TECH3022-17 Advanced Social Media Production

Lecture Twenty-Three: Revision – Digital Literacies

1 Exam Structure & Format

Section A: Compulsory
- Netnography
- Data Collection
- Ethical Research
- Data Analysis

Section B: Four from Eight
- Collective Intelligence
- Crowdsourcing
- Web 2.0
- Spreadability
- Media Engagement
- Meaningful Participation
- Participatory Democracy
- Literacies

Each Question is fifteen points (15). Answering eight questions out of a total one hundred and twenty points (120). This will then be averaged from 100%.

2 Reading

Boellstorf, T. (et al) (2012) Ethnography and Virtual Worlds – A Handbook of Method, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
Delwiche, A. & Henderson J.J. (eds.) (2013) The Participatory Cultures Handbook, Routledge, London.
Jenkins, H. (et al) (2013) Spreadable Media – Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture, New York University Press, New York.
Kozinets, R. V. (2010). Netnography - Doing Ethnographic Research Online. London: Sage.

[Look for the **[E]** on the lecture notes section on the TECH3022 DMU Commons Wiki Page]

3 Past Papers

http://www.library.dmu.ac.uk/Resources/ExamNet/ [Search for TECH3022]

4 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.

5 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.

6 Section A

(This section is compulsory, answer all questions)

6.1 Netnography: Kozinets - Chapter 4

Robert Kozinets describes Netnography as a rigorous form of online investigation.

- What are the main characteristics of Netnography?

6.2 Data Collection: Boellstorff - Chapter 5

Boellstorff (et al) point out that "ethnographic research is fundamentally a holistic project," in which researchers "seek to understand shared practices, meanings, and social contexts, and the interrelations among them."

- Identify the main attributes of the ethnographic research technique.

6.3 Ethical Research: Boellstorff (et al) – Chapter 10)

Ethical Research: According to Boellstorff (et al) "researchers have an obligation to take good care of the information that they are gathering."

- What safeguards should be used in an online ethnographic study?

6.4 Data Analysis: Kozinets – Chapter 7

According to Robert Kozinets, "netnographic data analysis… consists of contextualising the meaning of the exchange and interaction in ever-widening circles of social significance."

- How you would analyse data from an online ethnographic study.

7 Section B

(You must answer Four questions from this section)

7.1 Collective Intelligence: Delwiche & Henderson – Chapter 11 (Levy)

Collective Intelligence: According to Pierre Levy, knowledge producers are required to understand and manage their activities in the digital environment in ways that cope with the varied and abundant flows of knowledge that are around us.

- What is Levy's concept of collective intelligence.

According to Pierre Levy "we need to promote organisational cultures and technical environments conductive to transparency, flexible reorganisation of skill networks and continuous collaborative creation of immediately usable knowledge" (Levy, 2013, p. 104).

"This community develops, shares and uses knowledge in a way that is reflexive, or self-aware, and which is able to think about its own forms of organisation an modelling. As Levy describes this, "the work of self-modelling that allows the community to synthetically represent itself to itself its own emergent cognitive processes." This means that an organisation has to think about how it thinks, and what it expects to get from different types of thinking.

Levy explains that "whether we are producing useful documents, clarifying or improving shared symbolic structures, spreading the most effective methods and practices or raising individual and collective awareness of the emergent cognition for the community, we will almost always find our-selves confronted with the problem of explicating implicit knowledge and processes."

What Levy suggests, then, is that an organisation has to look at the way that it supports conversation and the sharing of tacit knowledge, as much as the way that it shares formal and previously established knowledge.

Levy believes that "we need to promote organisational and technical environments conductive to transparency, flexible reorganisation of skill networks and continuous collaborative creation of immediately usable knowledge." This means fostering a dialogue within an organisation that is trusting and allows people to comprehend the differences between knowledge that is explicit and clear, and knowledge that is implicit and emergent.

Levy argues that as individuals we inherit the benefits of the collective knowledge of our society, such as the institutions and the tools that are used to give shape and order to social life. Schools, civic institutions, the media, and so on, are all examples of this inherited field of knowledge, as we do not create them anew, but inherit them and add to them or change them as we engage with them. Alternatively, according to Levy, we also inherit 'distributed processes of problem solving, decision making and knowledge accumulation'.

These processes have emerged from the conversations and interactions that take place in society. Levy suggests that in a democracy, as well as recognising individual forms of intelligence we are also able to recognise collective forms of intelligence as contributors participate in these decision-making process and the collaborative production processes of an open society. A society that allows people to make a contribution of their own free will, rather than being forced or having a sense of discipline imposed on them.

Levy gives the example of the Open Source movement as one in which work is based on free collaboration between programmers and designers who share a common desire to exchange ideas, knowledge and techniques in the production of software. Levy cites Wikipedia as an example in which 'authors, readers and editors exchange roles to further the dissemination of knowledge', and are therefore a 'striking example of the power of collective intelligence emerging from a civilised creative conversation'.

Levy believes that collective thinking opens-up more space for individual critical thinking, rather than imposing a form of standardisation and conformity because we have a moral obligation to enrich and return knowledge back to our community for the common good. As Levy argues, 'collective intelligence can only be productive by combining or coordinating unique elements and facilitating dialogue, and not by levelling differences or silencing dissenters'.

Knowledge producers are therefore required to understand and to manage their activities in the digital environment in ways that cope with the varied and abundant flows of knowledge that are around us. All that can be known can't be learnt by any single person, so according to Levy, we have to learn ways to control how we attend to information, how we define and order our priorities and how we develop an effective level of competence in the know-how that we think we will need.

A wiki is therefore a useful place for us to develop our skills as knowledge producers in that we can use a wiki to organise, share, technically support, reorganise and collaborate with others who are interested in similar forms of knowledge. Wikis can be thought of as a 'collective memory' in which the implicit and local know-how that is embedded in our conversations is transformed.

7.2 Crowdsourcing: Delwiche & Henderson – Chapter 13 (Brabham)

Crowdsourcing: According to Darren Brabham crowdsourcing could be used to improve public participation in the crafting of government policies, injecting more of the voice of the people in democratic processes.

- What is involved in crowdsourcing?

According to Darren Brabham, "crowdsourcing is a model for problem solving, not merely a model for doing business" (Brabham, 2013, p. 120). The standard way that people often think about crowdsourcing, according to Brabham, is to look at the way that it serves the needs of marketing and product promotion. Crowdsourcing is well adapted, according to Brabham, to meet the public relations goal of businesses as they seek to develop a "close relationship with publics" which "allows consumer to participate in the marketing of brands" (Brabham, 2013, p. 120).

Brabham cites Jeff Howe, who explains the basics of crowdsourcing as: "the act of a company taking a function once performed by employees and outsourcing it to an undefined (and generally large) network of people in the form of an open call… The crucial prerequisite is the use of the open call format and the large network of potential labourers" (Howe in Brabham, 2013, p. 120).

Brabham makes reference to Wikipedia as an example of collaborative production, that is based around ideas of participatory culture, open-source methods, and commons-based peer-production. This method of social co-production has given rise to extensive and widespread information and software technologies that have contributed to the idea of the internet as a "collaborative platform" (Brabham, 2013, p. 121).

Crowdsourcing, on the other hand, according to Brabham, "blends an open creative process with a traditional, top-down, managed process" (Brabham, 2013, p. 121). Crowdsourcing is heavily dependent on the internet and its ability to reach people quickly, to offer "asynchronous engagement, and ability to carry many forms of media content" at the same time.

According to Brabham, "the Internet elevates the quality, amount, and pace of cooperation, coordination, and idea generation to a point that warrants its own democratic process, collective decision making, and cooperation for survival" (Brabham, 2013, p. 121).

The belief of advocates of collaborative engagement and problem-solving online, is that crowdsourcing and social networking can be "scaled-up to address even global concerns" (Brabham, 2013, p. 121).

The key for successful crowdsourcing, according to Brabham, is that the individuals who are engaged in a crowdsourced application, are in some way motivated to participate. Therefore, according to Brabham, it's important to understand why and how people engage and join in with crowdsourcing activities, what they get from it, and how they explain this to other people.

"Generally speaking," according to Brabham, "members of a participatory culture, including crowds, 'believe their contributions matter and feel some degree of social connection with one another" (Brabham, 2013, p. 122).

Brabhams identifies several factors for crowdsourcing to be successful:

- Reliant on robust, active and motivated crowd.
- Designed around individual communities, not a single on-size-fits-all approach.
- Given time and attention to grow.
- Motivated to participate and not just complain.
- Be integrated into other communications and community organisation practices.
- Given clear parameters with a specific problem to solve.
- Based around a two-way decision making process that lets community members become meaningful stakeholders.
- Avoids subversion, parody and gaming by filtering contributions from spam marketers.
- Avoids claiming that crowdsourcing is the best and only method of social participation and engagement, but sees value in other approaches.
- Explores diversity and heterogeneity in the make-up of the crowd being developed.

According to Brabham, "crowdsourcing is one specific form of participatory social media, part of a greater media landscape that included open-source production, commons-based peer production, blogging, video-posting, and photo-sharing sites, massively multiplayer online games, and other forms," (Brabham, 2013, p. 127) that is characterised by knowledge discovery, broadcast searches, peer-vetted creative production, and distributed human intelligence tasking.

Brabham believes that "by opening up the problem-solving process and managing the input of crowds to address focussed needs, crowdsourcing could be used to improve public participation in the crafting of government policies, injecting more of the voice of the people in democratic processes" (Brabham, 2013, p. 128).

7.3 Web 2.0 Participation: Jenkins, Ford & Green – Chapter 1

Web 2.0: According to Jenkins, Ford & Green, we need to rethink the concept of value generation associated with online media.

- What is involved in the Web 2.0 model of participation?

Jenkins, Ford & Green recall that the idea of Web 2.0 was introduced in 2004 by Tim O'Reilly, who developed the idea that the internet is more than a platform for the promotion of content, but is a mechanism for "collective intelligence" working with "killer" apps via networks of similar collaborators. This model of interaction and participation, according to Jenkins, Ford & Green, has now become the "cultural logic for e-business – a set of corporate practices that seek to capture and exploit participatory culture" (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013, p. 48).

Web 2.0 represents, according to Jenkins, Ford & Green, a "reorganisation of the relations between producers and their audiences in a maturing Internet market, as well as a set of approaches adopted by companies seeking to harness mass creativity, collectivism, and peer production" (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 49).

In the Web 2.0 model "'users,' 'consumers' and 'audiences' have been reimagined as 'co-creators'" who are engaged as collaborators as they upload, tag, organise, and categorise content". The central premise of Web 2.0 is that audience members are allowed to join in the "building and customising of services and messages rather than to expect companies to present complete and fully formed experiences" (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 49).

Jenkins, Ford & Green note how the practices associated with Web 2.0 "erode the line between 'collective (non-market, public) and commercial (market, private) modes of production." However, as Jenkins, Ford & Green note, there is some considerable difference between the rhetoric and the experiences that users recall of working with media in more collaborative and participative ways.

So, while "the mechanisms of Web 2.0 provide the preconditions for spreadable media; many of the key tools and platforms through which material is spread operate according to Web 2.0 principles. [While] on the other hand, conflicting expectations of what constitutes fair participation means that the actual spreading of media content remains a contested space" (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 49).

One of the shifts in thinking associated with Web 2.0, according to Jenkins, Ford & Green, is the idea that marginalised practices that were repressed in the broadcast era could now be enacted and developed. In this way new communities of users and co-producers could harness the affordances of interactive and web-based media, and in the process "developed a strong sense of social solidarity and a deep understanding of their common interests and shared values" (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 53).

The shift that Web 2.0 represents, away from corporate control of the process of production, is because, according to Jenkins, Ford & Green, that while online communities are often "fragmented, divided, and certainly more dispersed than corporate entities in which they interface," (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 53) they also tap into a a set of "heterogeneous" values and social arrangements that give rise to more diversity in thinking, a greater sense of identification with the self-produced media, and a sense of resistance to the corporately dominated media practices of the mass media producers.

However, and according to Jenkins, Ford & Green, while Web 2.0 "technologies enable audiences to exert much greater impact on circulation than ever before," they also "enable companies to police

once-private behaviour that is taking on greater public dimensions" (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 54). The free use and circulation of media content that is associated with Web 2.0 is restricted by the legal constraints that corporations place on content in the form of copyright and excessive control of the network infrastructure.

The question that Jenkins, Ford & Green raise, asks to what extent audiences as "savvy" about the content that they produce themselves, and the time and attention that they give to other content producers work? Who retains the economic value of content that is produced and shared on YouTube and Facebook, for example? Is this media content paid for by the corporations who control these platforms?

If co-creators of content are unable to access direct payment and control for their products, then they might shift, according to Jenkins, Ford & Green, to other approaches for realising social value from their activities. The question, according to Jenkins, Ford & Green, is "why participants engage in activities which may not yield them immediate financial returns or which may even cost money to sustain but which get appraised through alternative systems of value" (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 59).

So-called user generated content, according to Jenkins, Ford & Green, is often presented online simply to expand the audience and reputation of an existing collaborative network, rather than earning them significant monetary benefits. This means that "within many peer-to-peer exchanges, 'status.' 'prestige,' 'esteem,' and 'relationship building' take the place of cash remuneration as the primary driver of cultural production and social transaction" (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 61).

Ultimately, according to Jenkins, Ford & Green, this means rethinking the concept of value generation associated with online media, and imagining "alternative forms of value and meaning" that go beyond the simply transactional, and instead support social and cultural practices that operate in a "social and cultural context" (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 71).

7.4 Spreadabiity: Jenkins, Ford & Green – Chapter 5

Spreadability: Jenkins, Ford & Green argue that the culture of spreadability is built on technical affordances that encourages collaboration on projects by a 'hive' community.

- What are the main characteristics of the spreadability model?

Jenkins argues that "While stickiness may provide the prevailing logic for the creation of online business models, any content or destination that has gained relevance with audiences online has done so through pro-cesses of Spreadability" (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 7). In this sense the traditional forms of mass media, with their established channels of delivery are regarded as retaining some value as they remain the dominant way of getting content out to many people across a broad area.

This mass media model was dominated, according to Jenkins, by the 'stickiness' model, in which content was expected to make an impression on the life world of the consumer, and promote a sense of engagement and loyalty to the product, but there was little expectation that the user would actively engage in the re-dissemination of the content. As Jenkins argues "mass media channels are still valuable resources for getting information out and sharing content of great common interest because they have such widespread reach" (Jenkins et al., 2013).

Therefore, and despite some radical changes in the infrastructure that supports communication "stickiness still matters… Any creator – whether media company, fan, academic, or activist – produces material in the hope of attracting audience interest" (Jenkins et al., 2013).

In the spreadable media model, however, Jenkins raises questions about what happens when "many people make active decisions to put content in motion by passing along an image, song, or video clip to friends and family members or to larger social networks?" (Jenkins et al., 2013).

In the pre-networked media environment, i.e. the broadcast environment, media would circulate at a planned and control pace, determined largely by the broadcasting companies and the major advertisers. Now, so the argument goes media circulates at an "exponentially greater speed and scope, thanks to the affordances of online social tools" (Jenkins et al., 2013).

The consequence of which suggests, according to Jenkins, that we are now part of a networked culture where "citizens count on each other to pass along compelling bits of news, information, and entertainment, often many time over the course of a given day" (Jenkins et al., 2013).

As Jenkins argues "In this networked culture, we cannot identify a single cause for why people spread material. People make a series of socially embedded decisions when they choose to spread any media text: Is the content worth engaging with? Is it worth sharing with others? Might it be of interest to specific people? What is the best platform to spread it through? Should it be circulated with a particular message attached? Even if no additional commentary is appended, however, just receiving a story or a vide from someone else imbues a range of new potential meanings in the text" (Jenkins et al., 2013, p. 13).

Crucially, according to Jenkins, this culture of spreadability is "Built on technical affordances that encourage iterative approaches to tasks, fluid roles and a lack of hierarchy, shared rather than owned material, and granular approaches to problem solving, network society encourages collaboration on projects by a 'hive' community. This community creates through an 'on-going, perpetually unfinished, iterative and evolutionary process of gradual development of the informational resources shared by the community'" (Jenkins et al., 2013).

7.5 Media Engagement: Jenkins, Ford & Green – Chapter 3

Media Engagement: The way that we access and consume television has been changing, according to Jenkins, Ford & Green. We have witnessed a "shift from an appointment-based model of television viewing toward an engagement-based paradigm."

- What is different about engagement-based models of media?

7.6 Meaningful Participation: Jenkins, Ford & Green – Chapter 4

Meaningful Participation: Jenkins, Ford & Green argue that participatory culture is a "vital step toward the realisation of a century-long struggle for grassroots communities to gain greater control over the means of cultural production and circulation."

- What are the main attributes of participative media?

7.7 Participatory Democracy: Delwiche & Henderson – Chapter 17 (Fuchs)

Participatory Democracy: Dieter Fuchs argues that "citizen's participation in political decisions is an essential feature of democracy."

- What are the characteristics of online participative democracy?

7.8 Literacies: Delwiche & Henderson – Chapter 22 (Rheingold)

Literacies: Howard Rheingold argues that "online social networks can be powerful amplifiers of collective action precisely because they augment and extend the power of ever-complexifying human society."

- What does the incorporation of sociability models of media entail?

8 References

Brabham, D. C. (2013). Crowdsourcing – A Model for Leveraging Online Communities. In A. D. J. J. Henderson (Ed.), *The Participatory Cultures Handbook* (pp. 120-129). London: Routledge.
Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. (2013). *Spreadable Media*. New York: New York University Press.
Levy, P. (2013). The Creative Conversation of Collective Intelligence. In A. Delwiche & J. J. Henderson (Eds.), *The Participation Culture Handbook* (pp. 99-108). London: Routledge.