

TECH1002-18 Social Media Innovation

Lecture Eighteen: Future Media

1 Network Culture

“Network culture has not yet stabilised, its technical infrastructure is still in its infancy, its growth far from complete. It is still not too late to work together and attempt to alter the course of events. There is still room within the new space for other ways of doing things” (Lévy, 1997 p.xxi).

1.1 Productivity?

“The dark side of digital work: how technology is making us less productive”

“Digital technology has certainly delivered for business, leading to multiplying uses and channels, spiralling across the world of work. But the pace and scope of the transformation has been far greater than we could have imagined, and is beginning to push up against our human abilities to cope” <http://www.newstatesman.com/sci-tech/2015/02/dark-side-digital-work-how-technology-making-us-less-productive>

1.2 Technostress

“Technostress” comes from our feeling forced to multitask rapidly over streams of information from different devices, having to constantly learn how to use ever-changing IT, and the sense of being tied to our devices with no real divide between work and home” <http://www.newstatesman.com/sci-tech/2015/02/dark-side-digital-work-how-technology-making-us-less-productive>

2 Blogging – Challenge to the Mass Media Model

Alexander Halavais says that “what makes blogging special is not just that they are not created by mass-media corporations, but that they are, in many cases, personal spaces of exploration” (Halavais in Delwiche & Henderson, 2013).

According to Alexander Halavais blogging is a highly social form of communication that challenges the way that we think about the separation of the audience and the producers in the mass media model.

In this model television, for example, was largely thought to be a ‘passive’ medium whereby the audience merely consumed what they had been given.

However, according to Halavais there are many examples of the introduction of new technologies where many individuals have made contributions to its development before they have been bounded-up by governments or large corporations.

Radio and printing were both established independently and had many small-scale producers using the infrastructure well before governments stepped in and restricted their availability.

3 Radio Networks

Bertolt Brecht says: radio “is purely an apparatus for distribution, for mere sharing out. So here is a positive suggestion: change this apparatus over from distribution to communication. The radio would be the finest possible communication apparatus in public life, a vast network of pipes. That is to say, it would be if it knew how to receive as well as to transmit, how to let the listener speak as well as hear, how to bring him into a relationship instead of isolating him. On this principle the radio should step out of the supply business and organize its listeners as suppliers. Any attempt by the radio to give a truly public character to Public occasions is a step in the right direction” <http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/source-text/8/>

“This is 2LO, London Broadcasting Station calling! Ninety years ago today, at 5:33pm on 14th November 1922, the first British Broadcasting Company transmitter, 2LO, crackled into life – a moment when radio listening changed from a specialist hobby to a national pastime” <http://blog.sciencemuseum.org.uk/insight/2012/11/14/this-is-2lo-london-broadcasting-station-calling/>

Information Age: The radio transmitter that changed our world

<http://youtu.be/eKQwnB6Or9w>

“BBC marks 90 years of radio with historic Albarn broadcast” <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-20309289>

4 Printing

“The immediate effect of the printing press was to multiply the output and cut the costs of books. It thus made information available to a much larger segment of the population who were, of course, eager for information of any variety. Libraries could now store greater quantities of information at much lower cost. Printing also facilitated the dissemination and preservation of knowledge in standardized form -- this was most important in the advance of science, technology and scholarship. The printing press certainly initiated an "information revolution" on par with the Internet today. Printing could and did spread new ideas quickly and with greater impact. <http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/press.html>

5 Blogging

According to Halavais blogging is a similar process to keeping a journal, in that they are generally written from a personal perspective and are located in people’s private experiences.

However, unlike a journal they are used actively on the web and are often embedded in a virtual community that allows us to ‘anchor’ a sense of identity and presentation for our virtual selves.

Many blogs are formed around the interests of fans who engage with and watch mass media programming.

Writing in a blog and sharing our experiences in a way that remains personal but is also public is a useful way for people to bridge their sense of identity against the background noise of mass media. Blogging therefore provides a space for ‘exposition and reflection’ and gives us the ability to interact with like-minded individuals.

6 Dan Gillmor – We the Media

“They were the first tool that made it easy – or at least easier – to publish on the Web” (Gillmor, 2006, p. 28).

“So what is a weblog, anyway? Generally speaking, it’s an online journal comprised of links and postings in reverse chronological order, meaning the most recent posting appears at the top of the page” (Gillmor, 2006, p. 29).

Dan Gillmor: The Future of Journalism

<http://youtu.be/u7qZSiYcPWw>

“The weblog comes out of the gift economy, whereas most (not all) of today’s journalism comes out of the market economy. Journalism had become the domain of professionals, and amateurs were sometimes welcomed into it – as with the op-ed page. Whereas the weblog is the domain of amateurs and professionals are the one being welcomed into it. In journalism since the end of the mid-nineteenth century, barriers to entry have been high. With the weblog, barriers to entry are low: a computer, a Net connection, and a software programme...” (Gillmor, 2006, p. 30).

“The nature of journalistic authority is shifting” (Gillmor, 2006, p. 30).

7 RSS

“Early in the development of blogging software, programmers baked in a content-syndication format called RSS, which stands for (among other things) Really Simple Syndication. This syndication capability allows readers of blogs and other kinds of sites to have their computers and other devices automatically retrieve the content they care about” (Gillmor, 2006, p. 38).

8 Public Sphere

“The development of new technologies and cultural forms seems to be dependent upon privatised modes of consumption rather than the principles of open debate and discussion” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 47).

“The bourgeois sphere developed out of a feudal system that denied the principles of open public discussion on matters of universal interest” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 49).

“The purpose of the public sphere was to enable the people to reflect critically upon itself and on the practices of the state. The public sphere developed initially out of coffee houses and salons where male members of the bourgeoisie, nobles and intellectuals met to discuss works of literature” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 49).

The Public Sphere and The Internet w/ host Karl Marx

<http://youtu.be/bHixAB3Nko8>

“Habermas argues that while the ‘public’ remained small, the principle of universality was beginning to be accepted: those who met the qualificatory criteria of being rational, male and propertied could avail themselves, through active participation, in the public sphere” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 49).

“For Habermas, the operation of the market is best seen as a dual and contradictory process that has both emancipatory and dominatory effects and implications. For example, the book market provides a small stratum of readers with access to high-quality literature” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 50).

“Habermas’s original outline of the public sphere stresses that the intellectual space for critical debate was opened up through its institutional differentiations from the state and civil society. This allowed for the emergence of the principle of publicity, where the public use of reason is privileged over its private use” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 63).

8.1 The Public Sphere

“The preservation and extension of democratic and civic sensibilities actively requires the development of state-supported and non-commercial television. In other words, critical debate and open public deliberation requires the curbing of the power of big media, and the public spaces that enable citizens to become active cultural producers of a range of media material” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 64).

Howard Rheingold on the Public Sphere

<http://youtu.be/SIAgl4z4UIY>

9 The Noosphere

“The problem is exaggerated if we consider the extraordinary amount of information that is currently made available to citizens within modernity. Modern societies, as many post-industrial thinkers such as Baudrillard (1988a) and Melucci (1989) have recognised, cannot be characterised by lack of information, but by what might be called information overload” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 64).

“In 1938, a Jesuit priest wrote a book in which he postulated the existence of "a sphere of thought" enveloping the Earth. This book, *The Phenomenon of Man*, wasn't published until the late 1950s, after its author, Teilhard de Chardin, had died. In it, he called this enveloping sphere of thought the noosphere and described it as "a living tissue of consciousness" enclosing the Earth and growing ever more dense” <http://www.matrixmasters.com/spirit/html/2a/2a.html>

The noosphere is the sphere of human thought. The word derives from the Greek nous "mind" and sphaira "sphere", in lexical analogy to "atmosphere" and "biosphere". the noosphere is the sphere of thought encircling the earth that has emerged through evolution as a consequence of this growth in complexity / consciousness. The noosphere is therefore as much part of nature as the barysphere, lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere. As a result, Teilhard sees the "social phenomenon [as] the culmination of and not the attenuation of the biological phenomenon." These social phenomena are part of the noosphere and include, for example, legal, educational, religious, research, industrial and technological systems. In this sense, the noosphere emerges through and is constituted by the interaction of human minds. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noosphere>

Alan Moore: Magic

<http://youtu.be/p5bSbAFqcGE>

10 John Higgs

In my [probably-forthcoming book about The KLF](#), I talk about Doctor Who in the context of Alan Moore's concept of ideospace (it's that sort of book, don't say I didn't warn you). If you are not familiar with ideospace, it comes from Moore's interest in whether 'ideas' can be considered to exist in any meaningful sense. Moore takes the view that ideas do exist, and ideospace is a model he created to understand how they work and how they behave. Ideospace can be compared to Jung's '[Collective Unconscious](#)', de Chardin's '[Noosphere](#)', or Richard Dawkins' concept of '[memes](#)'.

Indeed, Dawkins' memes and Moore's ideaspaces can be thought of as roughly the same subject described by two wildly different men with completely different beliefs who arrived in the same place from almost opposite starting positions. <http://jimrhiggs.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/the-silence-slenderman-and-alan-moores.html>

<http://nexusnow.info/forum/showthread.php?15181-Alan-Moore-on-comics-magic-art-creative-process-anarchy-science-consciousness-noosphere>

11 Concentration of Power

“Contemporary democratic practice is best characterised as the application of power from below, and the redistribution of power as opposed to its concentration” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 71).

“The current global concentration of the ownership and control of media systems means that economic power is often translated into political and cultural power” (Stevenson, 2002, p. 74).

11.1 George Soros: Facebook and Google are a menace to society

Facebook and Google have become “obstacles to innovation” and are a “menace” to society whose “days are numbered”, said billionaire investor and philanthropist George Soros at the World Economic Forum in Davos on Thursday. “Mining and oil companies exploit the physical environment; social media companies exploit the social environment,” said the Hungarian-American businessman, according to a transcript of his speech. “This is particularly nefarious because social media companies influence how people think and behave without them even being aware of it. This has far-reaching adverse consequences on the functioning of democracy, particularly on the integrity of elections.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/jan/25/george-soros-facebook-and-google-are-a-menace-to-society>

12 Network Smarts

According to Howard Rheingold, the positive use of social networks “depends on knowing how to tune the network of people you follow, and how to feed the network of people who follow you” (Rheingold, 2012, p. 144).

Explain how self-produced photographs are shared effectively on your personal social network (i.e. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook)?

Howard Rheingold described how he achieves added value from his interaction with his friends on his social network because he is able to both entertain and to provide some useful information. Rheingold is conscious of the distinction between the weak-tie and the strong-tie relationships that he is part of, and what it takes to feed the network of people who are engaged with him.

Rheingold describes how he ‘tunes’ into the network of Twitter by selecting and noting content and occurrences that interest him and which coincide with his whereabouts. Rheingold makes a point of following people who are knowledgeable in their respective fields, and who regularly share information that he finds useful, especially if it is linked with a URL.

Rheingold regards this as a process of ‘cultivation’ in which he tries to put the right emphasis between those posts that are informational, and those posts that are personal, or funny, or provocative. Rheingold accepts that self-promotion is a useful constituent component of the curation process, but that he does not automatically post everything that he encounters on the web, instead he selects and filters his posts to allow followers to select and share information in a timely manner.

If something is amusing then Rheingold may share it with his followers, who in turn may share it. This process of reciprocation offers acknowledgement to followers of Rheingold, and so helps to maintain the continuity of the ties that he has established.

Each person, according to Rheingold, will offer a different mix of posts in different forms, though Rheingold believes that if a post isn’t fun, then it won’t be useful either, as what is put into the network is in proportion to what we get back from the network. In this way Twitter has become more than an idle amusement for Rheingold, and has instead become something that offers him satisfaction in maintaining wider social ties.

The principles of social media cultivation are based, therefore, on sharing, cultivation, creativity and learning.

12.1 Rheingold – Network Smarts

According to Howard Rheingold literacy can no longer be conceived as a solitary skill or attribute, but must incorporate increased levels of collaboration and social competency. Rheingold's five literacies for thriving online are:

12.2 Attention

According to Rheingold thinking critically and mindfully in the network media environments that we share is much more difficult than in previous times because of the volume of traffic and information, and because of the speed at which new information is sent to us. Successfully filtering this information is based on training our attention management skills and focussing on how we can filter out the bad information that we don't desire. According to Rheingold, "basic information literacy, widely distributed, is the best protection for the knowledge commons; a sufficient portion of critical consumers among the online population can become a strong defence against the noise-death of the internet".

12.3 Participation

New media technologies allow a degree of participation in the communications process like never before. According to Rheingold, recognising the potential power of the media equipment that many of us carry around with us in our pockets is a starting point for a more general change in society, one that values contributions more than passive receivers of information. As Rheingold says, 'a participant is active' and forms of collaboration have the potential for greater levels of global social understanding.

12.4 Collaboration

Social networking tools have the power, according to Rheingold, to 'amplify' the collective actions that we may wish to undertake. As we use the net to overcome barriers to cooperation we will find, according to Rheingold, that we will be able to achieve 'higher' ends and goals based on the idea that as humans we are 'optimised' for social activity and collective problem solving.

12.5 Critical Consumption of Information ('crap detection')

According to Rheingold basic information literacy is essential if we are to protect ourselves as consumers and citizens online. Being able to tell the difference between the spin and the marketing messages and those that are authentic messages of people actively engaged in activities for the benefit of other people is essential. How do we trust information to be accurate? Rheingold calls this skill an intention and suggests that we ensure that our 'crap detectors' are well attuned to filter out the credible from the incredible information.

12.6 Network Smarts

Rheingold argues that we need to encourage a wide range of skills to help us manage our life online in the form of Net Smarts. These are skills that will help us to maintain our social position and enable us to manage our reputations online, engage in different social networks and to track and trace the footprints that we leave on the net without undermining our sense of self as individuals, or our ethical sense as a community. Rheingold see these net smarts as a set of media tools that we can learn to use effectively.

13 Summary

"The goal of a good society should be to enable human beings to realise their potentialities to the fullest. The most important question to ask about modern societies is therefore what understanding of human life is embodied in the prevailing technical arrangements. I argue here that current technical arrangements place limitations on human development" (Feenberg, 2002 p.19).

"Insofar as one is enrolled in a technical network, one has specific interests corresponding to the potential for good or harm such participation entails" (Feenberg, 2002 p.20).

<http://chriscunningham.com/>

<http://vimeo.com/43444347>

14 References

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