

TECH1002 -17 Social Media & Technology

Lecture Twenty-Three - Exam Revision

1 Exam Structure & Format

Section A: Compulsory

- Network Culture
- Collaboration
- Play & Gamification
- Participation

Section B: Four from Eight

- Affordances & Constraints
- Spreadable Media
- Collective Intelligence
- Future Media
- Multimodality
- Media Sharing
- Music Sharing & Participation Power
- Cultural Ownership

2 Reading

Delwiche, A & Henderson, J.J. (Eds.), *The Participatory Cultures Handbook*. London: Routledge.
Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. (2013). *Spreadable Media*. New York: New York University Press.
Jones, R. H., & Hafner, C. A. (2012). *Understanding Digital Literacies*. London: Routledge.
Rheingold, H. (2012). *Net Smart - How to Thrive Online*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[Look for the [E] on the lecture notes section on the TECH1002 DMU Commons Wiki Page]

Past Papers:

<http://www.library.dmu.ac.uk/Resources/ExamNet/> [Search for TECH1002]

3 Question Styles

- The questions ask you to 'state' or 'identify.'
- The questions relate to what is discussed or described in each of the chapter sections that are identified in the weekly reading suggestions.
- The questions do not call for you to 'speculate', 'explain' or 'discuss' the relative merits of these issues.
- The questions do not call for you to give your own personal opinion or to relate these issues to your own personal experience.

4 Answer Styles

- Answers can be written as bullet-points.
- Answers should state clearly and precisely the main points or issues that are described in the suggested chapters – no more and no less.

- Answers should not be discursive, i.e. they do not have to attempt to debate the relative merits of an issue, unless this is undertaken in the chapter on which the question is based.
- Answers can provide impersonal examples that are founded in verifiable reported observation, i.e. in the mainstream media, but they should not be speculative or subjective, i.e. based on your own opinions or made-up stories.
- Answers should make an objective and specific point, and should not relate to an overtly general view or your personal experience.
- Think of your answers as if you are writing a Wikipedia entry and stick to the facts.

5 Section A - Compulsory

(Answer Four question from this section)

[These topics were covered in lecture Twenty-Two]

5.1 Network Culture

We live in a world, according to Howard Rheingold, that is dominated by networks.

- Think about what is different about social life in online networks?

5.2 Collaboration

According to Jason Mittell “wikis have become one of the hallmarks tools of the participatory Internet.”

- Can you identify what the key attributes of participation are in wiki use?

5.3 Play & Gamification

Electronic games, according to Jones and Hafner, have evolved to be rich multimedia experiences based on complex problem solving, often integrated with a narrative or with other players who can interact in real time.

- Think about what the main attributes of video games and how they are different to traditional forms of media?

5.4 Participation

Jenkins, Ford & Green explain how media is being transformed both by technology and by the expectations of audiences, who now want a greater degree of “meaningful participation.”

- If media is now more about participation, what are the characteristics of social media that enhance the participatory experience?

6 Section B

(Answer Four question from this section)

6.1 Affordances & Constraints

Affordances & Constrains – Jones & Hafner - Chapter One.

Jones and Hafner identify how digital technologies have brought about “new things for us to do” with media.

- In what way do memes offer new media affordances and new media constraints?

Jones and Hafner identify how digital technologies have brought about “new things for us to do” with media. This includes things like “blogging, mashing, modding, and memeing.” (Jones & Hafner, 2012, p. 1).

Digital communication, according to Jones and Hafner have brought about new practices of media production and representation that requires people to learn “new abilities and skills, new ways of thinking, and new methods of managing their relationships with others.” (Jones & Hafner, 2012, p. 1).

According to Jones and Hafner these new techniques of media production and media engagement affect the way that:

- People make meanings with digital texts.
- People relate to one another.
- How people form social identities.
- The kinds of actions that people enact.
- The way that we think about who we are and how we live in the world.

Jones and Hafner suggest that “the best way to become more competent users of technologies is to become more critical and reflective about how we use [media technologies] in our everyday lives, the kind of things that they allow us to do, and the kinds of things that they don’t allow us to do” (Jones & Hafner, 2012, p. 1).

Jones and Hafner make reference to Marshal McLuhan, who questioned how the media tools that we have to hand can be thought of as tools that enable us to “do new things, think in new ways, express new kinds of meanings, establish new kinds of relationships and be new kinds of people” (Jones & Hafner, 2012, p. 3).

The challenge, according to Jones and Hafner is to work out what and how these new tools also “prevent us from doing other things, of thinking in other ways, of having other kinds of relationships and of being other kinds of people.” (Jones & Hafner, 2012, p. 3).

In reference to Marshal McLuhan, Jones and Hafner point out how “all tools bring with them new affordances and constraints. According to McLuhan, “while new technologies extend certain parts of us, they amputate other parts” (Jones & Hafner, 2012, p. 3).

6.2 Spreadable Media

Spreadable Media – Jenkins – Chapter Five.

According to Jenkins, Ford & Green, “successful creators understand the strategic and technical aspects they need to master in order to create content more likely to spread, and they think about what motivates participants to share information and to build relationships with the communities shaping its circulation” (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013, p. 196).

- What are the main attributes of spreadable media?

In today’s media landscape, according to Jenkins, Ford & Green, it is harder to answer questions about the way that media circulates because audiences are no longer happy with the legacy routines of media consumption. For media producers this has introduced an increased level of uncertainty as media producers seek to create content that might resonate with audiences.

In the past, according to Jenkins, Ford & Green, media producers have sought to ‘overproduce’ and ‘overformat’ content and communication about this content, in order to manage the increased levels of unpredictability associated with more spreadable media. Likewise, the focus on “digital sharing” associated with new forms of network and social media offer audiences new affordances and technical opportunities to increase the range of content that they consume or interact with.

According to Jenkins, Ford & Green, content is more likely to be shared if it is:

- Available when and where audiences want it.
- Is portable.
- Is easily reusable in a variety of ways.
- Is relevant to multiple audiences.
- Is part of a steady stream of material.

Success in creating content that spreads, according to Jenkins, Ford and Green, is based on the idea that “in creating material people want to spread... some attention to the patterns and motivations of media circulation” must be given. These patterns, according to Jenkins, Ford and Green, are to be found in the “meanings people draw from content.” And while it might not be “readily apparent why people are doing what they are doing” media producers have to increasingly strive to “understand a person’s or community’s motivation and interest” in texts that are likely to spread.

6.3 Collective Intelligence

Collective Intelligence – Rheingold – Chapter Four.

The benefit of collaborative and collective action, according to Howard Rheingold, is that people are able to coordinate, share, and pay attention to their common goals.

- Can you identify what the main features of online collective intelligence are?

Howard Rheingold outlines how “mass collaboration has transformed not only the way people use the internet but also how information is found” (Rheingold, 2012, p. 148). According to Rheingold it is now common that information, systems and media are now designed, produced and shared collaboratively within virtual communities.

Rheingold suggests that the “knowledgeable digital citizen ought to know how virtual communities, wikis, and other varieties of mass collaboration work – and how to join in the fun” (Rheingold, 2012,

p. 148). Mass collaboration is seen by Rheingold as a way of conducting the business of human endeavour in a way that is more effective, more engaging and more widespread.

While Rheingold suggests that “competition is still important,” he suggests that it is likewise becoming increasingly important to “make room for what we now know about cooperative arrangements and complex interdependencies in ecosystems, economies and societies” (Rheingold, 2012, p. 149).

According to Rheingold virtual communities are “technologies of cooperation” (Rheingold, 2012, p. 151) that enable people to collaborate more effectively because they are able to coordinate, share and give attention to their common goals. As Rheingold describes, “collaborators develop and agree on common goals, share responsibility and work together to achieve those goals, and contribute to resources to the effort” (Rheingold, 2012, p. 154).

Rheingold describes Elinor Ostrom’s principles of collaborative participation in virtual communities that override “basic social dilemmas by constructing systems of norms and self-policing social contract” between collaborators (Rheingold, 2012, p. 152).

A self-governing group, according to Ostrom, is one that takes account of several emergent design issues:

- Groups boundaries are clearly defined.
- Rules governing the use of collective goods are well matched to local needs and conditions.
- Most individuals affected by the rules can participate in modifying the rules.
- The right of community members to devise their own rules is respected by external authorities.
- A system for monitoring member’s behaviour exists; the community members themselves undertake this monitoring.
- A graduated system of sanctions is used.
- Community members have access to low-cost conflict resolution mechanisms.
- For common pool resources that are parts of larger systems: appropriation, provision, monitoring, enforcement, conflict resolution, and governance activities are organised in multiple layers of nested enterprises” (Rheingold, 2012, p. 152).

According to Rheingold, knowing the difference between the terms “coordination, cooperation and collaboration” is essential to develop working strategies for collective action (Rheingold, 2012, p. 153).

The benefit of collaborative and collective action, according to Rheingold, is that because people are able to coordinate, share, and pay attention to their common goals, they are able to create “something that none of the collaborating parties could have benefited from without collaboration.” This is because “collaborators develop and agree on common goals, share responsibility and work together to achieve those goals, and contribute resources to the effort” (Rheingold, 2012, p. 154).

6.4 Future Media

Future Media: Delwiche & Henderson – Chapter 25.

Paul A. Taylor suggests that we should adopt a critical attitude to digital technology that questions the relationship between technical access and the quality of interactivity and participation.

- What do you think are the challenges involved with ‘clictivism’?

Paul A. Taylor suggests that we should adopt a critical attitude to digital technology that questions the relationship between technical access and the quality of interactivity and participation. Taylor questions the premise that technology is often viewed as “natural” and that it is “what we choose to do with it that counts” (Taylor, 2013, p. 247).

Using models of critical theory, Taylor suggests that interactivity would be better accounted for as a further form of “interpassivity” on the basis that “technology undermines human agency in the very guise of claiming to enhance it” (Taylor, 2013, p. 248).

Taylor’s claim is that “intersubjectivity occurs because there has been a flattening out of the discrimination basis from which one could distinguish between ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ interactions” (Taylor, 2013, p. 248).

This distinction is founded, according to Taylor, on the way that we use signs and images that are ‘simulated,’ and thereby project an idea of an activity which isn’t embedded in practice. For example, politics and issues based campaigning is in danger of becoming a ‘click-through’ process in which the “substantive nature of the political issues” is lost (Taylor, 2013, p. 249).

The expectation is that digital media is seen as a more honest form of interaction when compared to mainstream media, which has the tendency to gloss over the philosophical and political distinctions of social life.

Taylor suggests, however, that the supposed “hippy-minded” outlook of the early computer hackers has been used by major corporations to promote a “hacker ethic” that is used to divert attention from the corporate and commercial structures of the computer industry.

Hacking has therefore been reduced from a founding principle of computer networks and communication, to an image of “technical virtuosity” that “consists of technological playfulness with little political purposiveness” (Taylor, 2013, p. 249).

Cyberspace and The Matrix are images that project an idea of the hacker, according to Taylor, that is fanciful and idealistic, and doesn’t relate to the practicalities of attempts to bring about social change. Taylor argues that these exaggerated views of the hacker are designed to give audiences and readers an optimistic view of the potential of technological development that celebrates all things digital.

The consequence, according to Taylor, is that “hackers and hacktivists can be viewed as our technically savvy alibis,” who are able to “compensate for our own feelings of technical ignorance by projecting onto these apparently masterful figures” (Taylor, 2013, p. 254).

The paradox of this approach, according to Taylor, is that the “interpassivity of today’s culture is based on abstractions that have very real, physical effects” (Taylor, 2013, p. 254).

6.5 Multimodality

Multimodality – Jones & Hafner Chapter Four.

Jones and Hafner suggest that with increased multimodal media content it is necessary to think in new ways about the literacies we use to learn about digital media.

- What are the main issues that are associated with multimodality?

6.6 Media Sharing

Media Sharing – Jenkins Chapter Six.

According to Jenkins, Ford & Green, “under a broadcast paradigm, distribution is almost inseparable from promotion.” This is because “both mechanisms ensure that a commercially produced product grabs the attention of the most broadly defined audience possible” (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 230).

- In what way is the media sharing model different from the broadcast media model?

6.7 Music Sharing & Participation Power

Music Sharing & Participation Power – Rheingold Chapter Three.

Rheingold points out that “participatory culture is one in which a significant portion of the population, not just a small professional guild, can participate in the production of cultural materials.”

- How can the principles of participation be applied to the sharing of music?

6.8 Cultural Ownership

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Cultural Ownership – Delwiche & Henderson – Chapter 10 (Own Gallagher – The Assault on Cultural Ownership).

According to Owen Gallagher, “cultural works or expressions are different from other types of possessions in that they exist primarily to communicate knowledge and ideas in one form or another, which is of benefit to society at large and, therefore they should be copied and distributed as widely as possible.”

- How is the convention of copyright challenged by online remix media?

7 References

- Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. (2013). *Spreadable Media*. New York: New York University Press.
- Jones, R. H., & Hafner, C. A. (2012). *Understanding Digital Literacies*. London: Routledge.
- Rheingold, H. (2012). *Net Smart - How to Thrive Online*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Taylor, P. A. (2013). Participation and the Technological Imaginary. In A. Delwiche & J. J. Henderson (Eds.), *The Participatory Cultures Handbook* (pp. 247-256). London: Routledge.