

TECH1002-18 Social Media Innovation

Lecture Twenty-Four: Collaboration & Sociality

LoneLady – Groove it Out

<https://youtu.be/zlFe8yfYSHw>

1 Introduction

Henry Jenkins et al suggest that “curation, conversation, and circulation” (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013, p. 171) are at the heart of participatory media cultures.

YouTube incorporates these values, but what difference do these affordances make to the way that networks and communities function on YouTube?

“YouTube has a big problem. It simply has too much video.”

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevenrosenbaum/2012/10/10/youtube-reveals-a-curated-future-2/#42dddb4c5630>

2 Network-Based Media

One of the crucial differences that has been noted by Henry Jenkins about Web 2.0 and social media, is the shift away from centralised forms of delivery to more dispersed, network-based forms of media exchange and participation.

What is Web 2.0? What is Social Media? What comes next??

https://youtu.be/iStkxcK6_vY

2.1 Public Service Broadcasting

This challenges the traditional idea of public service broadcasting with its often ‘paternalistic’ view of the audiences. Public service broadcasting is founded on the idea that as an alternative to the marketplace, media should be organised on the basis of informing, educating and entertaining the public. These ideals as enshrined in the Reithian ethic that guides the BBC and other public broadcasters. <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/jul/01/bbc-inform-educate-entertain-order>

2.2 Virtual Communities

However, with the growth of internet-based media, with interactive media, and with social media, it is now possible for audiences and members of virtual communities, to share and exchange media content directly, and to ‘curate’ for themselves playlists and schedules of media content that they share and recommend with friends and followers.

2.3 What is Content Curation?

<https://youtu.be/8Qzgi7Mk8As>

YouTube is a good example of this phenomenon, with its built-in playlist capability, its recommendations, and its easy access to sharing and embedding of the videos that are posted to the site.

“Use of the terms “viral” and “memes” by those in the marketing, advertising and media industries may be creating more confusion than clarity. Both these terms rely on a biological metaphor to explain the way media content moves through cultures, a metaphor that confuses the actual power relations between producers, properties, brands, and consumers. Definitions of ‘viral’ media suffer from being both too limiting and too all-encompassing. The term has ‘viral’ has been used to describe so many related but ultimately distinct practices — ranging from Word-of-Mouth marketing to video mash-ups and remixes posted to YouTube — that just what counts as viral is unclear.” http://henryjenkins.org/2009/02/if_it_doesnt_spread_its_dead_p.html

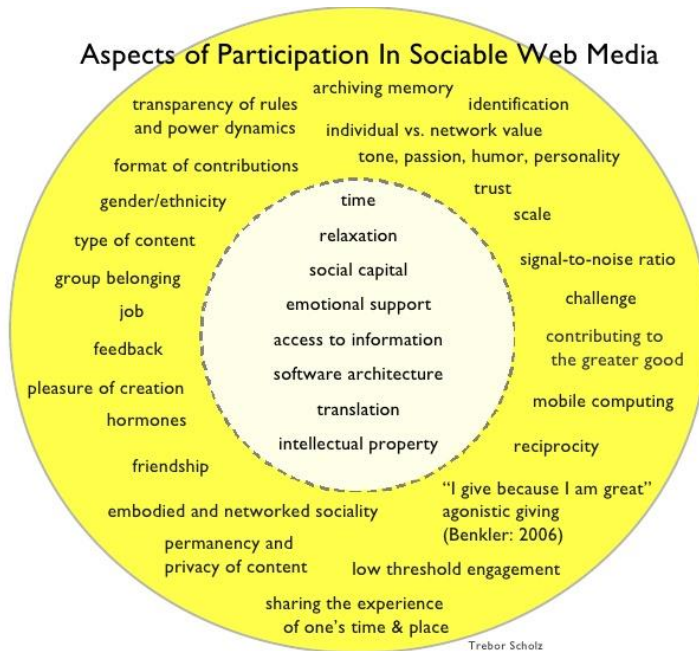
Jonah Peretti on What Makes Something Viral - Media Beat (2 of 3)

<https://youtu.be/2kfn9WZFHkU>

3 Participative Media

The belief is that if the public gains greater control over the content that they consume, then they may “deepen their investment” with that media.

So, rather than passively waiting for media to be delivered to the audience, they instead become users of media who actively seek-out and compare different forms of media through search engines, recommendations, programme guides, news feeds, and so on.



Media thus becomes something to be discovered, rather than lined-up in a queue, waiting in turn to be accessed when the media producer dictates that it should be accessed.

This phenomenon has given rise to the 'box-set binge,' in which people access TV series through services like Netflix and Amazon Prime, and they watch whole series in continuous sessions, rather than waiting for a weekly programme that is scheduled.

Epic Dance to Moongai - Cosmofamille - 20syl Remix
<https://youtu.be/bF5uPE2j0AU>

3.1 Curation & Discussion

Supporting this process of curation is the extended capability of discussion and conversation that is associated with many forms of media.

Often this might be as simple as a #tag attached to social media messages, it might be in a more extended discussion on a fan site or forum, or it might be through more participative social networks that build events, meet-ups and conventions for fans to attend.

3.2 Finding Content

Jenkins *et al* point out, however, that "since the public can only engage with content if they can find it among the plethora of available options, it's becoming increasingly important to use [social media] as calls to action to gather such publics or else to develop material which can sustain or engage existing communities."

3.3 Word-of-Mouth Process

Curation is therefore a word-of-mouth type process, in which members of an audience, or users in a network, tag and share different forms of content that they have encountered, and thus aid the process of spreading the media to other members of their network groups.

According to Jenkins *et al* this process of 'spreadability' lies at the heart of the new media distribution model because it takes advantage of the affordances offered by social and network media.

3.4 Social Curation

“Social curation involves aggregating, organising, and sharing the content created by others to add context, narrative, and meaning. Artists, changemakers, and organisations use social curation to showcase the full range of conversations around a topic, add more nuance to their own original content, and crowdsource content from their community members. The rise of social curation can be attributed to three broad trends.

- Firstly, people are creating a constant stream of social media content, including updates, location check-ins, blog-posts, photos, and videos.
- Secondly, people are using their social networks to filter relevant content by following other who share similar interests.
- Thirdly, social media platforms are also curating content by giving curation tools to users (YouTube playlists, Flickr Galleries, Amazon lists, Foodspotting guides), using editors and volunteers (YouTube Politics, Tumblr Tags), or using algorithms (YouTube Trends, Autogenerated YouTube channels, LinkedIn today). As a result, a number of niche social curation platforms have emerged to enable people to curate different types of content, including links, photos, sounds, and videos” (Thanh, Ichise, & Pham, 2014, p. 415).

Henry Jenkins: Spreadable Content Makes the Consumer King

<https://youtu.be/ZCKoLB1kUsY>

(Play from 1:30)

4 Attention Structures

According to Jones & Hafner, the ability to manage our attention is a “neglected aspect of digital literacies” (Jones & Hafner, 2012, p. 83).

Understanding how “attention structures” might help to provide a technological solution to information overload?

According to Jones & Hafner there are “two main challenges for the way that we manage and distribute our attention.” The first is ties with the “shift from page to screen,” in which authors and designers have to be able to comprehend the affordances that are gained from working in a multimedia and electronic environment, rather than simply on a static piece of paper.

<http://io9.gizmodo.com/does-the-internet-destroy-our-minds-just-like-televsio-1596620067>

This means that we have to be able to present many different forms of information simultaneously, making them available for use on a continual basis, and putting huge strain on our ability to manage our attention as we shift between the different forms.

4.1 Polyfocality

Jones & Hafner give an example of electronic gaming and refer to “polyfocality,” suggesting that “rather than directing their attention at a single focal point, players distribute their attention among multiple foci.”

This means, therefore, that if we are to understand how attention strategies can be developed in the digital world, we have to look at both the way information is distributed in computer mediated environments, and also the physical setting in which it is practiced by users.

4.2 Attention Management

“We all know that too much time with tech is bad for the mind, but even resisting temptation is taking its toll on us, argues Tom Chatfield. Those phantom messages, where you imagine your phone vibrating – that’s your body trying to tell you something. Over half of us now suffer from nomophobia – anxiety of being out of phone contact – and our will-power and attention are suffering as a result” <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/video/2015/nov/04/your-phone-is-seducing-you-and-youre-paying-the-price-video>

One method for understanding how humans manage multitasking is referred to by Jones & Hafner as “branching,” in which we pay attention to the goals that we are seeking to achieve while simultaneously undertaking simultaneously activities that might not directly be part of the strategic aim. This method implies that we have to equip ourselves with tools and capabilities that will help us to engage with the tasks we want to perform. Jones & Hafner give the example of

human evolution, and how human bodies are able to perform a wide range of tasks, which have given humans an evolutionary advantage.

4.3 Multitasking

“Turning off technology is about mental wellbeing – not becoming a digital hermit. Technological advances have put the world at our fingertips, but is being connected all of the time really good for us?”

<http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/apr/30/turning-off-technology-mental-wellbeing>

Search functions also mean that people are able to find all instances of a particular phrase or term that is used in an extended document, and which interests the reader specifically. This means that discussions can be more wide ranging and less focused on pre-determined categories that exclude other ideas and lines of thought.

5 Crazy Ways Social Media Is Changing Your Brain Right Now

https://youtu.be/HffWFd_6bJ0

Online status is increasingly used to manage the expectations of other users in a network as the individual’s ability to modulate their presence in the network can facilitate or restrict the use of real-time conversations.

4.4 Friendship Mirroring

“Friends hold a mirror up to each other; through that mirror they can see each other in ways that would not otherwise be accessible to them, and it is this mirroring that helps them improve themselves as persons.”

<https://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2013/09/19/aristotle-friendship/>

5 Cognitive Tools

Jones & Hafner suggests that these kinds of tools “help us to manage both the cognitive and social aspects of paying attention.” This means more than simply attending to a set of conversational interactions, but instead opens-up these interactions to a more “social dimension as well.” The feedback that is produced from these interactions is therefore useful for determining further actions, fostering relationships and managing the goals that we are seeking to achieve.

5.1 Mindfulness

“It may be an ancient Buddhist practice, co-opted and misrepresented by celebrity practitioners, but scientists and health practitioners have found that mindfulness has specific benefits for mental health patients. The medical profession, too, is beginning to take it seriously.” <http://www.theguardian.com/healthcare-network/2015/may/14/mindfulness-mental-health-treatment-nhs>

Howard Rheingold suggests that ‘attention management’ (Rheingold, 2012, p. 57) is becoming an essential skill of the 21st Century that needs to be taught by parents, schools, and employers. Describe what Rheingold means by ‘mindfulness’ and what you can do to train yourself to be more mindful?

Mindfulness, according to Rheingold, is a combination of “self-control along with the skilful use of attention, participation, crap detection, collaboration, and network awareness through social media,” and should be taught to as many people as possible.

“Work email is making us a ‘generation of idiots’. Time to switch off. Einstein warned that technology could surpass human interaction. It’s happening, and workplaces have to step in when employees can’t kick the habit.”

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/14/work-email-benefits-technology-human-interaction>

5.2 Information Overload

The vast and every shifting flows of data and information that are available to us mean that we have to adapt and develop how we use and understand how digital media and information affects us. As Rheingold points out, “digital media enables far more effectively than olden media did: communicating with multiple people and seeking information from multiple sources simultaneously.”

“Why the modern world is bad for your brain. In an era of email, text messages, Facebook and Twitter, we’re all required to do several things at once. But this constant multitasking is taking its toll. Here neuroscientist Daniel J Levitin

explains how our addiction to technology is making us less efficient." <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/jan/18/modern-world-bad-for-brain-daniel-j-levitin-organized-mind-information-overload>

Put Down Your Phone - Video

It's the holiday season, a time to spend with family and friends and take a break from ever-present screens. Unless, of course, you're one of the millions of phone addicts out there. In his latest song for the Guardian, Joe Stilgoe urges you to put down your phone and reconnect with the outside world <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/video/2014/aug/01/put-down-your-phone-video>
<https://youtu.be/jyn526ISTcQ>

5.3 Always On

Users of this data and information torrent have to be able to multitask and adapt to different forms of media simultaneously, checking messages, managing textual conversations, talking on telephone calls, viewing video, reading manuals, calculating processes and creatively producing content. There is an emphasis that users are always on, that their attention is required in a continual flow, but that they have to devote only partial attention to any task because other tasks are pushing forward that need attention.

This leads to a continual sense of 'crisis' and expectations that users manage their data flows in ways that is both synchronous and asynchronous (i.e. in time, and over time), and which overlap and connect in a wide variety of circumstances. It is therefore not uncommon to mix work, study, home and personal life in one endless stream of gestures, responses and actions.

"Bad reviews, malicious comments and mis-judged social media posts can all damage a firm's digital reputation and commercial value. Brand managers say dealing with negative online content is now the number one digital concern for three quarters of UK firms." <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/social-media/11006768/The-downside-of-digital-coping-with-negative-feedback.html>

6 Attention Management

Rheingold proposes, however, that we develop skills of "carefully managed attention," that is "more engaged than frantic attention." This means building-in time of inattention, times for undertaking tasks for pleasure rather than always seeking to fulfil a goal-oriented task.

This means changing our behaviour so that we have a more resilient mind to changes that has the capacity to adopt different attention strategies for different situations. Understanding how the mind works in managing attention and concentration is useful, therefore, as we seek to make new connections in new ways through a process of plasticity and adaptability.

"If you ask anyone what the worst part of their job is, they are likely to respond with one word: email. Over the weekend, the inventor of this contemporary curse, Ray Tomlinson, died... Today, email is part of the fabric of our lives. A recent survey of US employees found that they spent 3.2 hours a day dealing with work emails alone. Often the first thing we do in the morning is scan through our emails. Smartphones have made matters much worse. One study that tracked the introduction of BlackBerrys a decade ago found employees would compulsively monitor the device, often waking up in the middle of the night to check emails. When the researchers asked people why they did this, they said they wanted to appear professional and didn't want to miss anything. A decade later, we check our smartphones on average 221 times a day. Email is a huge source of distraction at work. One study found that when people check their email, it takes them an average of 64 seconds to switch their attention back to their original task. Workers in the study were distracted this way an average of 96 times a day. This means they spent more than 100 minutes every day being distracted by emails. Another study recorded even more disturbing results. After observing employees closely over a two-week period, it found that after checking their emails, people would do on average 2.3 other tasks before getting back to the activity they were originally working on." <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/07/emails-curse-failings-company-culture-ray-tomlinson-smartphone>

How did email grow from messages between academics to a global epidemic?

<http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/mar/07/email-ray-tomlinson-history>

The first step, therefore, as Rheingold suggests, is that different tasks require different cognitive capabilities, and they we can condition our minds to work more effectively in different situations that call on these competing attention strategies.

Mindfulness, or metacognition, is a way of thinking about thinking that can be learnt so that we can apply different thinking techniques in different circumstances. Rheingold summarises mindfulness as an interplay between our awareness of our intention, the 'breath' that connects the mind and the body (i.e. forms of meditation), and the goal setting that we organise in order to feel satisfied and engaged with the tasks we are seeking to complete, and not overwhelmed by them.

7 Conversation

"Her latest book, *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in the Digital Age*, is a call to arms to arrest what she sees as the damaging consequences of never being far from email or text or Twitter or Facebook, in particular the impact it has on family life, on education, on romance and on the possibilities of solitude" <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/oct/18/sherry-turkle-not-anti-technology-pro-conversation>

Hello? Put down your iPhone and Look-Up!

'Look Up' - A spoken word film for an online generation.

<https://youtu.be/F5XCe7LugHM>

How modern information overload can affect the brain, and how mindfulness can help

<https://youtu.be/OKZTHb1lmzg>

8 References

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