

Mediamorphosis: The New Era in Communication

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ABSTRACT.

Future: Timisoara, year 2020

After a hard day of work, on my way home, I tell to myself as well as to the “Multiplex”: HOME. The Multiplex knows what needs to be done and I know exactly what I am going to find home because I was the one who made the settings remotely. This gadget will replace soon all the many devices I carry with me. It will be phone and remote control, PC as well as TV using all communication and information media in one. I see a few friends and the family in a videoconference using the Multiplex. My GPS controlled automobile knows the way home and while I drive, I can watch the virtual screen projected in a corner of the windshield.

When I arrive home, I give an one word command to the Multiplex: NEWS and all the desired news channels are projected on a virtual screen in any place in the house I want. I can intervene in a live-transmission if I like to do so and say my opinion. If I prefer to read and write, my Multiplex will project a virtual keyboard for my use. If I want to dictate, my Multiplex can write what I speak.

Multimedia has resulted from the marriage of audiovisual media (television, radio, 3G phone) and print media (newspaper, magazines, and internet). What is new here? Through this compilation of the traditional and new communication and information mediums, three new interpersonal dimensions appeared: interactivity, distributivity and convergence.

Today’s interactive communication and handling of information models brainstorming. General information in electronic and encyclopaedias is accessed differently then in the past. Now we have computer programs such as *Brainstormer* which has been adopted by The Encyclopaedia Britannica. The computer program *Brainstormer* accesses information using

a multiple level interconnected index processing information in a manner similar to the way the brain actually works.

We see the pyramid of communication turned upside down in printed media as well as in audiovisual. From the one way of broadcasting the information, from the studio to the consumer, when the feedback was almost inexistent, delayed and censored, it was reached the point where communication has been liberated and each can contribute to the news. In the ancient Greece the Areopagus was the place in which every wise man could stand in front of the other people and freely express an opinion.

In the vision of Marshall McLuhan of the Global Village, the generalization and standardization in the area of communication technology and of the flow of information, will give universal access to information.

- Where? – the limit is the end of the known geographical boundaries.
- What? – Only I want to listen to!
- When? – Anytime!
- How? – Listening to your opinion and presenting my own opinion!

This means that today's interactive media can control the time, order, speed and the form of communication. A second characteristic is that feedback practically has no limits and the consumer and the transmitter are at the same level. The last one refers to the possibility of changing the direction in transmitting the information and of initiating it.

The collaborative sites full of volunteer journalists have grown in popularity. For example, Ohmy News, an on-line publication in South Coreea, with articles exclusively generated by users, has become the most important news source in the country.

Do-it-yourself journalism became one of the most democratic sources of information and the number of the users of news has beaten the records of readers of the most famous representatives of the traditional media. With millions of bloggers and tens of millions of internet users, the open-sources of the on-line news have radically changed the form in which we daily access the information. From a media perspective, the do-it-yourself journalism has blown the boundaries which separated the mainstream journalism from the new on-line media.

Research in the IT technology has reached such a level that scientists work on computers to read people's minds by analyzing the facial expressions and interpreting the feelings. Peter Robinson from Cambridge University who works on this project said in an interview: "Imagine a computer which can choose the right time to sell you something, a future

where the mobile phones, the cars and the web-sites can read your minds and react according to your mood.”

No matter how hard we try to imagine the evolution in technology and automatically of the on-line journalism, the future will surprise us. However, the future doesn't need to frighten you. Technology doesn't need to frighten you. You need a guide to help you choose how to filter information, how to discern the truth. What would the guidelines be? Who develops the guidelines? Is it the government? The religious leaders? The multinational corporations or the business leaders? There needs to be guidelines developed. They need to be basic and tied to a global culture.

With guidelines you may use this tool “interactive multimedia” to support you, to enrich your life and not destroy you.

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