TRANSFORMATION OF MEDIA AND ETHICS

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ABSTRACT: Change, as a natural process, transforms the media. With other transforming aspects of their lives, users also changing their media consumption and usage choices. When common ethical theories are revisited in changing and transforming media context, it is clear what to achieve to cope with daily problems in this area. Users' awareness of the new media landscape and its opportunity and threats are important. At the same time, strong education initiatives are required to give every person basic computing and new media usage skills.

***Keywords*: *Ethics, Information Society, New Media, Transformation*.**

Introduction

Traditional media in the daily life, has begun to lost its place to the digital media. Nowadays using new media for communication, chatting, searching for information, buying things from internet and gaming is not just technologically savvy people's choice, but almost everybody's choice who has access to the new media.

With its heavy capacity and high speed to send and receive information and communication at the same time, digital systems are replacing traditional systems. One may see this change simply looking at TV, radio and newspaper sector's approach to new media.

With new media and mobile communication technologies, users able to reach interactive text, audio and videos, as well as e-commerce applications independent of wired networks. These systems bring speed, quality and interaction into the lives of individuals, but also some problems and unethical situations came to daylight.

In this study, first we will look new media in the context of transformation, then we will discuss ethics problems of transformation of media briefly.

1. New Media in The Context of Transformation

1.1. New Media Systems

Until the 1980s media relied primarily upon print and analog broadcast models, such as those of television and radio. The last twenty-five years have seen the rapid transformation into media which are predicated upon the use of digital computers, such as the Internet and computer games. However, these examples are only a small representation of new media. The use of digital computers has transformed the remaining 'old' media, as suggested by the advent of digital television and online publications. Even traditional media forms such as the printing press have been transformed through the application of technologies such as image manipulation software like Adobe Photoshop and desktop publishing tools.

New media rely on digital technologies, allowing for previously separate media to converge. Media convergence is defined as a phenomenon of new media and this can be explained as a digital media. "The idea of 'new media' captures both the development of unique forms of digital media, and the remaking of more traditional media forms to adopt and adapt to the new media technologies."(Flew 2002: 11) Convergence captures development futures from old media to new media. For example, we can easily see that people watch movies in the home on DVD these days instead of videocassettes.

Also, it is true that people listen to music with their CD player and MP3 player instead of cassette player. The most prominent example of media convergence is the Internet, whereby the technology for video and audio streaming is rapidly evolving. The term convergence is

disputed, with critics such as Lev Manovich pointing out that the 'old' medium of film could be seen as the convergence of written text (titles and credits), photography, animation and audio recording. Equally, Espen Aarseth has surveyed the ever increasing number of incompatible electronic appliances to critique the techno-utopian claims of convergence. The status of convergence is one of many such disputed claims regarding the revolutionary 'newness' of new media.

While the term New Media is disputed - the technologies involved are now up to 25 years old, and therefore not new in the sense of recent innovations - Manovich has argued forcefully against the alternative term digital media in The Language of New Media (Manovich 2001: 20). Manovich contends that a digital process is one, which is based on sampling a continuous (analog) one from the real world in order to re-present it. While computer based media fit into this description, as data is converted into binary code, so too does cinema, which functions by sampling time into a series of discrete images which are then played in rapid succession. Consequently, the term digital media signifies too broad a range of technologies for Manovich to consider it to be of any value within academic discourse.

Andrew L. Shapiro (1999) argues that the "emergence of new, digital technologies signals "a potentially radical shift of who is in control of information, experience and resources" (Croteau and Hoynes 2003: 12,322). W. Russell Neuman (1991) suggests that whilst the "new media" have technical capabilities to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back in the opposite direction. Thus, although social changes will occur, they "will be evolutionary, not revolutionary" (ibid.). According to Neuman, "We are witnessing the evolution of a universal interconnected network of audio, video, and electronic text communications that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communication" (ibid.). Neuman argues that New Media:

* Will alter the meaning of geographic distance.
* Allow for a huge increase in the volume of communication.
* Provide the possibility of increasing the speed of communication.
* Provide opportunities for interactive communication.
* Allow forms of communication that were previously separate to overlap and interconnect.

In place of the vague, hype infused terms often used to describe new media such as digitality, hypertextuality and interactivity, Manovich presents what he purports to be the principles of new media - which are not to be understood as fixed as laws - but general ways in which new media function. (Manovich 2001: 20) These principles are listed as;

- Numerical Representation
- Modularity
- Automation
- Variability
- Transcoding

As an area of academic inquiry, new media studies has sought to understand the genealogies of new media platforms and texts; tracing the distinct pasts of digital computers and the media, and understanding how these paths came to intersect in the 1980s with the advent of GUI's and computers which were sufficiently powerful to run image manipulation programs. New media studies also seeks to map the potential trajectories of new media systems, and analyse their relationship(s) with democracy and the Habermasian notion of the public sphere.

Consequently it has been the contention of scholars such as Douglas Kellner and James Bohman that new media, and particularly the Internet provides the potential for a democratic postmodern public sphere, in which citizens can participate in well informed, non-hierarchical debate pertaining to their social structures. Contradicting these positive appraisals of the potential social impacts of new media are scholars such as Ed Herman and Robert McChesney who have suggested that the transition to new media has seen a handful of powerful transnational telecommunications corporations who own the majority achieve a level of global influence which was hitherto unimaginable.

Recent contributions to the field such as Lister et al (Lister et al. 2003: 61) have highlighted both the positive and negative potential and actual implications of new media technologies,

suggesting that some of the early work into new media studies was guilty of technological determinism - whereby the effects of media were determined by the technology themselves, rather than through tracing the complex social networks which governed the development, funding, implementation and future development of any technology.

A host of companies, organizations, and institutions describe themselves as "new media". With this all-encompassing use of the term, "new media" can refer to any type of media that is used for public relations or marketing, if it is more electronically sophisticated than an animated flashing neon sign. Because this broad use of the term has a vague definition, it may be considered something of a buzzword.

Such marketing organizations may understand "new media" as another term for digital media, whilst others discussing the term tend to see it as more related to a hypothetical future of digital media. This narrower, more advanced use of the term doesn't just apply to digital media, but to the technological leaps themselves from developing new concepts, products, or technology to pushing technological advances on items already in circulation.

New Media has become a significant element in everyday life. It allows people to communicate, bank, shop and entertain. The global network of the Internet, for instance, connects people and information via computers. (Croteau and Hoynes 2003: 12,322). In this way the Internet, as a communication medium of New Media, overcomes the gap between people from different countries, permitting them to exchange opinions and information. Diverse means for this exist even within the context of the Internet, including chat rooms, Instant Messaging applications, forums, email messaging, online video and audio streaming and downloads, and voice-over-internet telecommunications. New Media is defined not only as a communication tool, but also as a tool for the commercial exchange of goods and services. (Barr 2002: 244) Consumer goods are for sale, and personal property may be auctioned, through the Internet. New Media is increasingly ubiquitous in everyday life. To adopt the phrase used by Lister et al in New Media, a Critical Introduction, those of us with access to the online world are now "living in the interface". (Lister et al. 2003: 61)

Old media are, for example, typewriters, vinyl record albums and eight-track magnetic tapes.(Gitelman and Pingree 2003: 11) These media involve analog processes, ones that directly sample a continuous recording onto a physical medium, as opposed to new media, which sample media as a numerical representation in binary code.

The distinction between "new media" and old media is often indistinct due to the homogeneity of the term, which can conflate media where computers are the transmission medium and media where digitisation occurs to facilitate a new way of distributing a pre-existing medium. Whereas the Internet clearly marks a departure in terms of user experience and possibility, transferring a betamax tape onto DVD involves a far less dramatic change as the content of the media remains either identical, or slightly enhanced through digital manipulation of, for example colour.

The term 'new media' gained popular currency in the mid 1990s as part of a marketing pitch for the proliferation of interactive educational and entertainment CD-ROMs. One of the key features of this early new media was the implication that corporations, not individual creators, would control copyright. (Cramer, kathryncramer.com, 2008)

The term then became far more widely used as the mass consumer Internet began to emerge from 1995 onwards. The term 'new media' can be traced back to the 70s when it was described more as an impact on cultural studies of different aspects such as economic as well as social, it is only within the last 25 years that the term has taken on a more advanced meaning.

What counts as new media is often debated, and is dependent on the definitions used. However, there are a few that have been widely accepted as forms of New Media. The following are fairly firmly established, or at least referenced by some companies that claim to deal in new media:

* Mashup
* Internet Art
* Video games and virtual worlds as they impact marketing and public relations.
* Multimedia CD-ROMs
* Software

* Web sites including brochureware
* Blogs and wikis
* Email and attachments
* Electronic kiosks
* Interactive television
* Mobile devices
* Podcasting
* Hypertext fiction
* Graphical User Interfaces

Social Movement Media has a rich and storied history that has changed at a rapid rate since New Media became widely used. (Atton 2003: 3-15) The Zapatista Army of National Liberation of Chiapas, Mexico were the first major movement to make widely recognized and effective use of New Media for communiques and organizing in 1994 (Atton 2003: 3-15). Since then, New Media has been used extensively by social movements to educate, organize, share cultural products of movements, communicate, coalition build, and more. The WTO Ministerial Conference of 1999 protest activity was another landmark in the use of New Media as a tool for social change. The WTO protests used media to organize the original action, communicate with and educate participants, and was used an alternative media source. (Reed 2005: 240-285), The Indymedia movement also developed out of this action, and has been a great tool in the democratization of information, which is another widely discussed aspect of new media movement. (Kellner 1999: 186-204) Some scholars even view this democratization as an indication of the creation of a "radical, socio-technical paradigm to challenge the dominant, neoliberal and technologically determinist model of information and communication technologies." (Preston 2001: 244) A less radical view along these same lines is that people are taking advantage of the internet to produce a grassroots globalization, one that is anti-neoliberal and centered on people rather than the flow of capital.(Kellner, gseis.ucla.edu, 2008) Of course, some are also skeptical of the role of New Media in Social Movements. Many scholars point out unequal access to new media as a hindrance to broad-based movements, sometimes even oppressing some within a movement.(Wasserman 2007: 109–131) Others are skeptical about how democratic or useful it really is for social movements, even for those with access.(Marmura 2008: 247) There are also many New Media components that activists site as tools for change that have not been widely discussed as such by academics. Even Wikipedia, a site based on popular and democratized information, has been cited by some as such a tool.

1.2. Information Society and Transformation

Futurist Alvin Toffler describes the world civilizations three distinct phases; Agriculture and Handwork, Industrial Revolution and The Information Age. The first wave a civilization based on agriculture and handwork, formed and lasted for thousands of years. The second wave of change, industrial revolution, overlapped with the first wave. It began in Great Britain toward the end of the eighteenth century and continued over the next 150 years, moving society from a predominantly agrarian culture to the urbanized machine age. In a much shorter period of time than it took for civilization to progress past the first wave, societies worldwide moved from machine age into the information age, a period of change Toffler has dubbed the "third wave" (Jessup and Valacich. 2008: 409).

The term "information society" is widely used both inside academia and in the wider society (Lievrouw and Livingstone. 2002: 22). One as but to pick up the newspapers or turn on the television to encounter references to a new information age, or to browse the shelves of bookshops to come across titles displaying the words. There are several reasons why this should be so, but most prominent amongst them is surely the prevalence of information itself in the present era. There is simply a very great deal more information about than hitherto: perhaps most obviously in an explosion of media and media products (from cable TV channels to compact disc records, from mobile telephones to the internet), but also importantly in the rapid and accelerating permeation of computerized technologies throughout society, in the increased provision and take-up of education in most social systems, and in the growth of occupations that deal, for the most part, with information (clerks, professionals, instructors and so on). Experiencing such developments, it is not surprising that many observers have come to describe our age in terms of one of its most palpable features: hence, logically, the information society.

It is certain that the rapid development of these technologies as well as of digital television and mobile telecommunications, and the take-up of

personal computers, e-mail and e-commerce, have further stimulated talk of an information age having come upon us. Again, the fact there is now a great deal more information around than even a decade ago, and that this is demonstrable from everyday experiences (from watching television round the clock, through electronic banking services, to a significant increase in the information intensity of a good deal of modern-day work), has encouraged commentators to declare, more confidently than ever, that we inhabit an information society.

2. Ethics Problems of Transformation of Media

2.1. Ethical Theories

For centuries different societies human actions have been judged good or bad, right or wrong, based on theories or systems of justice developed, tested, revised, and debated by philosophers and/or elders in that society (Kiza 2003: 39-59.). Such theories are commonly known as ethical theories. Codes of ethics have then been drawn up based on these ethical theories. The processes of reasoning, explanation and justification used in ethics are based on these theories. There are many ethical theories but we consider only a few that are most widely discussed and used, namely consequentialism, deontology, human nature, relativism, hedonism, and emotivism.

In **consequentialism** ethical theory, human actions are judged good or bad, right or wrong, depending on the results of such actions, a desirable result denotes a good action, and vice versa.

The **theory of deontological reason** does not concern itself with the consequences of the action but rather with the will of the action. An action is good or bad depending on the will inherent to it. According to deontological theory, an act is considered good if the individual committing it had a good reason to do so. This theory has a duty attached to it. In fact, the word "deontology" comes from two Greek words, deon meaning duty, and logos meaning science. For example, we know that killing is bad, but if an armed intruder enters your house and you kill him or her, your action is god, according to deontologists. You did it because you had a duty to protect your family and property.

Human nature theory considers human beings as endowed with all faculties and capabilities to live in happiness. We are supposed to discover and then develop those capabilities. In turn, those capabilities become a benchmark for our actions, and our actions are then gauged and judged on how much they measure up to those capabilities. According to the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle, an individual committing an evil action is lacking in some capabilities.

Relativism theory is negatively formulated, denying the existence of universal moral norms. It takes right and wrong to be relative to society, culture, or the individual. Relativism also states that moral norms are not fixed in time.

Hedonism is one of the oldest ethical theories. It claims that pleasure is the only good thing in human life, the end of life as the highest good. A hedonist acts only for maximum pleasure and whatever he or she does, it is done to maximize pleasure or minimize pain. There are two types of hedonism: psychological hedonism, which claims that in fact what people seek in their every day actions is pleasure, and ethical hedonism, which claims that people ought to seek pleasure and that pleasure is the moral good. Modern hedonists use the word pleasure to mean happiness.

Emotivism theory maintains that ethical statements are neither true nor false and cannot be proven; they are really only statements about how someone feels (Encyclopaedia of philosophy, utm.edu).

Philosophers use these theories as engines to help them to understand and justify human actions. Altough over the years and in different places changing values have been attached to human actions, these ethical theories have remained relatively unchanged. This means that altough ethics as a discipline is evolving; ethical reasoning has relatively remained the same. In other words Aristotle and Plato's reasoning to explain and justify human actions is still valid, altough the premises surrounding human actions are changing with time and with every new technology.

2.2. Technology and Values

Every now and then, a new technology is

introduced in our midst, intended to make our lives easier. Some of these technologies do not last for more than a month; others take hold and become revolutionary in magnitude. Those which become successful most often influence society by creating new possibilities that may raise new moral and ethical concerns and consequently create vacuums and new dilemmas in that society's basic sets of moral values. Computer technology has been one of these successful technologies. In its very short duration, it has had such a strong impact and influence on society, and if it continues the present trend unchecked, it is likely to become one of the greatest revolutions in the history of human kind, far greater than architectural and industrial revolutions. Society as whole seems to be engulfed in this revolution and no cultural and/or society norm will, in the end if there is an end, be left unaffected.

Altough we are constantly in need of new moral principles and new ethical values to fit the changing landscape, we cannot formulate. Debate and put in place such principles and values fast enough before they are outdated. More important still, even if we were able to come up with new values and moral principles, we would still lack the conceptual models within which such values and principles can be applied.

2.3. Reflections on New Media Ethics

In traditional ethics there were few temptations prompting unethical actions. Computer technology has generated many more temptations for each input action. For example speed, privacy and anonymity, nature of medium, international scope, the power to destroy.

Speed: The speed of gathering information has greatly increased, causing unethical actions to be carried out in shorter times, thus decreasing the chances of detection. When the chances of being caught are slim, many perpetuators think that they can get away with it.

Privacy and anonymity: The great availability of computers and computer-related technology in less visible places like people's homes; high, cheap and fast communication equipment; and software that can guarantee anonymity are creating a highly tempting environment for unethical acts.

Nature of medium: The ability to copy digital data without erasing or altering the original in any way causes little or no suspicion and hence encourages unethical activities.

International scope: The boundaryless nature of many computer networks, including the internet, has created a temptation of its own. Now the entire world is well within reach by a touch of a button. This can tempt many intruders.

The power to destroy: Computers seem to give this enormous invisible power to those who have them. This seemingly omniscient power may be a temptation to some.

Conclusion

Life is easier than before with the new media device and technologies, because of their specialities like interactivity, speed, etc. But illegal and unethical usage of technology may cause target individual's life to become problematic.

New media cause virtual societies to flourish. These networks of people and systems for these networks like profile pages in Facebook etc. may cause some of ethical problems including:

Personal privacy problems, for example in cyberspace a person may post some text, pictures and videos related to his or her life, family and experiences. But with the time and its natural effect of transformation on the society, changing norms may cause these persons online material to become "unwelcomed content" for his or her company, colleagues, friends and even his or her own family.

Electronic identity theft or in computing jargon "phishing" is another example. It is the criminally fraudulent process of attempting to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords and credit card details, by masquerading as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.

Basic and simple solution to all of these problems for any person is to learn how to be a knowledgeable new media user. To keep up technological changes and their impacts on our personal lives are not easy for everybody. This is a duty that can be achieved with the help of the

public, education and private sector decision makers.

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