

WHAT IS SOCIAL ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA? The Rejuvenation of Television as social media

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Abstract— *WHAT IS SOCIAL ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA: The Rejuvenation of Television as Social Media highlights television as the dominant social medium of all time. Communication of any sort is already social interaction involving the sending of a message to a receiver, and the feelings and thoughts of the receiver upon interpreting the message within the viewpoint of a single linear model or two linear models stacked on top of each other to cater for feedback loop in the S-M-M-R (Sender-Message-Medium-Receiver) communication framework. "Truth" and "ideas" are constructed or invented through the social process wherein the sender channels a message to the receiver and the receiver then becomes the sender and channels a message to the original sender. This feedback model includes cultural background, ethnicity, geographic location, extent of travel, and general personal experiences accumulated over the course of interactant's lifetime. Thus, the question "what is social about social media" is rhetorical and points to the obvious – the human elements (sender and receiver) define any communication process as SOCIAL and any communication media as SOCIAL MEDIA. Though instantaneity of message delivery and simultaneousness of feedback are contingent to mass communication, they remain elusive and constitute the problem inherent in nearly all forms of media, including the so-called social media platforms. However, social media and television broadcasting have a number of connections and interrelationships that have led to the phenomenon of Social Television. Social Television is an emerging communication digital technology centered around real-time interactivity involving media displayed on television. Through in-depth review, analyses and synthesis of scanty literature, this research questions the description of television as "traditional" or "old." And, more so, the worn phrase "social media" or "emergent media" in exclusion of television is misnomer. Television – the underrated, overlooked but potentially the most powerful social medium from its humble beginnings, can be more appropriately celebrated as rejuvenated social media. In conclusion, this researcher proposes an updated definition and categorisation of television as social media. The author further makes the case that as television has always been social, never ceased to evolve and is still evolving as social media, it qualifies as emergent media consistent with its dramatically expanding capacity and capabilities beyond sound, picture and text.*

Keywords— *Communication Process, Social Television, Emergent Media.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The question "what is social about social media" is rhetorical and points to the obvious – the human elements (sender and receiver) define any communication process as Social and any communication media as SOCIAL MEDIA. Though instantaneity of message delivery and simultaneousness of feedback are contingent to mass communication, they remain elusive and constitute the problem inherent in nearly all forms of media, including the so-called social media platforms. More specifically, the *sender* and the receiver are the socialising elements who exchange meaning through sounds, words, texts or behaviours in the communication interaction.

The internet is the main is propelling the new model of television which is increasingly finding a variety of ways to reposition itself as the most popular audio-visual medium of communication. Television delivers the highest multi-media capabilities captured by Marshallian metaphor, "The medium is the message" meaning that the form of a medium influences how the message is perceived and attracts a large number of viewers across all age brackets.

Figure 1: Types of Media - an ever-social internet-powered Television.



Source: <https://leverageedu.com>

Figure 2: Henry St Leger, Nick Pino.



Source: File Photo - Samsung credit.

Figure 3: Giving a voice to Television. Support for both built-in and third-party voice.



Source: www.abc.org

Figure 4: The internet is the main factor in developing the new model of Television.



Source: <https://leverageedu.com>

II. METHODOLOGY

Through in-depth review, analyses and synthesis of scanty literature, this research questions the description of television as “traditional” or “old.” More so, argues that the worn phrase “social media” or “emergent media” in exclusion of television is misnomer. Television – the underrated, overlooked but potentially the most powerful social medium from its humble beginnings, can be more appropriately celebrated as rejuvenated or revamped social media.

1. Literature Review

McLuhan proposed that media themselves, not the content they carry, affects the society in which it plays a role not by the content delivered over the medium, but by the characteristics of the medium itself.

III. DISCUSSION

Communication Process

Communication is the process of creating, interpreting, and negotiating meaning. Communication can be verbal, nonverbal, or textual. It can be aural, visual, or even physical. Although communication occurs in a variety of different ways, it is always a learned behaviour making it to be a collective practice in which people use symbols to generate and interpret meaning. Therefore, communication and media can only be explained as social processes and indispensable tools for socialisation. The Linear, Interactional, and Transactional models of communication, especially the social interaction model where the sender channels a message to the receiver and the receiver then becomes the sender and channels a message to the original sender which includes the general personal experiences accumulated over the course of interactants’ lifetime has created the feedback loop. Draw backs in the in the original sender has to wait for the interactive message from the original receiver to react. Humans do not communicate simply as computers or robots as the Transmission Model suggests by simply sending facts and data to one another, but we take facts and data and they acquire meaning through the process of communication, or through interaction with others.

It's critical to realize that whenever you are communicating with a project stakeholder that the medium you use to communicate your message is just as important as the message itself. If you use the wrong medium, your message may never get through to the receiver or may be misunderstood.

What is Social About Social Media

Social mediums as a way of connecting with people have existed for a long before the emergence of face book, twitter. Social media it will encompasses face book, WhatsApp, Instagram, radio, Television, Newspaper and Email. Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration.

Social Television

Social television is the marriage of television and social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and king of them all – Smartphones, Tablets and other Mobile Devices. These have empowered citizens and billions of people worldwide to share their TV experience in real time before during and after the television programmes with other viewers.

The social TV market covers the technologies that support communication and social interaction around TV and specific TV broadcasts. The market was projected to be worth \$256bn by 2017.

Much of the investment in the earlier years of social TV went into standalone social TV apps aimed at providing complimentary consumer experience as well as optimising TV advertising buys through consumer data gathering and mining granting ease access to focus groups and creating feedback loops that have led to multi-screen advertising campaigns. Viewers share their TV experience on social media in real-time as events unfold. The volume of social media engagement in TV is also rising – according to Nielsen SocialGuide, there was a 38% increase in tweets about TV in 2013 to 263m. For the 2014 Super Bowl, Twitter reported that a record 24.9 million tweets about the game were sent during the telecast, peaking at 381,605 tweets per minute. Facebook reported that 50 million people discussed the Super Bowl, generating 185 million interactions. The 2014 Oscars generated 5m tweets, viewed by an audience of 37m unique Twitter users and delivering 3.3bn impressions globally as conversation and key moments were shared virally across the platform.

Figure 5: Instagram/Aljazeera dual screen newscast



Source: Aljazeera Television/Instagram newscast 16 June 2021. Screenshot by author.

Figure 6: Silverbird Interactive Phone-in Live.



Source: Silverbird newscast 16 June 2021. Screen shot by author

Interactive television (also known as ITV or iTV) is a form of media convergence, adding data services to traditional television technology. Interactive TV is a concrete example of how new information technology can be integrated vertically with the use of the remote control to enable channel surfing behaviours. This is the idea that the program, itself, might change based on viewer input.

Figure 7: TVC/SuperSport Interactive Television.



Source: TVC newscast 16 June 2021. Screen shot by author.

Panasonic Life Wall, which is literally a wall that doubles as a screen uses face recognition technology to follow the viewer around the room, adjusting its screen size according to the viewers distance from the wall.

Figure 8: TVC/SuperSport Interactive Television.



Figure 9: Panasonic Life Wall concept released at Panasonic Consumer Electronics Show in 2008.



Source: SANBS newscast 19 June 2021. Screen shot by author.

Simpler forms, which are enjoying some success, include programs that directly incorporate polls, questions, comments, and other forms of (virtual) audience response back into the show. One example would be Australian media producer Yahoo!7's Fango mobile app, which allows viewers to access program-related polls, discussion groups and (in some cases) input into live programming. During the 2012 Australian Open viewers used the app to suggest questions for commentator to ask players in post-match interviews. Examples include getting more information about what is on the TV, weather, sports, movies, news, or the like. Similar (and most likely to pay the bills), getting more information about what is being advertised, and the ability to buy it— (after futuristic innovators make it) is called "tcommerce" (short for "television commerce").

Figure 10: TVC interactive Television



Source: TVC newscast 16 June 2021. Screen shot by author.

Figure 11: LTV/FIFA TV/YOUTUBE



Source: LTV newscast 20 June 2021. Screen shot by author.

Figure 12: Dual screen Television.



Source: AIT SPORTS newscast 22 June 2021. Screen shot by author.

Fig. 13: TVC/SuperSport interactive.



Source: TVC/SuperSport newscast 16 June 2021. Screen shot by author.

Figure 14: AIT Multiple Screen interactive.



Source: AIT newscast 16 June 2021. Screen shot by author.

Fig. 15: MITV Multiple screen interactive.



Source: MITV newscast 20 June 2021. Screen shot by author.

TV viewers can follow their favorite programs, share TV-related content and reactions, and connect with fellow viewers before, during, and after a program. Many people use social media platforms whilst watching television to feel as though they are not alone or to compensate for the absence of other people in the physical realm of the living room and to have the chance to control others' reactions. Hard-hitting news is now taking a backseat to fluffy stories that get more shares and likes on social media platforms users and fans while a program is airing in real time.

Digital Era

Social media and television broadcasting have a number of connections and interrelationships that have led to the phenomenon of Social Television, an emerging communication digital technology that centers around real-time interactivity involving digital media displayed on television and allowing online access to television shows on a range of desktop and mobile computer devices, that are still evolving today in the 2020's.

Fig. 16: MITV Multiple screen feature.



Source: MITV newscast 20 June 2021. Screen shot by author.

Static media is on its way out, and if Networks would like to stay in the game, they must adapt to consumers' needs. Viewers can actively participate while watching a TV program by posting comments online, and have their interactions viewed and responded to in real time. Other viewers are encouraged to post hashtags on the TV screen during shows. These hashtags enable viewers to post online comments about the show, which may either be read by other social media users, or even, in some cases, displayed on the screen during the show.

Typically, the message is encoded on-screen for a short period of time when audience participation is welcomed. Selva (2016) describes this empowerment as identity-building for the purpose of creating social awareness, real-time fact checking, or perhaps dealing with conversational topics. Users can also provide

feedback almost instantaneously, as digital media enhances the efficiency and openness of the communication flow.

Due to the phenomenon of enabling the "social practice of commenting on television shows with peers, friends, and unknown people", audiences are all somewhat connected through the captivating world of digital media. Selva explains that television has transitioned from traditional media where dialogue is conveyed in a linear form, from the source to the receiver; to social and interactive media, where viewers have the power to navigate content, access on-demand services, and customise supply which is in theory, non-linear communication. This study also found that almost 40% of TV viewers discuss particular TV shows via social media while they're watching them. Furthermore, Selva claims that this is evidenced by the average 4.5 million tweets from this year's Super Bowl viewers. The earliest form of social interactive television was that of BBC's "Any Questions?" which allowed viewers to call in via telephone, whereas, now there are various other forms in which television can touchpoint their audience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this researcher proposes an updated definition and categorisation of television as social media. The author further makes the case that as television has always been social, never ceased to evolve and is still evolving as social media, it qualifies as emergent media consistent with its dramatically expanding capacity and capabilities. Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the occasion of World Television Day, 21 November, 2003 said "More than a generation ago, Marshall McLuhan predicted that television would bring us together into a "global village". Today, with satellites and other technologies making it easier for television to cross borders, our world is more and more a single "information society", and television, as the world's most powerful medium of communication, is a key part of that society." Kofi Annan <https://www.un.org/press/en/2003/sghsm9007>

Television can educate great numbers of people about the world around them. It can show us how much we have in common with our neighbours, near and far. The television industry is also in a unique position to promote mutuality with multi-platform content that tells the stories to the majority of the world's population.

To further actualise the vision, Kofi Annan proposed the first-ever World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva to discuss how best to put information technology, including television, can empower the world's broadcasters to make important contributions such as using animation, children's programming and reality shows to explain the Millennium Development Goals, press freedom and cultural diversity. This in a broad sense is the meaning of social media which is essential to global efforts to build an open, inclusive information society.

To complement the deliberations at the Summit, Kofi Annan had invited media executives and practitioners from around the world, along with policy makers and representatives of the United Nations system, a United Nations parallel event tagged World Electronic Media Forum, to discuss the new global media environment and how they can work with the United Nations to ensure that television contributes to progress and to the well-being of all the world's people. Social TV indeed has proven to be the leader of the social media revolution in the digital era.

Social Television as an emerging communication digital technology centered around real-time interactivity involving media displayed on television provides an opportunity for future study by this author and interested collaborators on the identified gap - though instantaneity of message delivery and simultaneousness of feedback are contingent to mass communication, they remain elusive and constitute the problem inherent in nearly all forms of media, including the so-called social media platforms. This study is a step in this direction. It will in due course expand the focus to propose theories, principles and methods to leverage existing social media and television broadcasting connections and interrelationships that have led to the phenomenon of Social Television.

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