, there is the tradition that

Considers audiences as active participants, that is, people making critical and/or oppositional readings of media texts, therefore contributing to an ongoing struggle in a process of 'conflict and dialogue' over the meaning of hegemonic media texts (Bailey et al., 2008, p. 64).

What unites both traditions, however, is an underlying assumption that the "composition of an audience can be known," and that the *attitudes* and *dispositions* that audiences have towards media texts can be quantified and "inferred from audience feedback – about subject matter, about language, about length." In the instrumental model of the audience, as Sonia Livingstone notes,

The task for audience research becomes that of charting the possibilities and problems for communication, or relations among people, in so far as these are undermined or facilitated, managed or reconstituted by the media (Livingstone, 1998, p. 251).

However, as Frances Gray suggests, questions have to be raised about "what transforms a quantified audience into listeners who then become an 'audience'" who are capable of "responding with group excitement." As Gray argues, this process is "always ultimately, defined by those listeners" (Grey, 2003, p. s54). As Henry Jenkins advises,

This approach may still include quantitative measures of how frequently and broadly content travels, but it makes important actively listening to the way media texts are taken up by audiences through audience interactions (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013, p. 6).

What is relevant here, however, are two key questions that Daniel Dayson suggests are crucial to any study of community media, because they distinguish the "type of sociation" that informs the concept of the audience that are applied in formulating a strategic view of the operation of community media forms. According to Dayson, either audiences are regarded in collective terms, i.e.

as a mass of consumers; or audiences are conceived as a *public* that plays an active role in the production and circulation of meanings associated with the texts that are produced. Dayson asks, therefore, what “other social groupings or communities (be they ideological, religious, cultural, national, etc.)” might be enacted from these associations, and how can observers seek to distinguish the process that turns “audiences into communities or communities into audiences” (Dayson, 1998, p. 110)? Furthermore, Kevin Howley suggests that both audiences and producers of media content are “complicit in accepting and circulating the notion that community media [is] aesthetically inferior to mainstream media form and content,” as community media is often characterised as “socially and politically irrelevant for popular audiences.” Howley argues that the reluctance of media scholars to engage with community media is in part informed by the “biases and misconceptions” that are prevalent in both audiences and scholarship communities, which prolong the reluctance of both to engage more fully with the “phenomenon of community media” (Howley, 2005, p. 36). Besides, and as Sonia Livingstone suggests, the way that these debates are framed in audience research studies is inherently reflective of the differences in the theoretical expectations and the different traditions of audience study. On the one hand, according to Livingstone, audiences are either seen as being “increasingly fragmented,” while on the other hand they are thought to be increasingly “homogenous.” Both readings, according to Livingstone are “primarily normative or resistant,” and reflect the extent to which scholars have first-hand knowledge of “how far [...] actual viewing practices (e.g. zipping and zapping)” go in undermining the dominant “textual and generic structuring” models of analysis that seeks continuity in the readings and meanings that are produced by audiences. As Livingstone suggests, “clearly it becomes important to relocate these findings of difference within a broader theoretical context” (Livingstone, 1998, p. 244). So, rather than viewing audiences, as discrete and self-contained, it is possible, as Livingstone suggests, to conceive of audiences in plural, and thus develop an account of audienceship that is

Conceived relationally as an analytic concept relevant to, and providing links across, relations among people and media at all levels from the macro economic/cultural to the individual/psychological (Livingstone, 1998, p. 251).

This phenomenon of audienceship is therefore one of accomplishment and grounded practices, that are based on the routines and repertoires of emerging intersubjective social action. Audiences, in short, have to *learn* to be audiences, as much as they have to be *declared* an audience. This is a process of embedded and learnt social practices and routines that become recognised and established over time. As Alexander Halavais describes,

The first audiences of every new communication technology are those who create with them; not just the inventors themselves ('Watson, come here!') but the waves of early users of the technology... The simple fact that a technology is networked rather than broadcast does not ensure its use towards democratic ends (Halavais, 2013, p. 110).

With the introduction of new communication and social media technologies, then, there is an opportunity to examine how audiences emerge as a recognised social phenomenon. The shift towards network communication suggests, moreover, that audiences are now being conceived in terms that are distinctive and novel, as there is a wider incorporation of active participation under the name of User Generated Content (Ferne et al., 2009; Ochoa & Duval, 2008; Wall, 2014). This shift is demonstrated to the extent that Dan Gillmor describes this phenomenon as "the former audience," because people are themselves increasingly equipped with the tools of communication, and according to Gillmor, have started to engage with forms of journalism, for example, that are open to "unexpected" and "endless ideas," and "in some cases superb, forms of journalism" (Gillmor, 2006, p. 238). As Gillmor explains,

The former audience has the most important role in this new era: they must be active users of news, and not mere consumers. The Net should be the ally of thought and nuance, not a booster shot for knee-jerk reaction. An informed citizenry cannot sit still for more of the same. It must demand more, and be part of the larger conversation. We will lose a great deal if this does not occur (Gillmor, 2006, p. 238).

While Gillmor might be mistaken in asserting that the "the Internet is the first medium owned by the audience," and suggesting that the internet is "the first medium to give the audience a voice" (Gillmor, 2006, p. 111), Gillmor does usefully point towards a wider sense of changed expectations that have become relevant as the amount of information that is available to people and enterprises as they circulate stories and media online has grown (Hermida & Thurman, 2007). As W. James Potter suggests:

The amount of information available has fundamentally changed the audience experience with the media. No longer is there a problem with information access; the problem is now how to adapt to a flood of messages aggressively competing for our attention (Potter, 2013, p. 234).

Moreover, what the alternative and on-line publishing practices that employs information technologies has also been able to do, as Chris Atton suggests, is "reduce social distance, to enable the personal and the interpersonal, even to erase the notion of audience or readership" altogether (Atton, 2002, p. 77).

1.7 Summary – DIY & Rhizomatic Media

The challenge, then, is to situate forms of community and collaborative media within a descriptive framework that accounts for the messy and contentious nature of their operations, rather than forcing a structure onto what are otherwise emergent practices. Eric Raymond illustrates this problem with his analogy of the Cathedral and the Bazaar, in which he outlines how systems thinking and organisational management of communication cultures is challenged by the often incomprehensible and eclectic emergence of social interactions that are channelled through dispersed communication networks (Raymond, 2001). The need to formulate and anticipate the new vocabularies that account for, and describe, this shift in communicative capability is complementary to, and part of the process of finding out about, and helping to develop new communicative tools, literacies and vocabularies that can help people to engage meaningfully in these situations. The final section of this discussion takes forward the consequence of this shift, as it pivots into the field of participative cultures defined through tactical assertions, civic negotiations and ethical routines of practice.

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