



## table of contents

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Digital Publishing: what we gain and what we lose Shutong Wang	4
Making Online Pay: the prospect of the paywall in a digital and networked economy Yi Wang	14
E-mail Spam: advantages and impacts in digital publishing Haoyu Qian	22
Advertising in the new media age Quan Quan Chen	32
Twitter Theatre: notes on theatre texts and social media platforms Alejandra Montemayor Loyo	40
The appearance and impacts of electronic magazines from the perspective of media production and consumption Ting Xu	50
Pirates Versus Ninjas: the implications of hacker culture for eBook publishing Shannon Glass	60
Online Library and Copyright Protection Yang Guo	73
Identities Collide: blogging blurs boundaries Jessica Graham	81
How to Use Sina Microblog for Brand Marketing Jingjing Yu	90
Inheriting the First Amendment: a comparative framing analysis of the opposition to online content regulation Sebastian Dixon	99

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## table of contents

---

The Impact of Convergence Culture on News Publishing: the rise of the Blogger Rena Engler	112
The New Design of Digital Contents for Government Applications: new generations of citizens and smart phones applications Lorena Hevia	120
Solving the Digital Divide: how the National Broadband Network will impact inequality of online access in Australia Michael Roberts	133
The Blurring of Roles: journalists and citizens in the new media landscape Nikki Bradley	145
Wikileaks and its Spinoffs: new models of journalism or the new media gatekeepers? Nadeemy Chen	157

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# Digital Publishing: what we gain and what we lose

Shutong Wang

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## abstract

It is widely acknowledged that electronic journals and newspapers have enormously increased in the past decade with the development of digital technologies in contemporary society. In the current digital age, people tend to read newspapers and magazines using their portable gadgets such as iPad and mobile phone. Obviously, this modernized life-style makes people's life more convenient and interactive with digital media. Nonetheless, it is time to consider what effect the new trend will have for our daily life. What do we gain and lose during the digital environment comparing with traditional media forms? This essay explores the advantages and disadvantages that have been brought with the advent of digital publishing such as e-books, e-journals and blogs. It elaborates on what consumers obtain and what they lose during this new age in comparison with the conventional media including printing newspapers and magazines. In conclusion, the article identifies some potential challenges related to the new publishing paradigms, and seeks a balance between digital publishing and traditional printing format to address these demerits .

## keywords

digital publishing - electronic resources - advantages-disadvantages - traditional printed media forms.

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## introduction

With the advent of electronic content delivery, people could get access to a wide range of up-to-date information more conveniently and unlimitedly. A great deal of research suggests that modern readers tend to choose online resources instead of printing ones.

Bailey (2006) pointed out printed book usage at Montgomery Library in Auburn University declined by almost a third from 2000 to 2004, while the use of 'NetLibrary' topics increased

considerably, reaching nearly 23% of the level of printed book usage.

The same trend has been found by Safley at the University of Texas in Dallas, that "print circulations had decreased from 67,465 in 2004 to 50,993 in the first eleven months of 2005, a period during which usage of a variety of e-book services had increased significantly" (John Cox, 2008, p.4). From a critical perspective, the digitization of the publishing industry has both positive and negative impacts on people's lives and working. These effects perform in terms of a number of aspects respectively as follows.

## Advantages of Electronic Resources

By utilizing electronic publishing formats such as e-book and e-journal, people are able to obtain a host of benefits including easy accessibility and updatability, searchability, multi-modality and interactivity.

In the digital world, it is much easier for consumers to access to large quantities of resources in spite of anywhere and anytime. Mallan and Patterson (2008) claim that e-books and e-journals are not bound by time and space. In traditional forms of content delivery, Thompson (2005) points out, "access to content is generally governed by certain spatial and temporal constraints" (p.318). For instance, traditional books and magazines can be acquire merely in bookshops, newsagents and libraries which are located in some specific areas, and are opening for certain time of a day. That means readers cannot always get access to them as they wish. On the contrary, materials in electronic forms are available without these restrictions. Anyone who has an internet connection may be free to access to online resources twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. "There is no need to go to a library to track down a book or a journal article if the content can be accessed from one's office or home", as Mr. Thompson argues (2005, p.318). Additionally, unlike paper-based text, an electronic text on the internet is able to be accessed and shared by numerous users simultaneously.

Moreover, a primary characteristic of content in digital forms is that it can be updated quickly, frequently with less cost. Brown asserted (1997), there was no need to wait for several months for a space in a journal issue, articles could be put on the website as soon as they were ready. According to Wilkinson (1998), the 'American Chemical Society' put articles on their web "as soon

as publishable" which would be up to 11 weeks before print. On the other hand, for the press, traditional paper texts are difficult and laborious to make changes once they have been printed, since the characters are fixed and cannot be altered. While in modern version of texts, editors could change or correct the content comparatively easily and cheaply, especially for timely data and statistics. Thus, the electronic papers are much earlier accessible for readers, and more flexible and easily updated for editors.

In addition, searchability is one of the core advantages of electronic material (Neal, 1997). Meanwhile, Hitchcock et al. (1998) argues that "the easier it is to find research, the fewer duplicated experiments there will be, resulting in less wasted time" (in Alison Wells, 1999, p.1). Normal books and magazines offer the 'contents' or index to guide readers to search the information they need. Nevertheless, the capacity of searching in a digital format is extremely faster and more powerful. Quite easily and conveniently, the users can input any keyword that they are looking for, then the specific database will appear. Actually, the ability of searching is a prime valuable feature of digital publishing which could tremendously improve people's efficiency. It is noticeable that by searching ability, users are able to gain a broad range of related information and materials involving almost all aspects (McCalman, 1996). In the case of conventional printed media content, individuals may merely acknowledge one limited angle from a certain newspaper or magazine. However, one could get in touch with a large scale of resources and understandings from a number of publications by searching and clicking into different news websites. Especially, this merit is considerably beneficial for education area. As a report in 2002 (Collins and Carr, 2008) points out, "nearly three-quarters (75 percent) of college students [said] they use the Internet more than the library, while only 9 percent said they use the library more than the Internet for information searching" (p.136).

Multi-formats of medium of digital publication may be one of the key factors attracting audiences, particularly for the youngsters. As Kho notes (2007), "web newspapers are becoming increasingly more popular, whereas paper-based newspapers are finding it difficult to recruit new readers from the younger generations" (p.37). It is commonly acknowledged that online resources presented in multiple media forms including sound, flash and streaming video instead of mere text and static image

in print-based media. This feature of multi-modality enables the news or story more vividly and dramatically. Moreover, there are always a series of links among the digital text. These links can be other sites or pages which are relative to the original topics. Hence, readers could know more about the topic in depth. At the same time, the multi-media format provides opportunities for advertisers to embed advertisements in the web, and this may add commercial values to some extent both for publishers and advertised companies.

Additionally, compared to the old printed forms of media, the digital publishing materials have been more interactive, participatory and user-generated. In the new media paradigm, as a tool of connect people, the Internet has become a medium for participation, especially in the age of Web 2.0 technology (Lorenzo, Oblinger and Dziuban state, 2006). Unlike in the traditional printed media formats such as newspapers and magazines, readers are merely limited to receive information; they are able to comment, review, and produce their own ideas. In this two-way digital world, a receiver can be a sender at the same time, the multiple communicational technologies enable everyone to express himself or herself interactively. Flew (2008) indicates, the digital format of publications make the current media more open and interactive than traditional publishing channels, the reader has shift from a passive receiver to an active creator. As a consequence, hierarchical boundaries decrease, anyone can have a conversation with someone more powerfully and unrestrainedly (Griffin, 2006).

In the initial print-based media, newspaper, for instance, is obeyed with the sender- receiver model, which is 'one-way' approach (Axel Bruns, 2005). In the model, the sender is usually referred to as the publisher or journalists who write news and publish it; on the other hand, the reader as the receiver normally can just acknowledge news and may not have the opportunity or realm to comment or discuss it instantly. Bruns divides the process of traditional news production into three stages which are input, output and response. For inputting, news is gathered only by news-staff such as editors and reporters. Then, in the second stage, printing and outputting means the "editorial hierarchy" is closed. Lastly, in the third stage, after publication, when editors receive the response letters from readers, they usually select some or a few (very limited number), and the small lucky selections would be published in the 'letters to editor' section.

In comparison, the present digital format of media provides a platform for consumers' participation and interactive information. Actually, in the contemporary networked society, a host of news websites (e.g. ABC, BBC and CNN) and online journalism facilitate people express their opinions and commentaries openly and promptly. The "two-way information-communication model" stresses the participatory and interactive nature of the new Web (Ross Gagliano, 2007). In this model, audiences have become active users who can directly get access to the "source code" of the news as well as instantly post their criticism and discussion. Further, it is a widespread phenomenon that almost every electronic publishing company involving in e-newspaper and e-journal has one or several special columns which are in particular interacting with the public, drawing on the wisdom of the masses to determine their subjects. And these columns or activities are always beneficial for improving their audience rating. Accordingly, in the age that anybody can post his/her own thought, proposal and evaluation on the Web, "it has changed from sender-focused selection and transmission of messages, controlled by traditional mass media including newspapers, to a liberating, spontaneous, public-oriented, and public-coauthored network of nearly limitless news and information venues" (Anderson, Dardenne and Killenberg, in Bruns ).

In the sense of the user-generated nature, the blog is a typical instance in terms of e-publishing. Jenkins (2006) defines "'Web log' (blog) as a new form of personal and subcultural expression involving summarizing and linking to other sites" (p.151). This Web form vividly manifest the 'DIY (Do it yourself)' media, that each subscriber build his/her own web page as personal home page. In this personal page, you are endowed with huge power to design it. For example, you can post personal diary, ideas and daily opinion. A variety of information formats are encouraged as well, such as pictures, videos, music and any other kind of media content that you want to share with public. There are two main types of functions in online blog. On the one hand, bloggers may actively deconstruct harmful claims or poke fun at other side; On the other hand, "they form temporary tactical alliances with other bloggers or with media producers to insure that important messages get more widely circulated" (Jenkins, 2006, p.151). In comparison with old medium such as newspaper, bloggers are both creators and audiences simultaneously; they are their own blog pages' producer and other bloggers' audience. While the producer and audiences of

traditional newspaper are different. Moreover, in the digital age, bloggers themselves are interactive audience, because they can generate their opinions to peers and also in turn response evaluation from others. That forms a circulate communication which is instrumental to interpersonal communication and self-recognition. Nevertheless, for old printed medium, it is one-way communication from the publisher to the reader, and the audience plays a single role as an information receiver.

### **Disadvantages of Electronic Resources**

Although the e- publications make people's life and working more convenient and up-to-dately informative, limitations and demerits can not be neglected.

At first, as the digital format of material requires an online platform, it may not be so accessible all the time. It is a fact that the new forms medium is guaranteed on the basis of an internet connection, thus it would be impossible without a computer or internet availability. Indeed, large quantities of people possess iPhones or other mobile phones through to the Internet; however, they may not get access to the e-resources at anytime as they wish. Even more, it may lead to problems accessing the web due to lack of electricity power or weak signal of cellular phone. Therefore, it seems to be restricted to access the e-publishing materials to some extent. In this sense, digital divide would be a key issue for e-resources accessing. Since digital technologies have not been evenly distributed across individuals or communities (West, 2003), people could not have equalities in accessing on-line resources. A related survey from NATSISS (2002) in Australia showed that, 67.6 % of the non-Indigenous population had used a computer at home in the previous year compared with only 43.5% of the Indigenous population.

Secondly, piracy is a serious problem which has always been hotly controversial in current digital media context. Clarke (1998) felt worried about the "malleability of content in electronic form" since the content online can be easily copied at one's will for numerous times. Verhulst (2002) indicates that as digital medium shift the forms of expression and any information or material can be transmitted from one space to another through the convergence of delivery channels in an electronic content, there are no national borders in the new digital paradigm. Hence, free open access to electronic resources like e-books,

e-journals and e-newspapers might attribute to violating the authors' intellectual properties, which would harm the environment of creation, especially the innovation of authors or artists (Lessig, 2001).

Additionally, on some occasions the content serving in digital publications may be lack of credibility. With the main character of participatory culture, anyone can generate his/her own content onto the internet. However, "authority, validity and quality of writing are also key concerns in the field of scholarly e-publishing, particularly in areas such as medical publishing where incorrect data may lead to potentially dangerous misinformation" (Deborah Wyatt, 2003, p.6). For instance, nowadays several major publishers are starting to adopt self-published e-book authors as innovative talents. It is uncertain to predict the sales of these grassroots self-publications, because the writers are almost amateurs, this therefore seems to be a 'guesswork' out of the setting initial print runs. An Australian editor Christine Nagel (2001) indicates that e-publishing can lead to "generally poor writing standards, lack of editorial intervention ... [and] lack of publishing standards".

Last but not least, despite of quicker research, wider range of information as well as free access to get electronic resources, the value of time spent seems to be losing. According to a report of the Institute for Social and Economic Research, Jonathan Gershuny (2005) outlined, the value placed by people on recouping time is more significant than monetary outlay in some cases. By evaluating the 'free' access offered by present digital media, Rodowick (2001) observed, "the value of access to information is determined not by special quantity (weight, volume, or number); rather it is measured by units of time. Alternatively, the value of services is measured by the time they 'create' " (p. 217). In fact, with online publishing such as e-magazine or e-newspaper, most readers have spent their time in comments, advertisements, videos, related topics and links to the original article... According to a survey carried out by Ingham and Weedon in 2005 which was to examine readers' preferences and motivations on the digital magazine 'Leisure Group', the result suggested the majority of informants did not consider the online magazine save their time; and 80 percent people would respond to advertisements in the online magazine while only 20 percent people would do that in the printed magazine. Consequently, online publishing always consume readers much more time than traditional publications and may

not be that quicker and efficient as printed medium, resulting in losing some values to a certain degree.

## Conclusion

To summarize, the prevailing use of the electronic publishing resources have dramatically benefited individuals for their more effective working and convenient acknowledging massive information than conventional printings. However, simultaneously, there exist a number of serious shortcomings such as copyrights and time-waste that bring about certain losses and pressing issues to the users. Accordingly, given the consideration of the potential challenges coming up with digital publishing, it is essential for both the government and publishing industries to take some feasible and valuable solutions in order to resolve these problems and achieve a win-win result.

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## Making Online Pay: the prospect of the paywall in a digital and networked economy

Yi Wang

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### abstract

This article explored the new trend in the newspaper industry towards charging for premium content online aiming to help the development of digital media in a networked economy. It described how paywall subscription service emerged and briefly introduced its definition and operating models. It also questioned what are the insensitives behind the service in terms of two major different views theoretically. Further, I used some cases to reflect current situation, meanwhile analysing the potential adverse factors that may confine its development. Finally this paper concluded the prospect of the paywall service both from the short-term and long-term perspective and then provided a suggestion toward managers and regulators. The primary research that are used to analyse the issue is sourced from books, academic journals, industry reports and technology literature.

### keywords

Paywall - Digital Economy - Newspaper - New York Times

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Facing the most difficult business environment in living memory, the news media is struggling to find ways to turn a profit with online content. One of the most straightforward solutions is to put articles behind a 'paywall'.

### The emergence of paywall

Newspapers have struggled to find their niche, stay relevant, and maintain profitability in an era where news is increasingly consumed online and for free. The New York Times online subscription service—as know as the 'paywall'—was along time in the making. Originally expected to roll out in January of 2011, the plans for the so-called paywall were not announced until 17 March. (Folkenflik, 2011) Anyway that the Times has opted to

move its online operation to a paid model is big news.

There is no accurate record for the origin of paywall. In January 1997, the Wall Street Journal became one of the first national newspapers to install a paywall—the Great Wall of Murdoch, charging \$50 a year for access to WSJ.com, just one year after launching the site. Then in the following two decades, when some media giants like NYTimes successively began to promote online charging service, this concept came to people's attention. (Heine, 2010) According to Radoff's definition (2009), a paywall is a digital mechanism to block access to a webpage with screen requiring payment. That is to say, on a website with some free content and some paid content, the paywall is the line to separate the former from the latter.

Making online readers pay for content is not a new concept. When the Wall Street Journal decided to charge for its online edition in 1996, the company did so without a great deal of deliberation. Rather, as Peter Kann, who was then the chief executive officer of the Journal's parent company, Dow Jones, would later recall, 'I didn't know any better. I just thought people should pay for content.' (Grueskin, 2009) That was a novel idea at the time—which people should pay for news they got on the Web. Today, after years of declining print circulation and disappointing online advertisement revenue, many news organizations have begun pondering whether to institute a subscription system for their online sites.

The development of paywalls in the United States has cultivated two staunch believers in the digital subscription business: the Wall Street Journal, and the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, which started imposing online subscriptions in 2002, which are two typical models of paywalls in the contemporary society.

Walter Hussman, publisher of the Arkansas paper, has portrayed his site's paywall as a way to protect the more lucrative print edition. The online subscription service 'does not justify itself as a revenue stream,' Hussman has said. Print subscribers get the online edition for free. (The Economist, 2009)

The Wall Street Journal sees it differently and has consistently charged print subscribers extra for digital access. And the difference between those strategies is manifested in the publications' number of digital subscribers: WSJ.com has



around 1.1 million subscribers (including those who also get the print edition), or a bit more than half of its print base. The Democrat-Gazette has around 4,400 subscribers to its 'electronic edition'—about 2 percent of its daily circulation base. Its print circulation, though, has remained remarkably steady while that of other papers has declined precipitously. In 2006, the Democrat-Gazette's daily circulation was 176,910. Daily circulation now is listed at 186,962, though some of that strength is due to a merger of operations with some small Arkansas papers whose subscribers are now counted in the Democrat-Gazette's total.

But how replicable are these two models? The Arkansas paper is the dominant news organization in its state. The Wall Street Journal provides content geared toward financial decision-making and reaches a more elite and affluent audience than most news organizations.

### **The motivation to erect paywall**

Publishers usually cite three reasons to charge for online products. One, of course, is to increase subscription revenue. Another, less obvious, is to stanch the erosion in legacy operations: That is, since their readers now get the content they want for free online, why would they pay for a print subscription? If you start charging for digital access, should not that protect your more profitable print business? Finally, there is evidence that a paying audience is more valuable to advertisers because it demonstrates deeper commitment by those readers.

However, considering the benefits toward paywall, a heated debate still exists among the industry and consumers. Pay proponents often put it this way: High-quality journalism costs a great deal to produce, so users ought to pay to get it. As the famous saying goes, Quality journalism is not cheap, which is claimed by the media tycoon Rupert Murdoch. On the other hand, pay opponents have a counterargument: The ethos of cyber culture itself is rested on the ideas of free exchange of free information and open source communities. According to Lanchester (2010), 'The Internet is the most effective means of giving stuff away for free that humanity has ever devised. Actually making money from it is not just hard, it may be fundamentally opposed to the character and momentum of the net.' The implementation of a paywall goes against this very cultural norm of cyberspace.

### **Opportunities or challenges?**

Indeed, it might be plausible to believe that the presence of paywall could in theory help gain revenues. In practice, whether the paywall mechanism could lead news organizations to accumulate both economic and cultural capital through the Internet is still extremely unclear.

There is a very successful example Financial Times (FT) whose online subscription base has grown substantially in this enormous digital revolution. In Britain the owners of the FT, Pearson, announced in July 2009 that paid-for digital services now accounted for 67 per cent of FT Group revenues, as compared with just 20 per cent from advertising. While FT profits were down that year, amidst an unprecedented global recession, CEO Marjorie Scardino stated her confidence that the newspaper and its online operation would survive the crisis by supplying paying customers with valuable, specialist information. (Tryhorn, 2009) In 2010, the number of online subscribers reached to 207,000, more than half the number of print subscribers. (Pearson PLC., 2010) Indeed its digital access is not cheap—the FT charges \$259 a year for a standard subscription and \$389 for premium access to more content deep within the site. (FT Ltd., 2010)

However for every notable success like FT, there have been high-profile failures. The New York Times (NYTimes) an influential daily newspaper in the United States is just the latest example, after its recently erected paywall reportedly led to a sizable fall-off in online readership.

According to the research results conducted by Dougherty (2011), in the 12 days after the paywall was erected, total page views for NYTimes.com fell between 11 percent and 30 percent per day.



This is not the first time the company has tried online subscriptions. In 2005, the NYTimes launched its TimesSelect service, charging those who didn't get the print edition \$49 a year to access opinion pieces. After a fast start, with more than 120,000 subscribers signing up in two months, the plan stalled, and the NYTimes closed it down two years later; executives said the \$10 million a year the service was generating was not enough to compensate for the lost traffic and ad revenue. (Grueskin, 2011)

Although the FT started charging for access in 2001 and had a modest number of online subscribers for many years until 2009 (Pearson PLC., 2010) and it is too early to judge the fate of the new launched paywall in NYTimes, we could try to summarize the possible factors that adversely affect its development.

For the most important thing, compared to the more stringent paywalls used by other high-profile news organizations such as the FT, the NYTimes' platform is relatively lax. The instruction on Digital Subscriptions and Premium Products posted by NYTimes says that, readers who come to NYTimes articles through links from search, blogs and social media like Facebook and Twitter will be able to read those articles, even if they have reached their monthly reading limit. For some search engines, users will

have a daily limit of free links to Times articles. Therefore, the 'pay fence' (Doctor, 2011) is already set, but it is porous anyway, which may lower the efficiency of its use. Just as Guardian commentator Greenslade mentioned: 'The publishers claim that widespread use of their work by online news aggregators is undermining their efforts to develop online business models at a time when readers and advertisers are defecting from print' (Greenslade, 2009).

Besides the very key factor, the model of the NYTimes' subscription service could be taken into account. Its plan is as follows: readers can access up to 20 articles every month for no cost before they are asked to pay. (Horn, 2011) This indicates that NYTimes seems to want both the traffic and advertising dollars from casual browsers as well as the subscription-driven revenue from the more serious readers. After that, it is a metered service, which boils down to the old adage: you cannot have your cake and eat it to. In this respect, the potency within paywall may be weakened again and even to the point of collapse.

## Conclusion

However, despite the potential weaknesses we talked above, we could not neglect its strong vitality in the present day. Possibly just as Janet Robinson, president and chief executive of The New York Times Co. puts it, online paywall is a long term strategy. In the short-term perspective, going to something new in this transition time, there may be a slight dip in traffic. But from the perspective of the way we've constructed the bundles and will remain part of the digital ecosystem, we believe we have protected our traffic and consequently protected our advertising inventory and advertising revenue. (Ives, 2011)

Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation once called for reform of the law in the digital media industry. (Greenslade 2009) So can we try to guess that media managers are not the only ones challenged by the online revolution, the regulators too must adapt their principles and practices for the digital era.

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# E-mail Spam: advantages and impacts in digital publishing

Haoyu Qian

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## abstract

This paper explored spam from a perspective of digital publishing, considering influences on legitimate mails and online advertising within digital society. Acting as a vital aspect of new media practice on the Internet, spam significantly benefited stakeholders with its extremely cheap costs and extensive unsolicited audience. However, it also drew significant impacts on email producers and users. In order to precisely understand the substance of spam in the digital world, the paper would analyze these problems based on a comparison of legitimate mails and online advertisement, answering three questions: (1) what is email spam? (2) why it is so popular on the Internet? and (3) how it affects other digital publications?

## keywords

Spam - Email - Legitimacy - Anonymity - Regulation

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Within the digital era, information has been extended to an ordered sequence of symbols that record or transmit a message rather than the restricted technical sense. It has become an extremely crucial resource in modern culture and integrated with the way we cognize, predict and create social life. Email spam, or so-called “junk mail”, contributes to commercial profits as well as to grand impacts. In terms of digital publications, unsolicited bulk mails throw the entire email industry into chaos and interrupt regular development of online advertisement.

The history of modern, global Internet email services reaches back to the early ARPANET. Standards for encoding email messages were proposed as early as 1973. Conversion from ARPANET to the Internet in the early 1980s produced the core of the current services. Technically, the practice of email

service systems consists of vast efforts directly from divergent computing engineers and contributions indirectly from email producers, users and proponents. However in return, as Keunseop Shim, Weonshik Hahn, and Cheolhee Lee (2011) believe, the complex of email becomes a major obstacle to achieve qualitative classification.

## What is email spam?

In order to fully understand the role spamming mail plays in digital society, it is vital to realize not only the definition of email spam but also the features of a legitimate email. An international organisation intent on eliminating spam, ‘the Spamhaus Project’ concludes in the introductory document that there are two key characters of spam mails: sent in bulk and unsolicited. It argues both unsolicited email (for instance, sales inquiries) and bulk emails (for instance, subscriber newsletters) can be legitimate; however, a message can be deemed to be spam when the two terms are joined.

The Australia federal government emphasizes spam’s lucrative dimension in the Spam Act 2003, identifying spamming email as ‘unsolicited commercial electronic message’ (pp.15). This act covers any email that is not correctly identified and does not have an unsubscribe address (Rogers, 2006). Interestingly, regulators make no reference to bulk messaging, and hence a single unsolicited commercial e-message could potentially be spam. In the United States of America, the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act 2003 (CAN-SPAM ACT) defines spam email as any commercial electronic mail that is “...which does not have an existing business or personal relationship, and not be sent at the request of, or with the express consent of the recipient” (pp. 4)

Both Acts concentrate on spam regulation in terms of commercialisation, but a clear definition of legitimate email is absent. Therefore, this article will adopt the definition of the Spamhaus Project (sent in bulk and unsolicited) for spamming mails and regard legitimate mails as those who are produced and sent under regular controls and used for legitimate activities. In particular, the commercial feature mentioned above will be explored as a key aspect of spam marketing.

Spamming mails are usually created by business companies or individuals for mercantile affairs. Through electronic messages,

they can promote goods and services to consumers, get useful content from anonymous surveys, offer attractive occupations or opportunities and sometimes hack for classified information (like bank accounts, patent details, trade secrets and so on) across packaged computer virus (Murphy, 1996). Murphy's (1996) evaluation of mail spam appears to be mixed: "the most promising way to deliver direct-response ads since telemarketing is, unfortunately, also the most annoying".

From the promotional perspective, the role of spam mails acts as mostly as advertisement does, to some extent which could also be regarded as one form of digital publication while the term "electronic publishing" is primarily used today to refer to the current offerings of online and web-based publishers. The question whether and how email spam impacts on e-advertisement market will be discussed below.

### **Why spam mails are so popular on the Internet?**

On May 3, 1978, Gary Thuerk sent out the first spam e-mail advertisement to 600 people over the network of government and university computers known as the ARPAnet (David Streitfeld, 2003). "I was the pioneer," Thuerk says with quiet pride. "I saw a new way of doing things." In the end, however, Streitfeld concluded Thuerk's pioneering action was "opening the Pandora's box". A quarter-century later, the ARPAnet has become the Internet, and e-mail in-boxes are being choked by Thuerk's legacy.

Although companies and individuals trap much of email spam in filters before it ever gets to members, more than enough gets through to annoy, distress and outrage email users. Researches of spam suggest that there are four major factors why spam is flooding over the Internet. One reason is, according to John Leyden (2005), the extremely low costs of creating and sending spam. Spammers are able to send out hundreds of thousands of spamming emails in seconds, spending almost nothing on material delivery. In fact, most of the costs are paid by recipients or the carriers rather than the senders". One of the most prolific senders of junk email messages in 2003", reported by Hansell issued in the New York Times, was exposed to have over 150 million email addresses in over two-dozen countries and could send spam mail to up to 70 million people per day (from each one million emails sent, he earned about \$500). By contract, if advertisements were sent through the post, each item sent

would require postage to be paid. E-books, online journals and other profitable items integrate costs into production and sales. Even for free services like blogs, Wikis and YouTube videos, they take up more time and energy during the process. Therefore, a junk mail would be of the lowest cost among all digital publications and make itself worldwide (Jonathan Krim, 2003).

Easy access to obtain available email addresses is another convenience for unexhausted spam-makers. An email address is made up of username and domain name with a symbol "@" in between, for example "digital@example.com". So a number of addresses can share one domain name, which facilitates producers to classify and multi-send entries (Scott Mueller, n.d.). Usually, producers can get effective addresses, for example through massive address-harvesting software and random username generator. Privileged mailbox holders, especially for free, can send advertising packages to registers or sell addresses to spammers.

Theoretically, the scale of email address is infinite. Without limitation of language form and length of username, users can have as many mailboxes as possible. According to Email Statistics Report, 2010 published by the Radicati Group, the number of worldwide email accounts is expected to increase from 2.9 billion in 2010 to over 3.8 billion by 2014, with around 75% belonging to consumers and 25% being corporate. In 2010, the typical corporate user sends and receives about 110 messages daily while roughly 18% of emails received are spam, comprising both actual spam and "graymail"(i.e. unwanted newsletters, alerts, etc.).

Spam is profitable because people respond to it, by sending an abusive email back, clicking on a link or purchasing a product advertised in spam. Considering that spammers consider a 0.5% response rate 'successful', 0.5% amounts to a considerable number of people when millions of spam email is often sent one time (Rogers, 2006). In fact, duo to an earlier survey by the Radicati Group (2005) over 10% of people surveyed had purchased something from a spam email, while 31% of people surveyed have clicked on a link included within the spam email.

Despite of divergent anti-spam acts or laws around the world, spam and spammers always free of regulation and legal

obligation, which significantly differentiate from other forms in publishing area. The anonymity of email makes it very difficult to discover the identity of spammers, thereby making enforcement of any anti-spam activity less than effective (Jacquelyn Trussell, 2004). In fact, billions of illegal messages touting cheap mortgages, sexual enhancement pills, quasi-fraudulent business opportunities and pornography of a startling rawness are still flowing into mailboxes every day.

Therefore, the email industry is positioned in a paradoxical situation that reaction and opinion about email spam is almost exclusively negative, yet at the same time, spammers are still able to make an income from it. Since international legislators have taken various approaches to ending the scourge of spam, it is worthwhile to examine underlying reasons for anti-spam legislation around the world.

### **How email spam affects legitimate mails and online advertisement?**

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in its "Task Force on Spam" in July 2004, asserts that "Spam is a cross-cutting issue impacting on network utilization, congestion issues, and Internet issues; privacy and network security issues; and consumer protection issues". Because of low cost, availability, anonymity and sent in bulk, spam poses affects digital content in a different pattern. This part will emphasize on email spam with impacts mainly on legitimate emails in terms of digital publishing and comparing with online advertising from a promotional perspective.

As individual users, it is a tough work to deal with spam mails, for not only endless fake messages, but also leading to a crisis of confidence to electronic resources. While users mostly see spam as an annoyance, for recipients especially corporations it is a considerable expense. According to a study conducted earlier in 2009 by Nucleus Research Inc., "spam management costs U.S. businesses more than \$71 billion annually-approximately \$712 per employee" (John Edwards, 2009). A typical 1,000-user organisation can spend upwards of \$3.0 million a year to fight and manage spam", Sara Radicati (2010) concludes after analyzing statistics and forecasts of the Radicati Group. These flattening consumptions are mainly used for purchasing spam filters, deleting escaped spam and paying employees for extra work caused by spam. Despite of few potential benefits,

recipients get nothing as a result.

The space for legitimate mails for commercial aims and communications is restricted by billions of junk mails for negative attitude towards spam has change the way email users perceive the entire email industry (Mikala Folb, 1997). States of America Oline (AOL) suggest that in January 2003, more than half of the e-mail arriving at AOL was spam. By March it was more than 70% and reached well above 80%, more than 2.5 billion pieces of spam a day (David Streitfeld, 2003). As the world's biggest Internet provider, AOL's problem reflects badly on legal producers and users, leaving them in confusion that who domains in email industry. Besides, Internet services providers can not completely protect legitimate messages. Margaret Farmaki (cited in Mark Johnson, 2010) who reviewed data from 131 ISPs in the USA, Canada, Europe, and the Asia Pacific territories from July through December of 2009, discovers that "legitimate permission-based emails are often misidentified as spam by ISPs, and subsequently directed to the spam folder or vanish into the ether" (pp. 1).

From the commercial perspective, most junk mails are created for advertising. The aim of spammers is to promote their commercial offerings, sometimes political or ideological ones like online advertisement dose, but there are still differences between them. Although advertisement uses texts, speeches and videos to persuade an audience (a reader, listener or viewer) to take some action with respect to products, ideas, or services, each element of advertising, such placement, timing and content is fully protected and regulated by relevant laws and rules. As a result, advertisers should be responsible for their states and qualities of goods or services. However, the existence of spam ads through emails suddenly breaks the balance and pushes online advertisement to "the opposite side" (Richard Warner, 2003).

According to advantages of spam discussed before, spam is more competitive than normal advertising in marketing cost performance (Hansell, 2003). Both spam and e-advertising are based on the content and network, but online advertising requires more. Problems may arise if mail spam and online advertising are located in equivalent approaches in terms of promotion. Despite of famous stars or public celebrities, an email only consists of several colorful images, an attractive price



and a highlighted hyperlink (Art Gib, 2009). While in presenting, Gib says that advertisement needs charged platform or place on websites to display images, sounds and movements, but an email can be delivered into numerous free copies in less than ten seconds. For the other, by the limitation of budget, the advertiser has to choose certain websites to perform and the popularity of advertisement depends on how many people browse these websites (Folb, 1997), but permitted or not, spammer is able to send everyone a post, even though he/she knows nothing about the recipient, via address-harvesting softwares. In spite of illegal behavior, spam seems to have illimitable audience rather than advertisers paying for certain group of readers. It is very different for legitimate advertisers to defend themselves in an unfair competition.

On the other hand, spam tremendously harms the profits of related companies and firms, as well as email users by cheating or overestimated introduction of products, services and ideas. Producers may exaggerate the functions of the goods for property because it is hard to confirm who is responsible for this mess. These frauds may undermine the reliability of electronic materials and rise concerns about the role email played in the progress of publishing and the development of digital revolution.

The increasing popularity of spam also generates private issues when information is transferred into digital form as '1's and '0's in which mail address exposure has occupied the overwhelming majority. Thanks to the Internet, spammers can get addresses by purchasing, trading and hacking lists of email addresses from service providers, various harvesting softwares and even other spammers (Heather Harreld, 2000). Black mails contained Trojan virus is an alternative option, which usually appears to perform a desirable function for the user prior to run or install, but steals information or harms the system. Emails may contain confidential information, but any collaborative anti-spam approach could not guarantee strong privacy protection to the participating entities (Kang Li, Zhenyu Zhong & Lakshmish Ramaswamy, 2009). In particular, even experienced email users may endanger the mailbox account when they misuse 'carbon copy'(short for 'CC') instead of 'blind carbon copy'(short for 'BCC') while sending messages to group recipients together with friends' email addresses unconsciously.

## Conclusion

In view of the potential for economic and social harm of spam, and the potential for further problems as a result of the convergence of communication technologies, different countries and international constitutions have taken action to anti-spam activities, in terms of legislation, proposals and relevant researches. However owing to the Spamhaus's statistics (2011), over 80% of spam targeted at Internet users in North America and Europe is generated by a hard-core group of around 100 known professional spam gangs. Up to 24 May 2011, of the 10 worst spammers and spam gangs, Ukraine and Russian Federation have three positions respectively, while Estonia, Hong Kong, United states and India each owns one place of ten. These numbers partially indicates that even with CAN-SPAM Act as the United States, spam regulations are facing challenges before complete achievement.

The email industry is positioned in a paradoxical situation that reaction and opinion about email spam is almost exclusively negative for information overload, high management expense, illegal competition and privacy invasion, yet at the same time, spammers are still able to make an income from it for extremely low cost and multiple audiences. However, just as the Task Force (provided by OECD) highlights, that "there is not a simple solution to stop spam", the openness and decentralized nature of the Internet, which are the main reasons for its success, have also created the conditions leading to a number of vulnerabilities that are increasingly exploited by spammers and other online offenders. The lack of centralized control enables users to hide their identity. In addition, the low cost of accessing Internet and email services allows spammers to send out millions of spam messages every day at an extremely low marginal cost so that only a small response rate is required to attain high profits. However, in combating spam and other online threats it is viewed as important to maintain the openness, flexibility and innovation underlying the Internet.

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# Advertising in the New Media Age

Quan Quan Chen

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## abstract

New media has a strong impact on the traditional advertising industry. Nowadays, advertising companies employ new technology to target customers, specifically on the Internet. Internet users have become a new target group for advertising companies.

In the 1970s, consumers were passive. They made decisions from information presented or displayed in advertising. After the 1970s, advertising became emotional. Advertising was tending to tell more touching stories in order to appeal to consumers. The internet allows users to experience traditional informative and emotional advertising in many different media forms. In the digital world, advertising in printed press, advertising on radios and advertising on TV are still existent and popular in our society; however, the impact of the traditional advertising is no longer as strong as it used to be. This situation has resulted in the advertising industry shifting its focus from traditional media to new media. An increasing number of people are communicating, entertaining and purchasing goods on internet. Therefore, it seems that advertising on internet might be more efficient than any other media.

This paper aims to study the current situation of new media advertising and discuss the necessity of studying new media advertising. Through analysing the main problems in the new media advertising industry, such as lack of creativity, lack of third-party monitoring system, less authoritative and low brand influence, this paper will introduce a few strategies for advertising business innovation

## keywords

new media advertising - new media age - advertising agencies - advertising industry

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## introduction

New media and new technology have sped up the development of the media industry and there is more advertising placement on the Internet, so that advertisers are willing to invest more and more money on new media. Therefore, investment and cost in the traditional media advertising has been transferred to new media. The rapid growth of new media advertising is changing the mode of advertising communication. It also sharpens the impact of advertising. In current media environments, traditional media advertising is under challenge and going to dilemma. It is hard for advertisers to choose media platform and media channel to place their advertisements. Its difficulties mainly refer to the management strategy, the number of the audiences and the channel of information. It is due to changes in media structure and media culture in new media age.

New media is considered as a form of communication that uses television technology, network technology, the internet, broadband local area network, wireless communication network and satellite channels, to provide users with video, audio, data service, online gaming, and remote education. It is interactive and Internet driven (Butterfield, 2011). At present, there are six types of media form which are usually described as the new media: mobile digital television (including wireless, on automotive and on public transport); Digital cable television; Internet Protocol Television; Internet Protocol Television (IPTV delivers television programming to households via a broadband connection using Internet protocols); Webcast; Network Television; Mobile TV.

Compared with traditional media advertising, new media advertising is more interactive and targeting to specific audiences. It is more competitive. A lot of researches and studies have been done in terms of digital and traditional media advertising. However, because of the rapid development and diversity of new media, advertising management is still a hot topic in new media environment for both scholars and the industry itself. The delivery method and impact assessment of new media advertising are still difficulties to advertising companies. This paper will emphasise the necessity of studying new media advertising and its main problems. More importantly, this paper will suggest a new advertising management strategy for new media advertising companies and advertisers in new media environment.



### **the necessity of studying on new media advertising**

New media as a new advertising platform has its advantages because consumers can become more “fragmented” and “focused”. New media is increasingly favoured by advertisers. The rise of new media is a challenge to the traditional advertising industry. The theories and practices of new media studies are considered as a focus in the advertising industry and communication studying area. In new media environments, the issue of advertising business management model has been debated.

Compared with the traditional media, new media has many advantages and outstanding features. However, many media operators and advertising agencies are still applying traditional advertising management strategy on new media form. Naturally, they are not able to maximize advertising effectiveness and their profit.

New media is more interactive and targeted (Haythorntharite, 2001). However, the advertising delivery method on new media and its assessment system has been criticized. There is very little research on the characteristics of target audience of new media advertising. It is even more difficult to judge if the advertising has reached its target audiences or not and the degree of satisfaction from consumers. According to Nopenen’s article, “Advertising efforts in social media-effective or not” (2010), there are only few studies of the effectiveness of advertising in new media and there are a large number of contradictions in the opinions and statements of new media experts. User experiences from marketing in new media are contradictory as well.

### **the main problems of new media advertising**

#### **less authoritative and low brand influence**

One of the concepts of new media is that everyone on the Internet could be a publisher. That gives people freedom of speech; however, that leads to bad impact for the Internet as a medium. “Less authoritative” is one of the features of the new media.

Compared to the traditional media or mass communication media, the coverage of new media is very limited. That is to say, massive advertising investment will be wasted. It is due to a shorter development period of new media, so the coverage is still low; on the other hand, too much entertainment information

and commercials on new media, which damages the authority and credibility of new media.

According to Eric Clemons (2009), professor of operations and information Management at The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, consumers do not trust advertising on new media especially the internet because of low credibility of commercial source. He points out that “advertising and company sponsored blogs are the least-trusted source of information on products and services”. “The problem is not the media, the problem is the message, and the fact that it is not trusted...”, he argues. The recent research (Nopenen, 2010) finds that advertising in social networks cannot be viewed effective or worthwhile.

As new media is still in the early stages of development, there are a lot of concerns in terms of advertising credibility and sustainability issues. Therefore, new media advertising hardly help build brand and its value. Promotion of the brand, especially the launch of new brands still rely on the brand impact of traditional media to enhance product and brand awareness and credibility.

Lack of third-party monitoring system

The effectiveness of the different promotion methods have not been researched much (Nopenen, 2010). As the development time is short and the form of new media advertising is very fresh, the relevant third-party monitoring system has not been developed. Most of new media still use the old payment method. From advertisers’ point of view, they can not tell whether the investment is worth or not because there is no way to judge if the advertising is reaching its target audiences and if consumers are able to see the advertisement. No mentioned, if it could enhance brand awareness and boost up sales is a big issue.

Lack of creativity

Media convergence enables the traditional media content to display on new media platform. However, “New-media technology is often blamed for inhibiting creativity in online advertising”, Macmillan (2010) argues. He also states that “since the arrival of the internet and other forms of new media, technology and creativity have been thrust together. They have not always been comfortable companions, as the desire to create new and exciting work in digital media has often been constrained by technology”.

At this stage, the most new media advertising use the content which is supposed to be used on newspaper or television. However, some content does not match the actual characteristics of new media and it could not highlight the advantages of new media. For example, advertising or commercials on bus mobile LCD TV often does not consider the feature of public transport and the situation of traffic. It is usual that advertisements are often interrupted by stops on the middle of road. Therefore, the actual impact of advertising is not satisfactory.

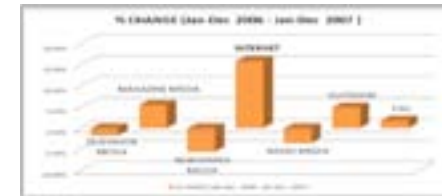
The development of newspaper in mobile phones has been restricted by so many factors, one of the most important which is that the content is all copied from somewhere. Currently, the newspaper on mobile phone almost has no original content. Lack of editing system, operational management system and professional team is the situation of newspaper on mobile phone. Its business, including news sources relies on traditional media or the internet. In the media age of "Content is the key", this will no doubt be the disadvantage of the development of mobile newspapers.

### **innovation of advertising business**

Because the speed of the Internet is increasing and new media delivery devices such as Iphone and Ipad, contain a lot of applications, we are heading to new media convergence culture. Media convergence and new media advertising jump into the same boat.

### **Investments of new media advertising**

New media advertising markets are expanding. Shifting from traditional advertising to new media advertising means a large amount of investment has been shifted. Internet usage is at large growth every year in the world (Dayrit, 2010). Therefore, advertisers are more willing to spend their money on new media advertising. According to Jon Swallen from TNS Media Intelligence (2008), "What we've seen in 2007 is that top advertisers as a group have been shifting money from offline media to online media at a faster rate than the rest of the advertising market". The table from TNS Media Intelligence shows that the investment of advertising on internet had a largest growth in 2007 comparing with any other traditional media. Less money had been invested on TV, radio and newspaper in 2007.



(Source: TNS Media Intelligence)

Investment in new media advertising is boosting. According to the prediction from Magna Global in US, it was said that online advertising would be the fastest growing medium during 2010. "The growth would be due to the increasing ease with which many advertisers – especially those who are endemic to the Internet as well as small and mid-sized companies – can accomplish their goals through digital media... In 2015, online advertising should generate \$42.7 billion in total revenues, 21.4% of total industry activity". New advertising agencies are established every day around the world; however, they tend to be small size but with high technology, focus and strong community building blogs to find and provide highly targeted advertising opportunities to advertisers (Good, 2008).

### **the advertising agencies and advertisers in internet age**

Advertising companies have to adapt with new media (Tabije, 2010). Over the last two decades, the structure of advertising business and advertising companies has changed significantly because of the internet and online advertising. Most advertisers and advertising companies take the advantage of online advertising. Since internet media has been changing everyday and every year, advertising companies have to adopt the new trends of new media. They should develop an advertising strategy on how to approach consumers on internet to their clients. Moreover, advertising agencies should be able to monitor direct response from consumers in terms of product sales, brand awareness and advertisers' company reputation in consumers' minds.

For advertisers, it is always important to choose the right advertising companies. "you have to make sure you sign with a company that is on the cutting edge of advertising methods and not one that is stuck in the old methods of print media only", Tabije (2010) said.

Principles of good new media advertising companies working with new media planning, placement and purchase are:

- Ability of defining the brand and identifying its target group for advertisers to the digital world
- Ability of using latest technologies and strategies
- Good reputation for providing effective advertising solution on internet;
- Ability of boosting up sales, increasing consumer awareness and strengthening brand.

Facing the opportunities on the internet and the challenges of the internet, the advertising industry has to:

- understand the feature of the internet;
- make good use of the information provided by the internet;
- segment target audience more specifically;
- deliver advertisement at right spot;
- provide good customer service by advertising;
- increase brand awareness by advertising

### conclusion

The rise of new media has a deep impact on traditional advertising industry. Traditional advertising has to combine and interact with new media based on internet and wireless communication technology and explore a new path to achieve communication effectiveness. The innovation and development of new media advertising communication is a tool to enhance the social and culture structure and is an inevitable factor to boost up economic development.

The development of new technologies and applications, advertisers' demand is aiming to accelerate the continuous improvement of the traditional media and new media between the integration of media integration will also become a development of the advertising industry background of the times. By analysing new media and traditional media advertising integration of the development of advertising, new media and traditional media advertising integration under the favourable conditions for development, under the proposed integration of media advertising strategy, while the integration of media advertising trends of development. Old and new media should disseminate innovative forms of advertising, and constantly improve the new media advertising business model, the old and new media to achieve the cross-media advertising, and work together to build an efficient management system, incentive advertising talent, ultimately to promote the harmonious development of industry.

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# Twitter Theatre: notes on theatre texts and social media platforms

Alejandra Montemayor Loyó

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## abstract

This paper examined how the Internet and social media platforms such as Twitter are modifying media forms such as theatre, specifically from two main aspects: the creation of theatre texts; and the engagement with the audience.

Modifications were pointed out by analysing two digital theatre projects: The English project *Such Tweet Sorrow*, which had the main objective of promoting Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in a new narrative form through Twitter messages and YouTube videos; and the Mexican project *Pájaros en el Alambre* (Birds in the Wires), which focused on creating improvised radio theatre through texts and characters shared and written in Twitter and Facebook by their audience.

Through the essay, observations are made on how social media has encouraged theatre institutions to publish their creative works on the Internet in new physical formats, and how this engages audiences to draw some more general conclusions about the direction of digital theatre projects.

## keywords

Social Media Platforms - Twitter - Theatre - Interactivity - Digital Environments - Collaborative Audiences - Digital Texts

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New technologies and the rise of the Internet have influenced cultural practices in various forms. They have changed the way in which we relate to performing arts such as theatre, dance or any artistic work that is performed in front of an audience. Some artists use technological tools in order to create new contents and meanings while others use them merely for aesthetic experimentation, channelling the relationships between audiences and artistic works in different directions and creating new dramatic forms (Dixon, 2007).

The goals of cultural institutions have changed as well. The primary objective of these organizations was to make art accessible. Today, the main focus resides in seeking new ways of generating a creative experience in the public and promoting its participation. 'Institutions are encouraged to present themselves not as gatekeepers or protectors of high culture objects or events, but as facilitators of engaging, value-generating experiences—resources for visitors' future creativity'. (Rumbold, 2010:315)

Digital environments such as social media platforms are a useful resource for accomplishing those objectives. They can provide audiences with unlimited access to art and its creators whenever they want (Cowen, 2009), they can promote a more direct participation between audience and creators, and used in a creative way, they can generate a truly artistic and meaningful experience for the audience.

Social media has already shown its capacity for empowering audiences while at the same time creating a closer relationship with its specific organisation. An example is the audience or fans of the entertainment industry. Scholars have studied a wide variety of fan activities, such as *Star Trek* fans (Jenkins, 2006) the more low profile fandom community of soap operas (Baym, 1997), observing that the Internet allows people to participate to their desired commitment level and through different platforms. Thus, an increasing number of theatre institutions and theatre companies are starting to use these digital tools as well, due to their capacity to foster communities, reach a vast majority of theatre viewers, and promote ticket selling (Davis, 2010).

The Internet has also changed the way we write and the way we experience reading through texts in electronic formats. Browner (2009) mentions three principal characteristics that electronic

texts seem to offer in contrast with printed text: searchability; links; and accessibility. Furthermore, she mentions that the Internet can be positive as well as negative since it might provide both the reader and the author with empowering or disempowering tools that can change their vision regarding what is now considered a text.

Browner takes into account the fact that before the rise of the Internet, our reading of texts was usually done in an individual form, whereas now our electronic reading is always accompanied by series of links, hyperlinks and hypertexts, that we follow and click whenever we want, leaving behind the traditional linear reading. As she points out 'in an environment where part of a text is its links to other texts, there is, in a sense, no separability of texts at all, or there is only one huge text, of which we sample fragments' (Browner, 2009:173).

Having this in mind, this paper aims to examine some of these changes by analysing the way social media platforms such as Twitter are modifying media forms such as theatre. It focuses on two main aspects: the creation of theatre texts; and the relationship with the audience. These changes will be observed in two digital theatre projects that use social media platforms to accomplish their goals: The English project *Such Tweet Sorrow* and the Mexican project *Pájaros en el Alambre* (Birds in the Wire).

It is important to highlight the fact that theatre has worked hand-in-hand with technology long before social media platforms. Lighting, props, music, and more recently multimedia elements are present in most theatre productions. In this sense, we can think of theatre as always being interdisciplinary, and as Dixon points out, 'theatre, from its ritual roots through classical manifestations to contemporary experimental forms has been quick to recognize and utilize the dramatic and aesthetic potentials of new technologies' (Dixon, 2007:39).

Theatre audiences have also changed as well. They started to adopt participatory roles in the late sixties, with happenings and experimental performances and open-air community events where they could take part through improvisational theatre and stand-up comedy. Since then, the interaction with audiences has expanded to different levels. Now, in online environments these levels can also be seen and analysed. Dixon (2007) talks

about four different types of interactivity in ascending order: navigation (by clicking to websites); participation (by voting online or answering multiple-choice questions); conversation (when a dialogue among members of the audience and the artistic work takes place); and collaboration (when the audience becomes author or co-author of the artistic work). Examples of these can be seen in the following projects.

The first project, *Such Tweet Sorrow*, was performed in April 2010 by The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), Mudlark (a cross-platform production company), and Channel 4's digital investment fund. It was a five-week drama based on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Shakespeare is one of the few playwrights whose art work has been adapted, reconstructed and performed in numerous



Figure 1 and 2: Tweets of some of the characters of "Such Sweet Sorrow", and Twitter accounts of all the characters of the story

narrative forms, being a source of inspiration for musicians, writers, actors and a wide variety of individuals. Shakespeare has been presented on stage, on paper, on screen (Worthern, 2008) and now even in videogames, demonstrating the importance of this dramatist and the valuable resource he symbolizes within digital environments (Osborne, 2010).

*Such Tweet Sorrow* presents *Romeo and Juliet* in a new narrative form performed in real time by six actors through their Twitter accounts. In order to carry out this story, the writers sketched out an outline similar to the original tragedy but with a more contemporary narrative taking place in modern England. The actors wrote and improvised short messages in Twitter

following this outline, while supporting the story through other social networks platforms such as YouTube, Twitpic, Tumblr or Lastfm where thoughts, poems, music and different elements were uploaded through computers and mobile phones. We can observe these elements in Juliet, who at the beginning of the play has just started to use Twitter, is about to turn 16 and is thinking of organizing a party to celebrate. She makes a Facebook invitation, uploads several videos to YouTube and one of her friends makes a playlist for the party in Lastfm.

All these uploaded material elements could be seen by the audience through “following” the characters on Twitter or through visiting the official website. In addition, the audience was able to send tweets to the characters in order to get involved in the story, and more often than not, the characters would reply to those tweets for the audience to see them. In an interview, Michael Boyd, artistic director of the RSC said; “Our ambition is always to connect people with Shakespeare and bring actors and audiences closer together. This digital experiment ... allows our actors to use mobiles to tell their stories in real time and reach people wherever they are in a global theatre.” (Reuters, 2010).

While browsing the official website and the timeline in the Twitter accounts, one can observe the real time based interactions among the characters through Twitter; the interactions between the characters and the audience through Twitter; and the combination of several social media platforms to enrich and create the electronic text.

With the presence of all these elements, we can see that the project experimented with opportunities fostered in social media platforms in order to reach new audiences (specifically Twitter users), meaning young audiences to whom Shakespeare might seem old, boring or difficult to understand. Therefore, the dialogues between the characters have a more contemporary and less poetic language, making it accessible in a new presentation and representation that shows the technological and historical context in which we are living.

This play is also a perfect example of the phenomenon that Browne (2009) observes in the digital environments regarding electronic texts. In this particular case, the story is not linear since it develops through links that the audience has to follow in

order to read the play. Therefore, the tweets, the links to other platforms and the hypertexts altogether, makes of *Such Tweet Sorrow* a unitary text.

The RSC achieved the publishing and sharing of Shakespeare’s cultural heritage to a global audience since any Twitter user from any part of the world could follow the story as well. Finally, it is important to mention that feeling of a live show is also present since the tweets were happening simultaneously and in a real time base.

The second project, *Pájaros en el Alambre* was done in January 2011 by the Radio and the Theatre institutions of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) with professional actors from the Mexican League of Improvisation (LIMI). The project aimed to develop live improvised radio theatre in order to create stories with the listeners of Radio UNAM 96.1 FM.



Figure 3.: *Pájaros en el Alambre* Facebook and Twitter accounts. NOTE: In Facebook we can still read suggestions from the audience whereas in Twitter this is not possible due to the structure of the social platform.

The improvised radio theatre done with this project was constituted by a story that would develop during the week from Monday to Friday using various mechanisms for the audience to contribute to the improvisation both off and on air. *Pájaros en el Alambre* created 10 stories in the 10 weeks that the program was on air.

In order to create the story, every Friday the director would choose a genre for the next week’s story (drama, comedy, suspense, etc), and the audience would suggest through Twitter and Facebook several titles, characters, and places where

the story could take place in Mexico City. Then, from Monday until Friday, the plot would develop adding more suggestions, characters and phrases invented by the public during the week. Also every Wednesday, members of the audience could telephone the radio station in order to improvise a character live on air. The director or the actors would tell him the character and he/she would improvise a telephone call live on air with one of the characters of the developing story.

As one hears the radio theatre (either live or later on the official webpage of Radio UNAM) several elements are highlighted: the story developing live on air, the suggestions of the audience happening simultaneously and during the week through social media platforms, the interaction of the director and the audience, and the interaction of a member of the audience and an actor through an improvised telephone call.

In the case of *Pájaros en el Alambre*, the merging of theatre, radio, telephone, improvisation techniques and digital platforms contribute to create a meaningful, participative and collaborative space where the audience is involved in the development of the story. As Oddey points out 'It is the diversity that is significant, in terms of the working process and practice of artists, in the creation and merging of the theatrical with everyday life, with the blurring of boundaries of the roles of director-creator-collaborator, performer and spectator' (Oddey, 2007:7).

In contrast with the first project, the stories here are not following a predetermined outline and its development is not seen in one specific social media platform (although *Such Tweet Sorrow* uses YouTube, Tumblr and other platforms, the main centre of the story is developed only on Twitter). However, they are similar in the sense that the stories are not linear and they are created through brief tweets (and with *Pájaros en el Alambre*, with Facebook suggestions as well).

In this particular case, the empowerment of the audience of social media is more noticeable. It involves them more actively in the collaborative process by creating and shaping the text through tweets and messages on Facebook, both online and on air. Therefore, the basic characteristics conferred to digital environments such as interactivity in its deepest level, participation and creativity are achieved, leading us to various conclusions that can illustrate different aspects of the way that

theatre and its audience are changing through social media.

On the one hand, *Such Tweet Sorrow* is a perfect example of new physical formats in theatre texts that show different ways of writing and reading an electronic text. It is clear how social media has encouraged the RSC to publish, share and distribute their creative works through the Internet in new physical formats. Also, a project in which a figure as important as Shakespeare is the main focus, help us to observe the impact of technology in the ways we appropriate cultural heritage and in the ways that theatre projects can modify their dramatic structure.

On the other hand, *Pájaros en el Alambre* presents an innovative combination of different media tools (radio, live telephone calls, social media platforms) that helps them to be closer with the audience in order to interact on different levels. They can either click on Radio UNAM's website to hear the radio theatre or they can actively become co-authors of the stories. Here we can observe how this project engages pre-existing and new audiences in an active collaboration of an improvised theatre text. This can foster a connection of audiences with cultural life without being passive receivers of a predetermined cultural offering.

The direction of these digital theatre projects proves, once again, that theatre is not a predetermined old media but a medium that constantly appropriates technology to create innovative proposals and offer the audience creative and enriching artistic experiences.

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### Images

FIGURE 1 and 2: Images taken from the official website of Such Tweet Sorrow

FIGURE 3: Images taken from the Twitter and Facebook Account of Pájaros en el Alambre

### Related Links

#### Links from the English project Such Tweet Sorrow

Official Webpage: <http://www.suchtweetsorrow.com/>

Twitter Juliet <https://twitter.com/#!/julietcap16>

Twitter Romeo [https://twitter.com/#!/Romeo\\_Mo](https://twitter.com/#!/Romeo_Mo)

Twitter Tybalt [https://twitter.com/#!/Tybalt\\_Cap](https://twitter.com/#!/Tybalt_Cap)

Twitter Jess [https://twitter.com/#!/Jess\\_nurse](https://twitter.com/#!/Jess_nurse)

Twitter Mercuteio <https://twitter.com/#!/mercuteio>

Twitter Laurence Friar <https://twitter.com/#!/LaurenceFriar>

Youtube Juliet <http://www.youtube.com/user/94Juliet>

Tumblr Jago: <http://kleptojago.tumblr.com>

#### Links from the Mexican project Pájaros en el Alambre

Radio UNAM official website (all the radio theatres done during the project are available in this website) <http://www.radiounam.unam.mx>

Twitter Pájaros en el Alambre <http://twitter.com/#!/pajarosalambre>

Facebook Pájaros en el Alambre <https://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/P%C3%A1jaros-En-El-Alambre/126687677397045>

# The appearance and impacts of electronic magazines from the perspective of media production and consumption

Ting Xu

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## abstract

This article analyses the appearance and impacts of electronic magazines from the perspective of media production and consumption. Electronic magazines have emerged to coincide with the trend of the digital revolution in the publishing industry. Traditional print publishing has been transforming into digital publishing, which brings new forms of content production and particular consumption habits. This article also analyses that it impacts the form of magazines production, bringing more interactive and multiple performance form, and contributes to the trend of media development through consuming it, such as convergence culture. It means that electronic magazines contribute to the cooperation of multiple media platforms and media industries, and enable people get more power in the communication activities.

## keywords

Electronic magazines - media production- media consumption- convergence culture

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## Introduction

With the rapid development of the Internet and communication technologies, particularly the invention of web 2.0, the publishing industry has experienced a transformation to some extent. Traditional print publishing has been transforming into digital publishing, which leads the way for changes in content production and consumption. The electronic magazine has emerged, which coincides with the revolution of the publishing industry in the digital environment. Not only in the new means of content production, but also in shifting consumption habits.

It brings new forms of magazine production, and contributes to the trend of media development through consuming it, such as convergence culture that was first defined by Henry Jenkins, an American media scholar, as “the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kings of entertainment experiences they want” (Jenkins, 2006). This essay will introduce the background of the appearance of electronic magazines, the three evolutionary stages, its impacts on the form of magazine production and media developing trends through consuming it.

## The background of the appearance of electronic magazines

The appearance of electronic magazines not only complies with the digital form of content production, but also matches the shifting consumption habits of content users, who increasingly consume electronic media but shrinkingly spend on print media, and develop a browsing, scanning, one-time, interactive and nonlinear screen-based reading behavior.

The traditional form of content production has been dramatically changed by the rise of digital publishing in the end of twenty century. The content carriers have been transforming from paper to computer, cell phone, Internet and electronic paper. Publishing has experienced a shift from books, newspapers, magazines to digital versions. It creates another landscape for the publishing industry, and publishers have been adopting digital media to maintain and expand their markets. It also seems that digital publishing is significant and necessary for media to compete with others.

In the increasingly digital environment, the amount of available electronic information is rising, and people spend more time on reading digital media. Then the reading methods and behavior of people and mode of thinking have been greatly affected. Although many people still prefer print materials over electronic ones because of the chief characteristics of print resources: portability and readability (Bodomo, Lam and Lee, 2003), electronic formats have achieved an increasing popularity, particularly for a younger generation, due to ease of access, timeless, searching capability, additional resources, availability and currency. Rogers (2001) conducted a survey of American colleges' students, finding that 62% of them prefer electronic

versions over print formats. Strouse (2004) indicates that content users, especially for younger users, have shaped an obvious preference for receiving information in electronic formats. Further, people's reading behavior has been shifting to base on screens. The characteristics of a screen-based reading behavior including more time being spent on browsing and scanning, one-time reading, nonlinear reading, key-word spotting, though at the same time, spending less time on in-depth reading and concentrated reading. Birkerts (1994) argues that the younger generation who grows up in the digital environment lacks the capability of in-depth reading and sustained attention. Also this interactive and nonlinear reading method largely impacts the mode of thinking of people, transforming single linear mode to the free, open and nonlinear way.

### **Three evolutionary stages of electronic magazines**

Because of the factors we discussed above, magazine publishers have been extending their market to digital media, and then electronic magazines have become increasingly popular. According to Tim Holmes (cited in McKay, J., 2006), the situation that electronic media has been experiencing can be roughly divided into three stages: the purely digital magazine, the electronic adjunct and the magazine-like community.

#### **The purely digital magazine**

This stage of electronic magazines are also called conventional-magazines-online, and sometimes labeled as 'art school' projects. Electronic magazines, at this time, which are the attempt of traditional magazines expanding to digital media, depend on the traditional pattern and get information or content from the printing magazines. But it utilises the specialities of digital media to provide diverse expression of content to users though the ways of delivery and dissemination of digital material. The prime formers are Salon.com and Slate.com. Salon independently runs and operates a subscription policy accompanying a 'day passes' program that non-subscribers can get access through watching a long and multi-screen advertisement, while Slate attaches itself to digital behemoth Microsoft and is available free supported by advertising. Moreover, the strong impression given by sites such as thisisamagazine is advanced graphic work, not only including graphics, but also the graphic treatment of text. In short, the low cost production of electronic magazines permits publishers to trail new genres which are more or less conventional products using unconventional ways of distribution

and dissemination.

#### **The electronic adjunct**

In this phase, electronic magazines are as an adjunct involved in mainstream digital media like well-know portals or printing magazines' websites. Such adjunct sites are characterized by three elements: content tasters, subscription builders and community hubs. Hence magazines profit from promotion of the main product, subscription sales and advertising or sponsorship. A small amount of the editorial content of magazines usually is offered to arouse the interest to go through the entire one, which results in the distribution of the print magazines and better signing up for subscriptions to access the digital version. Also unique editorial content is provided to the adjunct sites by the journalists of such sites rather than repurposed content from the print version. In addition, many portals such as Yahoo and MSN present some articles that are on a range of topics in the magazine form. Another unique performance of the adjunct is that content providers generate websites specifically for mobile users such as service providers AvantGo, which delivers massive mobile websites to users on their handheld personal digital assistants (PDAs) and smart phones. Further, community hub provision is another characteristic of adjunct sites and later develops to the heart feature of the magazine format, which enable cultivate a sense of identity or membership in a community (Korinek, V. 2000). Chat rooms and message boards are the feature of magazine websites, which encourages instant peer-to-peer communication, and email addresses allow readers to directly correspond with editors or writers, which achieves a two-way channel of communication.

#### **The magazine-like community**

Magazines in this phase tend to become a community site, supporting itself by both editorial and commercial ways. The classic example is iVillage.com that launched as a site in 1999 and went on to combine the site with Women.com, at the same time gathered content from magazines including Cosmopolitan, Good Housekeeping, Redbook and Marie Claire, and those owned by the Hearst Corporation of American. It is queried whether iVillage is a magazine. According to Abrahamson (1996b) in his book Magazine-Made America, there is a useful definition of magazines: 'specific information in a specific form that can be expected to appeal to a definable segment of readers'. Moreover, there is still editorial content, some

directly created by the audience and 'editorial team' who are named writers of articles and collating and subediting material by community members. Tim Holmes (2006) argues that one of the strongest characteristics of the magazine form is the blurry boundary between producers and consumers.

### **The impacts of electronic magazines**

Electronic magazines increasingly became popularity, which affects the form of magazine production, such as the digital version that has distinct performance forms, and contributes to the trend of media development through consuming it.

### **The impacts on the form of magazines production**

Electronic magazines have incomparable advantages including multiple expression form in multimedia websites, timely publishing, low-cost production and stronger interaction with readers, but also together with drawbacks such as unguaranteed quality of content created by untrained journalists and editors.

Compared with print magazines, one of the strongest characteristics of digital form is multiple expression from combining texts, images, audio and video, which offers a more interesting and enjoyable experience to users. At the same time, unlike the constraints in the layout of paper, layout design to the web allows such flexible performance of content. Moreover, many sites provide regular podcasts for users such as BBC History Magazine and New Scientist. Net, and then users (sometimes only offering to subscribers of the site) are allowed to browse or download audio bulletins and feature videos. At the same time, it is easy to grasp the particular interest and needs of audience, which is significant feedback for publishers and editors, who hope to improve their publishing strategy.

Users can more easily get information through electronic magazines not only because of the timescale of publishing, but also the way of accessing the information, without limited factors such as time and geography. Traditional magazines are usually released in weekly or monthly cycles and need to plate make, print and bind, but magazine sites tend to publish on a daily basis even timely update when news becomes available. On the other hand, there are many facilities to receive information such as computers, PAD, cell phones, enabling readers to access digital magazines at any place. Also users can choose the way

of reading such as reading online and download it, which means reading is not limited by time. Hence, electronic magazines easily expand their popularity and gain more readers.

Supported by technical infrastructure, electronic magazines are not limited by paper and more effectively use content in different platforms. Publishing to the web is not restrained by paper sheet, which leads to not only saving the time and cost of plate making, printing and binding, but also more diverse, flexible and humanised design of layout, and more importantly reducing contamination. In addition, content such as news stories or images can be effectively managed through the database systems. Journalists store their works to some form of content management system, then content can be reused or redesigned in very different platforms such as the printed page, a website or a cell phone, which saves the time and cost of production.

Publishers or editors always want to get the feedback from readers through interactive activities. In print magazines, the puzzle will be put in one page, left the answer in another page, or readers are encouraged to fill the questionnaires or correspond to editors. But now in electronic form, users can immediately comment on the article they just read, and then editors can get the accuracy feedback on how readers feel. There are also chats room supporting peer-to-peer conversation, and such flexible interactivity in traditional magazines is hard to find. In short, interaction is very significant, enabling publishers and editors to get the key point that users wanted, and also contributes to develop a reliable readership.

Although electronic magazines bring about a number of incomparable virtues, it also generates its own dangers such as poor quality content created by untrained journalists and editors because they lack a censor or professional 'gatekeeper'. In contrast to the professional team of journalists and editors in traditional magazines, most members who contribute to communities of electronic form not only can generate amateur articles, but also highlight some issues if they have the vague idea about it. For instance, in 2007, a series of defamatory content about a parenting expert posted on Mumsnet. Com, a parenting website, led the owners of this website to engage in a lawsuit. In addition, electronic magazines still develop in an immature condition, and the quality of it in market does not reach



an average level. It means some magazine websites still focus on the form of expression using new technologies but neglect the quality of content such as rich, specificity and innovation, and some are maybe directly copy from print magazines. Those issues will effect to build authoritative status of electronic magazines in the communication industry.

### **The impacts of electronic magazines' consumption**

The consumption of digital media has been generating the tendency of media convergence and the emerging of convergence culture. The production and consumption of electronic magazines also contribute to media convergence and convergence culture. As the definition of convergence culture proposed by Henry Jenkins mentioned before, electronic magazines are the performance of cooperation and convergence between traditional media and digital media, contribute to the cooperation of multiple media industries, while the consumption behaviors of audiences transfer in multiple media platforms and industries. It also benefits to develop the blurry boundary of media producers and consumers.

Electronic magazines have become increasingly popular, but now they cooperate with traditional media to some extent, while audiences tend to consume magazine content across multiple media platforms. Due to rich profits and a huge number of chances created by new media, magazine publishers and editors expand their market to digital media. However, electronic format also need to be supported by traditional magazines since the weakness is brought and the advantages of traditional media. According to Mark Glaser (2005), electronic magazine would replace print one are unlikely to be true in the immediate future. Firstly, readers do not rely on the text of magazines as heavily on digital version as on the page. Traditional media still keep the authority in the communication process such as high quality information and professional team of publishers, journalists and editors. Moreover, most readers prefer going from page to page over a screen. Tenner and Yang (1999) conduct a survey among faculty members of Texas A&M University, indicating that 55% of the responders prefer print versions primarily because they dislike reading on a screen, less credibility of authors and difficulties in future access. Furthermore, since the users used to get data or information in the free way on the Internet, readers easily go elsewhere if online publishing attempt to charge for a subscription. According to Jason Whittaker (2008), the ideal of

magazine world is print version drives readers to the website, while the magazine site drives some of users back to the print magazines.

According to Andrew Nachison (2001), the director of the Media Center of American Press Institute, media convergence as strategic, operational and cultural alliance between printed, audio, video and interactive digital media organizations, and he stresses the emphasis of media convergence is the cooperative mode between multiple media industries rather than just a merger between various media platforms. It seems economic interests and occupying market drive the cooperation in multiple media industries, and the consumption behaviors of audiences also easily transfer in different media industries. For example, in the beginning, Slate was attached to Microsoft, obtaining technical support and consumer resource. According to the report of Nielsen Net/Ratings, Slate had 6 million users in November 2004, but actually 60 percent were from MSN portal of Microsoft. After it was sold to the Washington Post which also looking to extend and diversify its online market.

The development of electronic magazines tends to create a community site where the public no longer passively receive information as consumers but can produce communicating content by themselves. On one hand, when public largely participate in the information flow, they will get more power in communication process, not only supervising the flow of information and power but also having their own rights of speak. On the other hand, massive interaction between readers and editors, especially readers to readers, can contribute to exert the affects of collective intelligence. Pierre Levy (1997) states collective intelligence has enormous potentials for transforming existing power and knowledge. Then grassroots culture are created by ourselves where public can fully perform their intelligence and get more power in communication activities.

### **Conclusion**

Supported by rapid development of the Internet and communication technologies, the digital revolution has been spreading to many fields including the publishing industry, bringing new forms of content production and particular consumption habits. Then electronic magazines have emerged to coincide with this trend, and increasingly have been becoming

popular, which experience three stages including the purely digital magazine, the electronic adjunct and the magazine-like community. It impacts the form of magazines production, bringing more interactive and multiple performance form, and contributes to the trend of media development through consuming it, such as convergence culture. It means that electronic magazines contribute to the cooperation of multiple media platforms and media industries, and enable people get more power in the communication activities.

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# Pirates Versus Ninjas: the implications of hacker culture for eBook publishing

Shannon Glass

## abstract

Hacker culture has embedded itself into both the development of Internet architecture and within the evolution of digitized media that utilizes the Internet for content delivery. Specifically, eBook technology and industry have been developed in a time of essential dispute between the values of openness at the core of this hacker culture and the closed, protective practices of commercial interests. Through a review of the academic literature on hacker culture and the history of book piracy, this project explored the implications of the hacker ethos for eBook publishing, focusing on the conflict between the open source movement and intellectual property issues surrounding digital piracy. This assessment showed that the user-led innovation practices found within the collaborative culture of the open source movement propel digital piracy of copyrighted eBooks. It concludes with a discussion of how the influential nature of hacker culture will play a crucial role in the future development of digital publishing.

## keywords

Hacker Culture - Piracy - eBooks - File Sharing - Intellectual Property - Digital Publishing

## introduction

The term 'eBook', or electronic book, refers to the digital form of a conventional book that can be read on computers or other electronic devices, such as dedicated eBook readers, mobile phones and portable tablets. While eBooks can be the digitized form of a book published in traditional print form, they can also be born digital without an equivalent paper publication. The advent of the eBook introduces new concerns for authors and publishers trying to navigate the shift to digital publishing and circulation. Likewise, eBooks represent a new target for

negotiations between consumers and government and industry regulators.

In an effort to illuminate the current and future development of digital publishing, this article examines the history of the hacker culture that has embedded itself into the development of Internet architecture alongside the historical catalysts and consequences of book piracy dating back to the 15th century. Through examination of the current issues of contention surrounding eBook publishing, the essential conflict between the hacker ethos and the publishing industry's model for intellectual property ownership is exposed, revealing that the core principles of hacker culture propel digital piracy of copyrighted eBooks.

This essay posits a parallel between the Pirates Versus Ninja meme and the divergent perceptions of hacker culture in order to facilitate a more nuanced understanding of digital piracy. Within this light, this paper concludes that hacker culture will continue to influence the development of eBook publishing until industry standards and practices incorporate the hacker ethos into its business models.

## Hacker Culture: Pre-Internet History



Source: <http://xkcd.com/234/>

Fig. 1: "Escape Artist," by xkcd, referencing famous magician and escapologist, Houdini, who performed escapes from handcuffs, shackles, chains, ropes, straitjackets, jails, and prison transport vans.

Steven Levy's book, *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution*, traces the history of hacker culture from its early days amongst mainframe hackers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the late-1950s and '60s, through the homebrewed hardware and software hackers of the 1970s and concluding with the computer game hackers of the 1980s. The term "hacker" originates in ancient MIT lingo, wherein the word "hack" referred to the elaborate pranks for which MIT

students were notorious (1984). For the first hackers, the term “hack” was understood to require “innovation, style, and technical virtuosity” (Levy, 1984). Levy says that it was the most productive people in this enclave who called themselves “hackers,” and they did so with great pride (1984).

These pre-Internet hackers were both artists and visionaries, members of a community with a particular set of ethical principles: access to computers should be unlimited and total; all information should be free; one should distrust authority and promote decentralization; hackers should be judged by their hacking ability and not by age, degree, race, or position; one can create art and beauty on a computer; computers can change your life for the better (Levy, 1984).

In the 1980s, hackers garnered a bad name when the media began reporting about them in relation to computer-literate teenagers crudely breaking through government security systems. It was at this time that the term “hackers” became synonymous with “digital trespassers” (Levy, 1984). While Levy’s history of what he calls the “true hackers” concludes at this point in history, Douglas Thomas continues the historical narrative in his book, *Hacker Culture*. “New-school” hackers of the 1980s and 1990s, called “crackers” by the old-school hackers of earlier decades, argue that they stay true to the fundamental tenets of the original hacker ethic, with some emphasizing their activities as about exploration, learning and fascination with the inner workings of technology, while for others, the emphasis is placed on the pranking nature of their exploits (Thomas, 2002).

## Pirates vs. Ninjas



Source: [http://blogs.office.com/b/office\\_comics/archive/2009/04/14/internet-debates.aspx](http://blogs.office.com/b/office_comics/archive/2009/04/14/internet-debates.aspx)

Fig. 2: Example of the PvN meme from 2009, referring to news stories about Somali pirates taking foreign sailors hostage.

“Pirates vs. Ninjas” (PvN) is a popular Internet meme depicting a fictional battle between pirates and ninjas, both viewed as worthy adversaries with distinctly different skill sets. Interestingly, the characteristics associated with each parallel the two predominant opinions of hackers: the crude lawless prankster vs. the visionary technical virtuoso.

Pirates, historically positioned as seafaring terrorists, are most notably identified with thievery. They plundered ships-at-sea and onshore ports without commission or license from any government or king. Ninjas, historically positioned as mercenary agents, are assumed to possess high skill in both martial arts and stealth. They were hired to perform covert ops, which encompassed assassination, espionage and infiltration. Where pirates are viewed as ruthless and brutal wielders of the sword (or cutlass), ninjas are characterized as composed and disciplined fighters adept with any tool. Both types can commence battle from afar: pirates use the crude cannonball, whereas ninjas use the precision-dependent shuriken. Pirates are loud; ninjas are silent.

Pirate lore depicts most anyone being able to join a pirate ship and learn as they go from their peers, in contrast to the years of training necessary to develop mastery of skills for ninjas. The pirate operates within a crew, while the ninja must be self-sufficient. Finally, pirates are easily identified by their garb, their manner of speaking, and their flags. Ninjas, on the other hand, are masters of disguise who cannot be traced or tracked, seeming to fade in and out of the shadows.

Similarly, hackers are viewed as either lawless brutes shamelessly violating the law with crude attacks and rampant piracy/theft, or highly skilled operatives operating behind the scenes to infiltrate closed institutions and affect the balance of power. In order to understand how hackers operate more like ninjas than pirates, we must take a deeper look at how hacker culture has embedded and disseminated its values.

## Hacker Culture: Cyberspace and the Electronic Frontier

The networked digital world was prefigured in the early 1980s by authors such as William Gibson, whose cyberpunk literature described a high-tech culture in which the smart and talented, not the bureaucrats, designed the rules (Thomas, 2002). Gibson



coined the term “cyberspace” in his 1984 book, *Neuromancer*, as reference to a global network of computer data in graphical representation. He called those who roamed cyberspace “console cowboys,” antiheroes who live in a world defined by information, wherein technology is the fundamental means of power and data jockeys manipulate the system for their own purposes. Gibson’s vision of the future gave hackers a space in which they would feel at home (Thomas, 2002).



Source: <http://xkcd.com/130/>

Fig. 3: “Julia Stiles,” by xkcd, referencing a television series co-produced by the Children’s Television Workshop and the BBC, which aired on PBS, the American non-profit public broadcasting network, from 1992 to 1995.

By the early 1990s, the subculture of cyberpunk, first born in science fiction novels, moved into the mainstream. The ideals of the hackers, now carried by the cyberpunk movement, were no longer the sole province of an elite group of MIT programmers, nor merely the justification for schoolboy pranks. Instead, these principles had become the foundation for the formulation of the Internet as a decentralized network that fundamentally grants anonymity, and thus equal access, to all users. By design, the inherent architecture of the Internet enables users to act anonymously, which in turn renders domestic laws on copyright, content regulation, and taxation unenforceable, and according to some, inapplicable (Malcolm, 2008). In so doing, the architects of the Internet allowed for the reorientation of

knowledge and power to come.

### Hacker Culture: Dissemination of Ethos



Source: <http://xkcd.com/225/>

Fig. 4: “Open Source,” by xkcd, referencing Stallman - the last of the old-school hackers, open source advocate and unofficial spokesman Raymond, and Torvalds – initial developer and chief coordinator of the open-source Linux kernel.

In 1996, John Perry Barlow, co-founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, wrote “A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace,” a manifesto which expressly refuses the right of any government to apply laws to the Internet. Barlow’s tract echoed the ethics of the hackers:

We are creating a world that all may enter without privilege or prejudice accorded by race, economic power, military force, or station of birth. We are creating a world where anyone, anywhere may express his or her beliefs, no matter how singular, without fear of being coerced into silence or conformity. Your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us. They are all based on matter, and there is no matter here. (1996)

Writing in the following year, Loader points out that while Barlow was right to identify the Internet as too widespread to be easily dominated by any single government, this focus on the authoritarian domination of the nation-state overlooks the importance of free enterprise in restricting individual actions and thought (1997). This oversight did not last long.

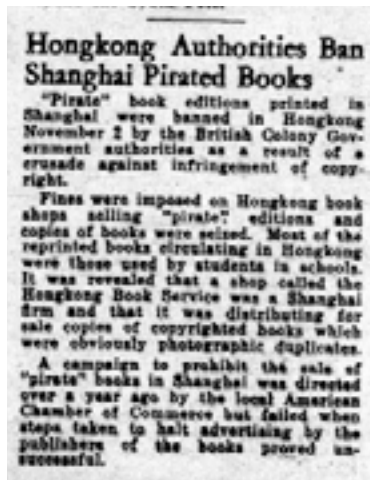
In 1998, members of the old-school hackers’ free software

movement adopted the term “open source” in an effort to get the corporate world to listen to the hacker community (Open Source Initiative), and in so doing, the free software ethos of the hackers emerged into the spotlight. At the height of the dotcom boom, Open Source was suddenly getting attention from corporations, political leaders and regulators, and a generation of technophile teenagers (Kelty, 2008).

Kelty argues that Free Software/Open Source is not simply a reorientation of technical pursuits, but also a cultural reorientation that creates a recursive public collective in which the values of the hackers proliferate. For this public, hacking is now amplified as a form of political action in which modification of the infrastructure is used in response to governments and corporations who attempt to impose regulations on cyberspace (Kelty, 2008).

Through the open source movement, hacker values transform opposition to copyright protection into a political agenda in which the key form of political action is alteration of the protected product for free circulation. It is in this sense that hacking elevates media piracy as the fundamental means with which to reshape industries whose practices violate the hacker ethos.

### Book Piracy: Historical Notes



Source: <http://www.chinarhyming.com/2010/10/06/shanghai-book-pirates-are-nothing-new/>

Fig. 5: Article clipping from a 1940 edition of China Weekly Review reporting on government attempts to control book piracy.

Much of the academic literature explored for the purposes of this article situate piracy as predominately an issue in the digital era, but a wider historical lens suggests that the current crisis of copyright, piracy and enforcement is quite similar to earlier periods of conflict at times of change (Balázs, 2011). Bodo Balázs research on historical book piracy identifies five laws of piracy consistently at work in cultural markets:

1. Persistent gaps between supply and demand due to artificial constraints on price or supply will be filled by pirate producers.
2. When faced with piracy, industry incumbents almost always turn to the state to defend their market positions and usually adapt their business models only when other recourse has failed.
3. Conversely, pirate producers tend to operate at the edges of the sphere of influence of incumbents, where differences in law and difficulties of enforcement create spaces of ambiguous or conflicted legality.
4. Piracy, at these economic and political peripheries, has a well-established role as a development strategy that facilitates the circulation of knowledge goods.
5. In many of these contexts, piracy also plays a clear political role as a counterweight to the centralized control of information – whether by states or private interests. The censorship of texts in pre-modern England and France was continually undermined by pirate networks ... (while) piracy played much the same role in Russia and South Africa in the 1980s. (Balázs, 2010)

By printing censored texts and introducing cheap reprints to new reading publics, historical pirate publishers fueled the development of a deliberative public sphere while disregarding state censorship, crown printing privileges and guild-enforced copyrights (Balázs, 2011). Balázs’ study points out that, “in the long run, pirate practices were almost always incorporated into the legitimate ways of doing business,” where regulatory frameworks were changed to accommodate the new publishing landscapes (2011).

### eBook Technology: Issues of Contention

In order to understand the implications for eBook media, we must examine the central issues being negotiated by publishers, consumers and government regulators, each of whom bear different interests in the development of the technology and its

industry.

First, intellectual property rights remain a particularly heated point of contention. While digital media in the age of the Internet cross borders readily, copyright law that varies between nations proves difficult to enforce within a given nation. Along with the legal ramifications of intellectual property protections that concern governments, corporations, and authors, questions of fair use and ownership arise for eBook consumers. For instance, the right to fair use of works for scholarly pursuits has been challenged by the publishing industry in cases such as the Google Books initiative (Google, 2008). Furthermore, copyright protections in eBook technologies raise questions of ownership, in which eBook sellers possess the ability to remotely delete copies of books it determines have been published illegally, such as in the 2009 deletion of George Orwell books on Kindle devices by Amazon (Stone, 2009). These conditions oppose the core hacker value insisting that all information must be free, as well as Barlow's insistence that legal concepts of property have no bearing in the cyberspace of networked data.

Secondly, eBook technologies, both hardware and software,



Source: [http://www.toonpool.com/cartoons/Book%20vs%20E-book\\_72528](http://www.toonpool.com/cartoons/Book%20vs%20E-book_72528)

Fig. 6: "Book vs E-Book" succinctly summarizes several of the issues with eBook technology.

raise privacy concerns for consumers. A review of the Electronic Frontier Foundation's annual "E-Book Buyer's Guide to E-Book Privacy," reveals that e-reader companies – that is, providers of hardware and software platforms for reading eBooks – can:

track book purchases, even those made from other sources; share the information collected with third parties without obtaining consent from the consumer; prohibit consumers from accessing, modifying and deleting collected information; monitor how you read a book, even titles obtained elsewhere (Cohn, 2010). These conditions irritate the core hacker values of distrust of authority and insistence on decentralization, as well as the principle that access should be unlimited and total.

Third, issues of commerce have galvanized both the publishing industry and its critics. Threats to profit are of special concern to publishers, much as the advent of the MP3 stirred the music publishing industry, for fears of piracy replacing sales. In addition, publishing and vendor policies that restrict pricing to narrow or fixed standards have been met with contention by consumers, who often view it as unfair practice, by self-publishing authors, who may have to severely compromise their independence in order to gain access to the market, and by governments, such as the European Union, who are investigating these policies as possible anti-trust violations that restrict competition (Jordison, 2011). For hackers, such price restrictions represent unlawful authoritarian domination that restricts the freedom of data flows and access thereof.

Finally, there are issues surrounding who can access material published in eBook formats, and how they can access it. Digital books and eBook readers present a new possibility for redemptive censorship, which could be performed without the author or the consumer's knowledge by publishers, distributors, or governments. Perhaps most notable for consumers, Digital Rights Management (DRM) systems limit, and in some cases completely eliminate, a consumer's ability to access purchased eBooks by restricting use to specified hardware devices and/or software applications. Additionally, DRM practices concern non-consumer agents, such as libraries and developing nations, who are often forced to incur higher costs in procuring and circulating eBooks, as compared to print publications (Pioneer Library System, 2011). Within hacker culture, unlimited and total access for the free flow of information is an essential value, and so DRM practices represent a core conflict between this culture and the publishing industry.

## eBook Piracy: Facilitation



Source: <http://www.toondoo.com/cartoon/2699845>

Fig. 7: Artist's projection of continued restraints in eBook technology due to corporate regulation and DRM.

Hacker culture facilitates eBook piracy in three fundamental ways. First, the ability for Internet users to act anonymously has been embedded within the architecture of the Internet, making it possible to circumvent any government or commercial assertion of legal penalties for copyright violations. Second, the cracking of DRM protections enables individuals to access and use eBooks in ways that non-pirated copies disallow.

Third, the resultant ability for every individual to anonymously circulate non-protected copies of eBooks allows each download to act as an individual pirate publisher, from which eBooks can be distributed without consent to government or industry regulation.

Given the myriad of contentious issues surrounding eBooks at this writing, there is much cause for protest amongst consumers. By utilizing pirate practices, individual consumers can take political action in an effort to push the publishing industry into a more consumer-friendly business model, just as historical book pirate publishers accomplished with the restrictive industry practices of their ages.

## Conclusion

Societies transform themselves through the complex interactions of cultural, technological, economic, and political factors (Castells, 2001). For the past seven centuries, since Gutenberg's technology democratized knowledge, piracy has

performed as an economic and political counterweight to the restricted circulation of knowledge goods. Hacker culture of the postmodern era, embedded in the decentralized architecture of our computer networks, emphasizes the use of technology as a political action. In the democratization of piracy itself, all users are enabled to participate in a reorientation of knowledge and power, for the console cowboys of cyberspace have seen the future and call it open.

We can expect that eBook piracy will, as book piracy always has, be legitimized by changes in the publishing industry and its regulatory framework. What the hacker culture has added to the practice of book piracy is the ability for anyone with access to a computer to safely participate in resistance of authority on a mass scale. In a knowledge-based economy of the digital era, it is the language of computers that becomes the lingua franca for the voice of the people. Until eBook technologies bend to the will of the people, the people will, thanks to the hackers, continue to employ mass piracy as a development strategy and political protest. Like the music industry before it, book publishers will be forced to embrace the open values of hacker culture in order to survive.

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# Online Library and Copyright Protection

Yang Guo

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## **abstract**

The development of digital technologies has changed the way people get information. This article covers the launch of Chinese online library service Baidu Wenku. It considers the Chinese digital publishing market, the copyright situation in China, and the actions of Baidu. It compares Baidu Wenku to Google and Microsoft's online libraries, and considers the problems associated with "orphan works". The paper provides an interesting non-Western take on digitisation of books. This article analyses current problems faced by Baidu Wenku online library in Mainland China in order to make recommendations for their survival navigation of the changing Baidu Wenku online library. In this article, the academic resources such as online journals, websites and books in library were used to do analysis. This article uses Baidu Wenku online library as a case study for research and this research found the problem between copyright protection and the public's interest fair use. This article discuss how Baidu Wenku continue its online library while at the same time give the publishing industry a satisfied answer and the public's interest fair use was still protected.

## **keywords**

Intellectual Property -Copyright Protection-Digital publishing

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## **Introduction**

This paper presents an introduction to intellectual property protection and digital publishing in China, highlighting the tension between intellectual property owners, web providers and internet users over copyright, introducing the Baidu Wenku online library. It provides an account of the controversy over Baidu Wenku, a document-sharing service that allows users to upload documents, indexes them, and makes them available to other users. The paper mentions Baidu's attempts to filter out pirated material, and that these have not convinced critics because of Baidu's history of enabling piracy. It considers the reaction of the public, authors and the Chinese government to

## **Background to digital publishing in China**

The digital publishing industry is facing the problem of copy right protection. With the development of digital publishing, Baidu as search giant in China develop a new product called Baidu Wenku online library. In digital era, digital information is easy and cheap to distribute once it been produced. Therefore, Baidu Wenku online library raises the question of the unauthorized use and intellectual properties protection. Forty writers in China claimed that digital advances might lead to devaluation of writer's works. However, at the same time copyright is facing much more challenge than before. When it comes to digital publishing industry, the copyright becomes a major problem because many digital publishers or websites do not have content copyright.

## **Current Status of Digital Publishing Industry in Mainland China**

The latest report on China's digital publishing industry (Li, 2009), identified that the total revenue of China's digital publishing in 2006 amounted to 21.3 billion RMB per year, and that of 2007 is 36.2 billion RMB per year, with an increase rate of 70.15%. For 2007, the total revenue breaks down into revenues generated, respectively, from e-journals (760 million RMB), e-books (200 million RMB), digital newspapers (1 billion RMB), blogs (960 million RMB), online music (150 million RMB) and internet advertising (7.6 billion RMB). The projected total revenue of the digital publishing industry at the end of 2008 will reach 53.1 billion RMB per year, with an increase rate of 149.1% compared to that of 2006, and 46.4% compared to 2007. Details can be found in the following table. (Li, 2009)

Image source from: LI, Z. 2009. Annual Report on the Digital Publishing Industry in China: 2007–2008. Springer Science+Business Media, LLC.

With the development of digitisation, the shift from paper documents to electronic version has also produced important benefits. Nevertheless, this change is often limited to the internal operation of each entity due to the lack of security in the electronic communication mechanisms (Yagu" e, 2004).

## **Baidu Company's history of copyright disputes**

This is not the first time Baidu has been criticised because of

its pirated content provided on its websites. Before they set up the Baidu Wen ku online library they had another product called "search MP3 service". Baidu's reputation for full service in enabling users' quests for pirated content — such as search results with mp3 links for one-stop downloading — helped the Chinese search engine to reach its dominant perch (Epstein, 2011). In search MP3 service people in China could download music online for free without giving any share to the original copy right holder. Numerous people visit Baidu websites for this service because they could find and download their favorite music for free. This service brings to Baidu lots of advertising revenue. After many years criticism by the music industry recently Baidu finally reach an agreement with the music industry.

## **The launch of Baidu Wenku**

By the time Google left China's search industry, China had already developed their search engine called Baidu. In China, Baidu like Google became the most popular search engine. Baidu is China's largest search engine with a 75 percent market share. Recently, search engine giant Baidu is drawing criticism from many writers because as a result of setting up the largest online library in China.

Baidu's spokesman Kaiser Kuo said in a statement to Reuters under so much pressure Baidu claimed that they are going to develop anti-piracy technology for online library. Baidu argues that "the technology will not only enable Baidu Library to systematically eliminate copyright-infringing content already uploaded on its platform, but will also enable automatic rejection of future problematic uploads," (Owen, 2011). However, this is a testing phase in April 2011 before a full release on May, 2011.

## **Public, Author and Government criticisms of Baidu Wenku**

The reason Baidu for this public relations mess now is because, for years, they behaved like many Chinese businesses, consumers and government officials: They exhibited a casual disregard for piracy, in a culture and economy that did not value intellectual property (Epstein, 2011). Many people in China think this criticism about Baidu Wenku online library will not have any changes for Baidu to continue build online library in China. Admittedly, In China, people have not paid enough attention to the digital copy right protection. It seems that everybody like free good or service. There had been a really long history for

Chinese internet users to download music or information for free. People in China have already got used to it. They do not have enough conscience about the copy right protection. This habit has many years history and it is not easy to change.

This action raised many issues about copy right protection. March 17,2011 Baidu Wenku (Baidu's online library service) was recently protested against by a group of 50 Chinese writers, including Pingwa Jia, Xinwu Liu, Wei Zhang, Jia Mai and Han Han, for the online documents sharing website, Baidu Wenku's full collection of all their works that are open to the public, free of charge and without any authorization(Tao, 2011 ). They have signed a letter to denounce Baidu set their own library called Baidu Wenku and it's allow people to upload and download book for free without the original authors' permission.

In publishing industry, authors with the copyright want Baidu to remove the books and documents without their permission upload on the Baidu wenku. They claimed that Baidu want to use online library to attract more users and get more advertising revenue. Baidu claimed that they will protect copy right if there is a claim from authors. Baidu will make it deleted within 48 hours. Baidu claimed that they have already deleted tens of thousands of books upload by their users without authors' permission and copy right(Michael, 2011).

Chinese authorities have already warned Baidu. The deputy chief of the Department of Copyright Administration requested the search company to submit a plan to eliminate copyright infringing material on its website. Since Baidu online Library allows users to upload documents that can then be viewed online for free. Over 20 million documents have been uploaded since the site's launch at the end of 2009,(Melanie, 2011).

### **Comparison with similar services in other countries**

Google Books operates under a different, if also controversial, model, the most important difference being it does not allow users to download the entire text of copyright-protected books(Epstein, 2011). In addition, Google is relying on 27 library partners—including those at Harvard and Oxford University—to supply books for scanning(Edward, 2007). However, not only in China Baidu get criticisms by authors Google had already been criticized by this plan. All of whom have filed lawsuits claiming Google is engaging in massive copyright infringement.

Google's situation is different from China. The major reason for this difference is first we have different law system and people's attitude is different about protect digital copy right. Recently a federal judge in New York rejected a sweeping \$125 million legal settlement the company had worked out with groups representing authors and publishers. The decision is a setback for the Authors Guild and the Association of American Publishers, which sued Google in 2005 over its book-scanning project. After two years of painstaking negotiations, the authors, publishers and Google signed a sweeping settlement that would have brought millions of printed works into the digital age,(MIGUEL ,2011). Google has already scanned some 15 million books.

Microsoft own scanning project, entitled Live Books Search, delivers material much in the same ways as Google. The main difference is that the company is only scanning books for which it has garnered explicit permission to do so, either with an author or a publisher.

### **How to deal with the problem of 'Orphan works'**

Is there having a better way for Baidu to maintain they have enough internet users at the same time maintain music authors and writers have their profits. If Baidu could work with the publishing industry authors and publishers will have a new way to earn profits from digital copies of their works. They can both benefit from it. The public have to admit that if Baidu set up online library it is easier to have access to books while you are at home.

However, there are many books without right holders could not be found is called "orphan works". The major argue is who have the copy right from the orphan works. Baidu try to collect information and make available all written works to all people. Baidu has the right idea but with "orphan works" Baidu should not be able to obtain rights to these works when the rights can not be legal given over by owner. Making all written works available on the internet is a great step to having all info available to all people world wide. One idea is Baidu earns large amounts of money from selling orphan books but Baidu do not own their copyright either. Therefore, Baidu should use the profit from the orphan work establish a fund for those people who need help. Another idea is for all orphan books and out of copyright works



to free to access by public. However, free download orphan books require a modification of copyright law. And Baidu could charge for the book with the copy right because they need to pay for copy right for the author.

People who support Baidu build online library base on distribute information to as many people as it can. The digitization of books is encouraging a free opportunities to people who could not afford the book. If these books and documents digitised by someone it can be better stored. University libraries and online readers have largely supported Baidu's digitization of out-of-copyright works.

### **What happens to our libraries, if books are digitised?**

Other people argue that the issue is that Baidu cannot digitize books without the consent of the author. If Baidu wants to digitize every book they need have an agreement with authors for their intellectual property. Intellectual property is always important for examples Baidu will not allow someone use their trademark without their permission. Baidu should recognize the value of intellectual property and try to negotiate with the publishing industry.

Many people argue that Chinese National Library should digitize the book. Because the library belongs to government so they will not do this for business purpose .However, it is not realistic for Chinese National Library to do this enormous work right now. Or there is another solution Baidu can give a copy of each work it digitises to the Chinese National Library. This behavior will definitely help Chinese National Library to speed to build digital national library. At the same time Chinese National Library could have the orphan works' copy right. The copy right belong to the government.

### **Conclusion**

This article compares Baidu Wenku to Google Books, finding the differences related to public opinions between China and the US, and highlighting Google's proposed solution of working with publishers to maximise revenue while minimizing infringement. It suggests that this solution could also be applied in mainland China. It considers two solutions to the problem of "orphan books", where the rights holder no longer exists and cannot be traced. The first is to permit Baidu to make the works available,

but to use the revenues to endow a fund dedicated to people who need help; the second is to assign copyright to "orphan works" to the Chinese National Library and compel Baidu to provide the Chinese National Library with copies. The article concludes that "opt-in" negotiation with copy rights owners, alongside strategies to deal with "orphan works", is the best solution to the problems associated with digitisation.

Publishers, those who stand to make money from a copyright, were in agreement with Baidu to digitize the books, and Baidu had worked out a profit-sharing agreement with them. Publishers and authors must "opt in" instead of "opt out" to stop Baidu continue to provide pirated books in online library. It is a good idea to make out of print books available to the public, but there needs to be competition and fair compensation to all involved in the making of the book. While copyright holders do deserve compensation for their intellectual property, knowledge should not be the privilege of only those who can afford it. For the foreseeable future, the issue of digital rights remains to be complex and controversial.

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# Identities Collide: blogging blurs boundaries

Jessica Graham

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## **abstract**

In the burgeoning literature on digital culture, the area of identity and online communication has attracted considerable attention. Whether work has aimed to theorise an aspect of new communications and literacy, or whether it has attempted to shed light on new practices through empirical study, the fact remains that there is something about changing patterns and practices of interaction through new media that raises important questions about social identity.

Cyberspace is a location, an environment in and of itself. The Internet is a new space, a new environment, and the location of a developing virtual sphere. It is the location of a developing culture, a cyber culture that is situated in a social sphere that allows the lines between public and private to become blurred. Within this arena, the multiple identities often encompassed by an individual in their online activities and in the physical world are of significance. By investigating the blogosphere, this article demonstrates how weblogs, as a form of online publishing, portray multi-faceted identities of an individual and demonstrates the effect cyber culture has on its virtual participants.

## **keywords**

Publishing - Private - Public - Audience - Identity - Weblogs

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It is an inescapable fact that the landscape of communication has changed, and indeed continues to change, and that in turn raises new possibilities for constructing and performing social identity. As the Internet and Web 2.0 proliferate, people live increasingly hybrid lives where the physical and the digital, the real and the virtual, interact. In this world, online and offline identities have overlapped and interlocked, erasing prior boundaries in social and cultural domains. The central

argument of this article proposes that society is witnessing an underlying process of technology-spurred blurring, resulting in major shifts in the cultural landscape of the 21st century. A central consideration revolves around the observation that a growing number of people now live in a hybrid world where the boundaries between what is physical and what is digital continue to fade. This hybrid world has become one where a person's identity and experiences begin to integrate physical facets of existence so that consciousness is to some extent shared between an offline physical and an online virtual self.

This is predominantly as a result of Web 2.0 which is associated with 'social software' and user generated content, sharing features such as participation and the user as contributor who harnesses the power of the crowd (Anderson 2007:6). Such features allow the user to embody a virtual identity, which sees the blurring of the private and the public. One of the more well known writers in social science that have dealt with digital identity is Erving Goffman. In his 1982 dramaturgical theory, he describes social interaction as "performances" by individuals, which vary according to context, usually intended to please the current audience. Goffman terms this "face work" in describing the online public space as a stage where individuals, like actors, always perform different roles. To expand upon this theory, this article demonstrates how society today has witnessed the internet as a developed space in which social interaction, development of the self and the establishment of communities not only blur the public and private but the offline physical and online virtual selves have become simultaneous.

The underlying dualism of public and private in regards to the real and the virtual signals the emergence of a major breakthrough in the world of web publishing represented by the spread of individual and self-regulated scholars disseminating their product directly from their own desktop to the cybersphere (Ware, 2009a). Wikis, personal web pages, social networks, and of particular focus here, weblogs, are leading to a distinction "between formal communication, which is long-lasting and addressed to a wider audience, and informal communication, which is more ephemeral and between a more restricted audience" (Meyer and Schroeder, 2009: 2). However, the practice of self-archiving and open-access publishing, both aimed at enhancing knowledge sharing and free circulation of information, is becoming an authoritative alternative for

traditional publications (Jankowski, Quoted in Calise, 2010: 54).

In this regard, weblogs serve as a lens to observe the way in which people have used digital technologies and, in return, transformed some of the traditional cultural norms, such as those between the public and the private. Researchers from Stanford University have detailed five motivations or purposes for blogging: "documenting one's life; providing commentary and opinions; expressing deeply felt emotions; articulating ideas through writing; and forming and maintaining community forums" (Nardi et al. 2004: 43). Therefore, with such media frequently making thoughts public which might previously have been regarded as private, the public and private domains collide. The Internet, a many-to-many medium, therefore offers users the possibility of making their own personal concerns very public indeed. Therefore, the blurring of the public and private is visible whereby writing online in the form of personal weblogs is automatically recorded, and in contrast to traditional media such forms of online writing are automatically published.

Thus, the context of this paper should be seen as an increasingly hybrid world where the digital and virtual is omnipresent as the boundaries between real and synthetic, offline and online, physical and virtual continue to shift and fade. Such a trend in social transformations is termed "the blurrings" by Jordan (2009) in response to the proliferation of the Internet and the rise of the World Wide Web. The blurrings of interest here, then, are technology-induced and technology-mediated fusions that have emerged with the new communication technologies, especially the Internet and Web 2.0. The rapid emergence of Internet-based personal weblogs reflects specific technological innovations and new online practices with broad affinity for the self as dialogical.

Digital technology and Web 2.0, in particular blogging, have transformed localities into "hybridized entities with multi-faceted identities and nebulous boundaries" (Cobb, 2005: 565). Being at the same time private and public, individual and collective, weblogs invoke the notion of a contradictory genre and activity, with 'me', 'you' and 'everyone in between' being brought into a single, semiprivate or semipublic space and experience. By emphasizing how bloggers create multiple cyber identities when publishing online, there is the importance of the audience in refining those varied narrative acts of identity performance, as



discussed by Goffman as "face work". While publishing online, how to conceive of and respond to an audience, and how to imagine the readership, is therefore clearly of central importance. This point is emphasised by Hine when she argues that the production of a web page "is made meaningful primarily through the imagining of an audience and the seeking of recognition from that audience" (2000: 136). Several empirical studies have developed a theory of social networks that demonstrate how trends in the use of new technology are embedded in the wider, changing landscape of social interaction. For example, Wellman and his colleagues (2005) used a tripartite model to chart the shift from traditional close-knit communities to 'glocalized' networks and on to what is termed 'networked individualism'.

In such glocalized networks, weblogs can serve the purpose of providing communicative links, and a degree of interactivity between local and dispersed individuals who have common interests, constitute a community of practice (Merchant, 2006:241) or operate in an affinity space (Gee, 2003). In this way, blogging software supports the emergence of glocalized networks as argued by Wellman and it provides a space for authoring social identities. To be precise, the weblog format allows for identity to be produced in a variety of different ways, where blogger profiles, and template choice or modification, as well as the style and content of publishing personal posts all provide these social affordances. In addition to this, many bloggers use the sidebar to provide additional information which helps to locate them in specific social networks. Blogrolls and favourite web-links are quite explicit ways of showing one's affiliations, whereas add-ons such as 'all-consuming', detailing what the author is currently consuming, and links to photosharing sites, such as Flickr photostreams, all provide opportunities to showcase anchored and transient identities.

This then details the notion of exhibitionism and voyeurism which can be applied to the development and motivation behind blogging. Weblogs, while largely text based, have grown to include ever more intimate information and provide more exposure as a spectacle of the blogger. The integration of technologies like digital photography, web cameras and YouTube make more and more intimacy a public spectacle. To demonstrate this further, Hodkinson conducted an ethnographic case study of the experiences and perspectives of users on LiveJournal, a blogging and social networking site. By setting up

his own account and writing a blog, he established contact with users and made 'friends', predominantly with those interested in the 'Goth' subculture. This study examines the online Goth community's transition from discussion forums to weblogs in the context of debates about individualization and identity. Hodkinson's (2007) study therefore demonstrates the personal becoming public, and the formation of identity through identity performance in recognition of an audience. It is the character of weblogs as simultaneously private and public which enables the formation of not only individual identities but also group affiliations.

Seen in this way, weblogs have invoked, almost automatically, the ideas of voyeurism and exhibitionism. A recent Pew Internet and American Life Project (2006) report concludes that the most popular topic among bloggers is 'me' or the 'process of me', therefore creating the blur between private ('me') and public (everyone who is reading about 'me' and writing to me and linking to me). The first-person narrative of weblogs promotes high levels of self-exposure to the audience often largely unknown to the author. Miller and Shepherd (2004) observe that on weblogs "people are sharing unprecedented amounts of personal information with total strangers, potentially millions of them", concluding that "the technology of the internet makes it easier than ever for anyone to be either a voyeur or an exhibitionist or both".

In regard to the personal as public in blogging, available through Web 2.0, personal weblogs document the minutiae of everyday life as well as sensitive or significant events. Thus far, most scholars of this area support this as they observe weblogs as a development of the handwritten paper diary (Rak, 2005:167). Hodkinson noted the trend of the personal becoming public due to the advancements of Web 2.0, and this log of daily life has been described as:

"Reading people's diaries would have only been possible 5 years ago; you would have had to burgle their home. But if you want to read a million diaries today, you can do online" (Snee, 2010).

To understand more fully this feature of weblogs as communicative events, the reference to burglary above is telling, as it suggests what has traditionally been kept private is now shared on such a vastly public domain. The decision to publish a weblog engages a blogger actively in an array of

self-presentation strategies within the public environment of cyberspace. Unlike private diaries, weblogs are inherently public and the posting of items on a blog is a social act of positioning that, minimally, bids readers to encounter some aspect of that self that fashioned the item.

Therefore, this demonstrates that there is something about changing patterns and practices of interaction through new media that raises important questions about social identity. From this perspective, new tools for communication provide a context for new kinds of identity performance, or as some commentators argue, have helped to create a new kind of person (Thomas, 2004). In *Hello World: Travels in Virtuality* (2004) Thomas documents an interview with a blogger who said: "I went from being one person with single name to existing as a number of identities created by me but not always recognisable as me, even by myself" (Thomas, 2004:9). This demonstrates that many bloggers have many virtual selves as digital publishing in the form of a weblog displays multiple and shifting positionings in the form of ongoing, personally meaningful and hypertextual themes. Social theorists like Giddens (1991) and Bauman (2004) convincingly support this as they argue that identity in the late modern world is contingent, multiple and malleable, whereby blogging allows the individual to actively produce and perform an ongoing narrative of the self.

So here, the idea that identity is produced through action and performance becomes important. A plural narrative begins to develop, and the perception of an actual or imagined audience prompts bloggers to think about what they want to show (Grosz, 1994). Identity performance, then, inevitably involves a sense of audience: an audience to whom one is presenting a particular narrative(s) of the self. In an auto-ethnographic study of academic blogging, Davies & Merchant detailed this interaction between the development of plural narratives and the sense of audience was traced through reflective work on weblog publishing. This study demonstrated that in publishing online, weblogs became texts for self-presentation which they hoped would "be accepted as appropriate and plausible performances" (Hine, 2000: 122). This extract from the metablog was used in their study captures this idea:

"I have an ongoing story. But I think we have several on-

going stories. I also think that if we bear in mind a particular audience, we change our story to suit them and thus change our notion of who we are according to our audience". (Blogtrax, 2005)

Whilst it is relatively easy to accept that society draws on different facets of multiple identities in different communicative settings, both online and offline, the actual choices bloggers make are more complex.

Demonstrating this further, symbolic interactionist perspectives challenge the western conception of the person as bounded and unique by claiming that the self is the product of interaction rather than an immutable entity. By asserting that the self is empirical rather than essential, symbolic interaction through weblogs and the publishing of private thoughts encourages one's identity to continually change. If identity is indeed 'performed', then the ideas of audience, readership and community are indispensable, all of which are fundamental to weblogs. Cooley's concept of the "looking-glass self" defines the self as the reflection generated by the 'generalized other' that is coupled with that 'generalized other's' judgment. In other words, a bloggers sense of self is really their perception of society's evaluation of them. In this process, the blogger "perceives in another's mind some thought of appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it" (Cooley, 1902: 17).

Throughout this article, emphasis has been given to identity performance and the ways in which online interaction mirror multiple and shifting perceptions of audience. Writing online, in whatever form it takes, provides the opportunity to "author the self" (Holland et al, 1998) to sustain narratives of identity (Giddens, 1991), and even to explore a number of different stories of the self, but as demonstrated, these identities are forged through an online publishers connection with their audience. And this leads to the ultimate dilemma in Internet identity. The artificiality of online participation through the sharing of intimate information and the perception of an actual or imagined audience prompts bloggers towards identity performance. This provides more exposure as a spectacle of the author and questions whether the individual knows of their true identity beyond this "face work".

The changing patterns and practices of interaction made possible by Web 2.0 and the Internet impacts on social communication and develops a cyber culture that combines the once separate sphere of private and public. In doing so, the real and the virtual also become one as the hybridized world observes the notion of identity becomes less about the embodiment of a social category and more about the strategic performance of a multifaceted social self. Being at the same time private and public, individual and collective, weblogs demonstrate the notion of a contradictory genre and activity, with 'me', 'you' and 'everyone in between' being brought into a single, semiprivate or semipublic space through the Internet. With the outlook of ongoing developments in technology, constantly changing online virtual communities and their ever increasing connection to reality, can an individual ever have one true identity?

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# How to Use Sina Microblog for Brand Marketing

Jingjing Yu

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## abstract

This essay will examine that what are the changes by using Sina microblog in digital publishing environment, and how to use Sina microblog for brand marketing. At the end of the essay, I will give a case of Dell to analyze and support the importance of Sina microblog in marketing.

## keywords

Sina Microblog - marketing - digital publishing - communication

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## Introduction

With the continuous development of the microblog in the global market, the microblog has also become another important field for network business and publishing. Compared with the traditional business and publish mode, microblog contents are relatively simple, and this means any enterprise and individuals can freely join in the platform regardless of the type, reputation and scale, carry through direct interaction and communicate with the customers and users. Moreover, microblogs can help the enterprises and individuals to find the most appropriate business and publishing methods for their own targets.

Microblogs are a platform based on user relational information sharing, dissemination and access. The users can set up individual communities by WEB, WAP and a variety of client ends, use about 140 words to update information and achieve real-time sharing (Briggs, Mark, 2009). Microblogs rapidly develop with its unique advantages and charms, and becomes the new platform of marketing experts.

Microblog mainly provides social networking sites and video sites to people, and it is an open social service on the internet. Compared to the traditional lengthy articles on the web, the

emergence of microblogs breaks the pattern. The limitation of 140 characters in microblog makes users more likely to become prolific blog publishers.

## The changes analysis of Sina microblog

SINA Corporation started to promote Sina microblog in August 2009, and by the star effects it attracts general audiences to join. Sina microblog makes some local Chinese improvements on their publishing 's contexts in digital age, such as the users can publish the discussion topics, the users can attach some pictures instead of words, and the display way of discuss forum is similar to the community forum. In addition, Sina also opened up the function which invites the other sites' user to login Sina microblog.

The specific operating methods of Sina microblogs make everyone have the chance to be an editor or journalist in digital publishing environment. As a new network application model, Sina microblogs have become a more attractive new media form after traditional blog having the unique instant messaging features. Compared with the traditional blog, Sina microblogs have the following changes in digital publishing:

Microblogs have very low barriers to entry. The traditional articles in the blog emphasize the organization and layout of language (Deuze, M, 2006), so the creative process should consider the logic integrity of the articles in the blog. It can be said that in the blog it has higher requirements and conditions to publish the articles. However, even if the language basis is not good, as long as the user can send text messages, and the user can also use Sina microblog. In addition, in terms of using a medium, even if there are not computers, mobile phones can also be used to publish the microblog. Just like text messaging, the simple and conventional operating process of Sina microblog can let the users publish information at anytime and anywhere, and this process is not influenced by the surrounding environment (Zhuo Xu, 2010).

Sina microblogs create the originality of instant messaging. This kind of originality means that users could publish information or feeling instantly and transmit the information widely. The character of each microblog which has only 140 characters information volume is especially appropriate for every mobile internet users. No matter where they are, it is easy to express their



own microblog by using mobile phones. In terms of scope, Sina microblogs enlarge the scope of information's transmission. A person passes the information to a group of people, and then everyone of the group passes the same information to another group people. After publishing the information which has higher concentration, it can be transmitted to every corner of the Sina microblog in the short time by the users, and the high-speed transmission is difficult to be done by any media. Therefore, the spread scope and covering surface can be imagined. And the instant messaging communication function of Sina microblog is very powerful.

Sina microblogs have a more powerful interactive than blogs. In article -Blogs, wikis and creative innovation, "while some blog do not allow comments, the view is widely held that, in the absence of comments, a site is not really, or not fully, a blog. In many cases, a blog post serves more to initiate a conversation, held in public view, than as a discrete piece of communication from author to reader. The majority of visitors to a blog site never comment, and are thus viewers rather than participants." (Quiggin, 2006) By contrast with blogs, microblog differ with less communication in the blog. The important element of microblog is interaction among users. It can be one person to a group of people, and it can also be one person to one. Users like giving a lot of pieces of comment in each message in a microblog. Once the users logon to computer or mobile phone accounts, send a command, and then they can accept a lot of information from the other users. Every user can also invite their friends by sending short messages, and at the same time he can become the follower of another user. If some users have not yet registered, they can also receive the messages invitation from other users to join. In the browser, it is very convenient to manage friends. The multimedia and conveniences provided by the mobile medium make the experience sticky and Sina microblog fans are stronger and stronger.

From the view of marketing, microblogging has a higher affinity than traditional publishing modes. The communication of Sina microblogs reflects warmth, interest and life of users in the real world. Through the fragmentary and random statements, the enterprises not only publish their brand information and promote activities, but also publish their views on hot social events, carry through their companies' culture in the Sina microblog, provide the users as much help as possible, and give the users a good feeling. To some extent, microblogs allow the companies

to be close to their consumers, and builds a trusted relationship with each other.

Microblogs have a higher level of accuracy in digital publishing than traditional publishing environment. After the enterprises register in the Sina microblog, they can pay more attention to the potential users, and observe the activities and topics which are interested by them. At the same time, the companies remain active in the Sina microblog, which can also lead the users who are interested in their products to concern and become the fans of the enterprises. Those people above are the most direct target customers of the enterprises. By using microblog, the enterprises communicate with them online, and this is direct access to the consumers in marketing, whether collecting market feedback or brand communication, the enterprises face the more accurate consumption group.

### **Sina microblog for business**

As the above mentioned the use of Sina microblog for business has many unique changes, therefore, the enterprises should make full use of these characters in developing brand marketing. The specific strategies are as follows:

First, interaction of the microblog shapes the brand. The enterprises can not only use Sina microblogs to promote their products and news quickly, but also provide sufficient technological feedback and services to the external. It is an important point for the enterprises to improve brand awareness to the external. The target of the enterprises for business in the Sina microblog is getting enough fans, making the fans form a good interactive and communicated platform, and gradually build a network well-known brand. By the interaction with the fans in the Sina microblog, it can make the fans continue to recognize the brand, and become the loyal customer group of the brand.

Another strategy is that the microblog promotion builds the brand. The free things and promotion activities will undoubtedly have heavyweight destruction to the ignorant consumers. Sina microblogs are more flexible than the blog, and a prominent feature of the Sina microblog is to spread quickly. Through their own microblogs, the enterprises can carry through a series of free delivery and promotion activities. Microblogs enlarge the influence of brand communications for a long time, and they can also build the fans' worship to the brand in digital world. In

addition, by such activities it can attract the consumers to participate and test the new products, and obtain users' feedback in order to collect market information.

Take VANCL for example. As a platform which can be freely selected by the net friends and communicate feeling, VANCL does not publish the brand advertisements singularly to market in the microblog. Instead, it use the characters of microblog to carry out promotional activities, subtly publish the brands, provide the good browsing experience and feeling to the users.

Third, microblog marketing is easy to spread the brands. Fast transmit modes of Sina microblogs are one of the most convenient tools for the dissemination of information by far. However, the convenience can not used easily by people. It needs to let the users consider the contents whether they are worth watching and reading, and are willing to share with good friends. Therefore, the digital publishing format must make really good contents for users, resonate with consumers, and let the consumers be interested in. The contents maintenances of Sina microblog are relatively simple, and contain distribution and exchange. Different from the blog of the enterprises, Sina microblogs of the enterprises have very distinct characters, such as its release barriers are relatively lower and personalized color is very strong, and interactive are more convenient than traditional publishing form. If the enterprises use Sina microblogs for business, they must pay attention to the characters of Sina microblogs, and create good brand marketing communication mode.

Last, the affinity of microblog reflects the charm of the brands. The brand shape not only includes products, symbol and personality, but also contains a very important point which is the enterprise itself. It has been difficult for the empty or the rigid corporate culture to communicate with the consumers. Instead of this situation, Sina microblogs have an unparalleled affinity, and it is less of a dogma. The enterprises select the easy interactive ways, mobilize the users to involve, deep into the hearts of the users, and link the brand impact with the emotional chain by using Sina microblog.

### **Case Study - Dell's classification microblog Marketing Management**

As the global third largest PC manufacturers after HP and Acer, Dell is a company which uses internet for marketing. "Dell direct sale mode" which relies on the network and telephone have achieved a great success. Dell is sensitive to internet marketing. When enterprise blogs just appeared, Dell has already focused on the increasingly prosperous microblog in March 2007.

Data show that to March 2010, Dell's microblog marketing activities have generated more than \$ 7,000,000 PC, accessories and software orders. Especially noteworthy is that \$ 7,000,000 means that Dell directly produced transaction value by the microblog communication with the consumers during the past two years. So, how does Dell cultivate its "microblog marketing experimental field"?

Open communication is essential to the microblog, thus Dell and its consumers establish a close and direct reliable partnership. The objective of the microblog is to know and focus on customers' need. As Dell said: "Whether Dell company likes them or not, these online conversations among the customers always happen. The key issue is that if you want to join the dialogue. My view is to join certainly, you can learn from them, speed up your reaction time, by listening and joining the conversation, you will become a better company (<http://www.dell.com>). "Microblogs make Dell can get in touch with the users without any region limitations, and listen to the users' views by the network. The current performances show that microblog marketing perspectives has become Dell's priceless treasure, and the additional income is also the returns for Dell to initiatively meet the users.

By using the method of microblog classification, Dell published a variety of microblog information to different groups. Different contents are published by different accounts. Through the establishment of different positioning microblog, Dell can communicate with the users around the world and meet their needs. If the users want to look for discount information, they may focus on @ DellOut-let, if the customers want to know Dell's breaking news, they can focus on @Direct2, Dell and so on. In addition, Dell also regulates that a variety of microblog information published must comply with the simple principles, simplify the process to communicate with the users, simplify the complaint process, and simplify the methods to collect advices from the users.

“Do not send spam” is an important method for Dell’s microblog marketing management. In fact, many companies take microblogging as one-way channel, and send too much promotional information. The result is that the spam messages make the users pay less attention to them, and soon forget the enterprise. Dell’s approach is to meet the user’s interest, specially set up the microblog account for promotion. So it just provides useful promotion information for those interested users, and resolutely cracks down on the junk messages.

Surprisingly, Dell encourages all employees to access Dell’s official microblog with their real name, and takes the staff brand to bundle with corporate brands. Microblogs are a social media marketing tool which cooperates with external communities, many companies keep the cautious attitudes to their employees take the position information to publish in the internet, some companies even make strict limitations to their employees’ publishing contents in the social media, microblog and other places. However, Dell’s approach is quite different. Dell encourages their employees to show their own identity online, and communicates with the users as the corporate ambassador. Dell’s direct sales general manager of Greater China, Chen Jianhao said: “In China, there are many Dell’s employees active in the Sina Microblog. Our next plan is to further develop the employees’ potential energy. In China, Dell has tens of thousands of employees, who would be more than them understand our products, brands and customer needs, who are better than them do Dell’s brand ambassador? (Suyan Yang, 2010) “

Currently, Dell gets in touch with 12 countries’ microblog users through the microblog, including the United States, Brazil, Mexico, China, and Japan and other important markets. In addition, Dell microblog followers increase 23% in the past three months, now it has 1.5 million followers (<http://www.dell.com>). Although compared with \$61.1 billion annual revenue in 2009, \$7,000,000 is only a tiny fraction of sales, but just as Dell’s vice president of network business Mehta said:” For us speaking, the microblog is full of dynamic marketing channel, and it is one of important ways to communicate with the customers.” It can be expected that internet marketing experts-Dell will use microblog for a wider way.

## Conclusion

Sina Microblogs have become another excellent communication method. The enterprises communicate with the users by the approach, and make their own brands into the hearts of the users, which will undoubtedly be another important marketing strategy. In the digital publishing age, everything is in the development and changes. So speed, information, communication, and personality will become the key points of enterprise brand strategy. Therefore, each enterprise should make good use of the Sina microblog platform and make Sina microblog play very important roles in enterprise brand marketing.

In addition, as a new phenomenon, Sina microblog’s media operation mechanism is not mature. To the strong media publish rights system, Sina microblogs can only survive in the cracks. Although Sina microblogs show its obvious superiority in participating to construct public discourse platform, the limitations are also highlighted. Sina microblog can not yet fully reflect media values, and it has limited published results in participating to construct public discourse platform. Once the external technical limitations are dispelled, the willing and motivations which are as citizens participate in public discourse will become the fundamental problem to influence to construct public discourse platform.

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# Inheriting the First Amendment: a comparative framing analysis of the opposition to online content regulation

Sebastian Dixon

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## **abstract**

The Australian Government's proposition to implement mandatory Internet filtering was largely met with ill-concealed and vocal outrage. The plan has reignited the same fervent, cyberlibertarian discourse that John Perry-Barlow, the founder of 'The Well' and Internet pioneer, and his hacker contemporaries expunged in the early and mid-90s. This paper sought to understand this discourse in the context of its antecedents in the US cyberlibertarian discourse and movement. The study applied a discourse analysis based on Entman's (1993) theory of framing on newspaper articles which emerged from Australian opposition to the Net Filter, and similar texts emerging from an American context – especially those from the mid-90s and the opposition to the 1996 Communications Decency Act.

## **keywords**

freedom of speech - censorship - net filter - framing - First Amendment

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## **Introduction**

The principle of freedom of speech has enjoyed robust and passionate protection both at a legislative and civic level throughout the developed world. Regardless of its status in law, the principle freedom of speech is regarded as an inalienable and sacrosanct principle which is emblematic of a free and open society. One can see how the defence of this principle, or rather, how perceived attacks upon this principle are defended, in the media's coverage of the Australian government's attempts, beginning in 2007, to implement a web filter at the ISP-level which would block material which has been classified 'Refused Content'.



This paper seeks to understand this discourse within the context of its antecedents in an American cyberlibertarian movement which drew on a US First Amendment tradition. The study applied a discourse analysis based on Entman's (1993) theory of framing on newspaper articles which emerged from the Australian media's coverage of the Net Filter debate, and similar texts emerging from an American context – specifically those from the media's coverage of the 1996 Communications Decency Act. (CDA) The CDA was a legislative mechanism, passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton, that outlawed the publication, proliferation, and dissemination of any material which could be deemed “indecent”.

It is the hypothesis of this essay that the language of rights used by the Australian media in order to articulate its opposition to the Net Filter was framed with principles and rhetoric assumed from similar actors from the United States. This emerged through the adoption of a pro-free speech discourse, as well as through the importation of a hyper-liberal interpretation of the First Amendment in the form of the architecture of the Internet itself. I believe that a study of the way that the media frames technological policy debates is a useful way of understanding the broader public understandings and attitudes towards technology and its implementation.

I will begin this essay by briefly outlining the existing literature that surrounds this topic, followed by a discussion of the socio-political contexts from which the two discourses emerged, including an examination of the architecture of the Internet and the values which are embedded in it. I will then outline my approach to framing and how I applied the technique to this study, followed by a comparison of the ways in which the discourses themselves were framed and demonstrate how the socio-political landscapes affected the framing of each discourse before making some concluding remarks.

## Literature Review

There are numerous examples of comparative framing analyses being used to understand what messages are foregrounded in different discourses. (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) (Kuypers & Cooper, 2005) (Luthra, 2007) More saliently, a framing analysis of how the news media in different countries approached the issue of censorship in China was conducted by Xiang Zhou.

(2008) A comparison of freedom of speech laws in Australia and the United States, using the Child Online Protection Act, the CDA's second iteration, was carried-out by Gareth Griffith. (Griffith, 1999)

## Socio-political Contexts

### United States of America

In the United States, the federal Constitution enjoys the position of supreme law within the legislature. It is an example of an ‘entrenched constitution’ which means it cannot be amended without the onerous procedure of achieving a ‘supermajority’ in the houses of Congress, and ratification from three-quarters of states. It is the First Amendment to the US Constitution which concerns this study and it reads as follows:

“Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” (House of Representative of the United States of America, 2004)

Given the supremacy of the Bill of Rights over other pieces of legislation in the United States, the interpretation of the First Amendment has resulted in a generous space for speakers to speak and minimal constraints on topics for speakers to speak about. Indeed, so pervasive has the concept of freedom of speech become in American society, it has almost evolved beyond a law and become “a badge of citizenship”. (Tsai, 2008, p. xi) That is to say, freedom of speech not only occupies the position of law in America, but the protection that it affords has led it to become a more ubiquitous principle that Robert Tsai (2008) describes as having created a “First Amendment Culture”. Consequently, with such a firm focus on the speech rights of the individual, the First Amendment is applied as liberally to the Internet as all other media.

### Australia

While modern Australia emerged from a similar socio-political history as the United States – that of the European Enlightenment – there is no provision in either the Australian Constitution or other Australian legislation entrenching or protecting the right to freedom of speech. Though Australia is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which affirm the right of freedom of speech, they have never been implemen-

ted into Australian legislation – thus they are not enforceable by Australian courts. Nevertheless, since 1992, the decisions of the High Court of Australia have indicated an implied right to freedom of speech on matters concerning politics and government. (*Nationwide News Pty Ltd v Wills*, 1992) However, the *Rabellais Case* (*Michael Brown & Ors v Members of the Classification Review Board of the Office of Film and Literature*, 1998) found that this protection is narrow in scope – only protecting speech that concerns politics and government. Furthermore, it found that the constitution did not afford any protection to any material that incited criminal action, irrespective of its subject matter.

Despite this lack of explicit legislative protection, Australia's Enlightenment origins (as well as the vocal opposition to the Net Filter) suggest that freedom of speech is a valued individual liberty that deserves defence. For example, despite the fact that there was no common law rhetoric of freedom speech to draw upon, Australian courts have repeatedly implemented free speech values. Similarly, some legislation, while not explicitly referencing freedom of speech, implies a recognition of speech values and, in some cases, their tacit protection. (Chesterman, 2000, pp. 7-13)

### **Architecture and Code**

The architecture of the Internet – the code and organising principles which underlie it – is a kind of law (Lessig, 2006, p. 77); it reflects the values and culture of the society in which it was created. Considering the fact that the Internet was established largely in the United States by 'hackers' and researchers looking to establish an open and unconstrained communications network, it affords open and almost unconstrained speech rights for the individual user. A fact which has led Lawrence Lessig to state that "we have exported to the world, through the architecture of the Internet, a First Amendment more extreme in code than our own First Amendment in law." (2006, p. 236) If this is the case, then it presupposes the notion that Australia has adopted an interpretation of freedom of speech principles that are heavily influenced by the American context – a context that is deeply rooted in a First Amendment tradition.

This importation of American law and culture has overt implications for the discourses utilised by those who object to the

Australian government's attempts at regulation of the Internet. Primarily, it demonstrably illustrates the notion that a discourse that espouses American concepts of rights and justice lends itself well to an opposition to the Net Filter. To articulate it simply: if the object to be defended (the principles of freedom of speech built into the Internet) emerged from a specific context (the United States and a First Amendment culture), then one can more efficaciously defend that object using a discourse which emerges from the same context (a discourse which would foreground violations of freedom of speech).

### **Framing**

I will be relying on Robert Entman's (1993) theory of framing in order to analyse the media's coverage of both the CDA and the Net Filter. Entman says "to frame" is: "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described." (emphasis in original) (1993, p. 52)

According to theory (Entman, 1993) (Knight, 1999) a frame has four main attributes – (1) the definition of a problem; (2) the identification of the agents responsible for the problem; (3) a recommended solution or treatment; and (4) a moral evaluation of the agent and how it is responsible for the problem. A frame is constructed or referenced using a variety of devices: metaphors, exemplars (examples from which lessons can be drawn), catchphrases, depictions, and visual imagery (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). As this study will only examine media reports, the analysis will not discuss visual imagery because it does not appear in the sample group. The classification of the framing scheme will be based on Donohue's conflict map (1994) which divides frame disputes into fact-based, interest-based, value-based, and relational categories.

A framing analysis attempts to understand a discourse by identifying the key issues and values that have been embedded in a text by the means of various rhetorical devices. George Lakoff posits that power comes from the persistent ability to control the language of key issues and highlights the centrality of the metaphor in establishing and maintaining this control. (1980) A framing analysis will clarify the values and principles that are foregrounded in the discourses surrounding both the CDA and

Net Filter and allows for a comparative analysis of these values. The sample of ten news reports analysed concerning the Australian Net Filter fall between January, 2008 and June, 2009 and has been drawn from a range of Fairfax, News Ltd., and government-funded publications. The ten newspaper articles concerning the CDA were published between June, 1995 and July, 1997 in the Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, USA Today, and The Washington Post. I believe that the variety of publications that I have included reflect a broad representation of the political spectrum, though the opposition to both the CDA and Net Filter appears to have been universal, regardless of the political leanings of the newspaper.

### **Framing Analysis**

Before discussing the differing means by which the media from each socio-political context framed their respective issues, I will explicitly outline the frame which the media used to discuss the question of content regulation. Applying Donnohue's (1994) conflict map, whilst ostensibly making use of an 'interest-based' frame – used often in policy debates to highlight the benefit (or detriment) of one policy over another – I believe that the frame that has been adopted most closely resembles a 'value-based' frame as it makes explicit claims about what is right and wrong.

#### **The Frame**

*Defining the Problem* – a regulatory framework which stifles freedom of expression and does not properly understand the technology

*The Actors Responsible* – the government

*Remedy or Solution* – the government needs to cease its action and encourage self-regulation among families

*Moral Evaluation of Actors Responsible* – the government is curtailing the individual's right to freedom of speech and does not understand the technology on which they are legislating

#### **Communications Decency Act**

The US media framed the debate over the CDA largely through the use of metaphors, catchphrases and depiction.

#### **Metaphors**

Throughout the discourse surrounding the CDA, the Internet was referred to as a "conversation" (Hentoff, 1996) (Greene, 1996) (New York Times, 1997) and a "soapbox". (The Washing-

ton Post, 1997) These allusions to both literal speech (conversations) and political speech serve to illustrate the social-good that is afforded by the Internet and, in doing so, the disservice that curtailing speech rights on the Internet might do.

#### **Catchphrases**

A reference to the First Amendment or constitutionality (or unconstitutionality) appeared at least once in each of the ten articles that formed the sample of this study and 34 times overall. In each case, the reference was made in the context of the CDA's violation of the Constitution or how it might violate the First Amendment. This ought not to come as a surprise, given that the CDA was struck down in each of the court-cases in which it was challenged on the grounds of its unconstitutionality. By putting the CDA and the agents responsible in direct conflict with the Constitution the media establishes a basic good an evil dichotomy. The CDA is perceived as a problem as it compromises the principles of the Constitution, which are demonstrably good things.

#### **Depiction**

A moral evaluation of the actors responsible for the CDA manifested itself largely through the use of depiction – the judgement or appraisal of opponents. Amongst the sample of articles, those responsible for the passing of the CDA were referred to as "censors", (Hentoff, 1996) "Big Brother", "The Senate's Cybercensors", "the smut police", (The Washington Post, 1995) and "Federal censors". (New York Times, 1995) Overtly pejorative terms, these depictions are designed to represent the actors responsible for the CDA as draconian and unaware or uninterested in defending the individual's right to access legitimate speech without constraint.

#### **The Australian Net Filter**

The Australian media's framing of the debate surrounding the government's proposed mandatory filtering scheme was based on the use of exemplars, catchphrases, and metaphors.

#### **Exemplars**

The use of exemplars – examples from which lessons can be drawn – was based on a desire to cast a moral judgement on the actors responsible for the problem and to define the Net Filter as a problem. Allusions to China's Golden Shield program of strict regulatory measures are made in four of the ten sample

articles (The Age, 2008) (Moses, 2008) (Watts, 2008) (Sullivan, 2009) and references to Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Burma appear three times. (Sullivan, 2009) (Watts, 2008) (Moses, 2008) The deliberate use of recognisably draconian regimes which are recognised for their limited protection of civil liberties equates the proposed Net Filter with strict censorial regimes which represent an antithetical position regarding freedom of speech.

### **Catchphrases**

The term “censorship” or a derivation thereof appeared in eight of the ten articles and 22 times altogether. The term has negative connotations of a strict regulatory regime which restricts access to content for malicious or sinister reasons. The use of this term, in conjunction with allusions to other more autocratic regimes, foregrounds the effects that the filter will have on freedoms and liberties – specifically their being curtailed.

### **Metaphors**

The term “blacklist” appears thirty times in six of the ten articles. It is used to represent the list of websites that are considered RC. The origins of the term indicate its pejorative meaning, associated most frequently with the House Un-American Activities Commission which created a ‘blacklist’ of suspected communist sympathisers in Hollywood. Those on the blacklist were barred from working in Hollywood and ostracised from society. The use of terms such as ‘blacklist’ frame the Net Filter as a problem; judges negatively the actors responsible for it; and associates it with violations of the principle of freedom of speech.

### **Comparison**

A comparative framing analysis of the way in which the media from the United States and Australia framed their opposition to the respective regulatory frameworks reveals that both countries framed the issues in a similar way, using similar techniques, though the specific terms they used differed significantly due to the differing socio-political contexts from which each issue emerged. The journalists discussing the Australian Net Filter cannot reference ‘constitutionality’ or the First Amendment like their American counterparts, as freedom of speech is neither protected by the Constitution nor enshrined in a bill of rights. Instead they refer to broader more accessible, though still related, terms such as “censorship” and “blacklist” in order to communicate a similar message. It is interesting to note that

the term “censorship” appeared in only two articles and four times overall in the discourse surrounding the CDA.

The discourse surrounding the CDA is absent of the exemplars of governments which strictly regulate the Internet such as China, Iran, and Burma because these countries had not begun to implement their control mechanisms until after the CDA was quashed by the Supreme Court, (1998, 2000, and 2001 respectively) thus the journalists, writing over a decade earlier than their Australian colleagues, did not have the opportunity to capitalise on the popular perception of other countries in order to condemn the CDA.

### **Concluding Remarks**

A comparative framing analysis of the discourse surrounding the opposition to both the Communications Decency Act and the Australian Net Filter reveals a similar value-based frame being adopted by the media. That which characterises government regulation of the Internet as a problem, and the government as, not only responsible for the problem, but culpable of trampling speech rights. The means by which they articulate this frame are dissimilar, though when one considers the socio-political landscape from which each discourse emerged, a more coherent understanding of each discourse prevails. This demonstrates that the Australian discourse, trailing the furore created by the CDA by over a decade, was heavily influenced by the rhetoric espoused by the US media and the First Amendment culture which it was predicated upon. The debate surrounding the CDA was the only comparable discourse in the international media that the Australian media could take its cues from.

In this context, the repetition of ‘censorship’ and ‘blacklist’ and references to other censorial regimes form a coherent message: appeals to a First Amendment culture where no First Amendment can be found.

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## The Impact of Convergence Culture on News Publishing: The Rise of the Blogger

By Renae Englert

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### abstract

This article reviews the consequence of new media convergence in context of citizen journalism giving rise to the blogger and the impact this has made on news publishing. The impact of the blogger was compounded with technological advancements and received acceptance from news journalists and publishers at times of large-scale catastrophe, and in the wake of these as society embraced personal expression and dialogue to create a sense of community. This media convergence shifted the power previously dictated by news publishers to those traditionally on the receiving end and has highlighted the blurred role of blogger and journalist. The economic implications of this, evidenced in the sale of the Huffington Post and its paid worth of \$315 million, as well as The Punch, loosely modelled on the Huffington Post and started by News Limited in 2009 are analysed in support of this theory.

### keywords

Convergence culture, new media convergence, news publishing, bloggers, citizen journalist, Huffington Post, The Punch

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### introduction

The constant and fast-paced evolution of the Internet has dramatically changed the distribution and economics of news and the power of news publishers and journalists. News websites in real-time, RSS feeds and tickers have created a much more difficult environment for news publishers to lead within. And in particular, with the ability of non-journalists to upload and publish their writing to the public sphere that is the Internet, the cultural explosion of blogging, has created new challenges for every facet of news publishing.

The 'people formerly known as the audience' (Rosen, 2006) is a term making reference to the changing nature of news and publishing ownership with the rise of the internet. And as readership numbers fell for newspapers, and advertisers consequently turned their attention to other avenues, powers that were once attributed only to the privileged shifted to almost any citizen with internet access. The Internet moved the media from holding the traditional one-sided conversations and forced them into dialogue with their audiences. As media consumers became proficient with technology and the inherently interactive nature of the web, their participation in news content started to control it. According to Rupert Murdoch (2005), 'They want control over their media, instead of being controlled by it.'

This article will provide media theory background on convergence culture, and examples of how and why this has catapulted the blogger onto the mainstream news publishing stage, rivalling the traditional journalist.

### Convergence Culture

The paramount media theory laying foundation to this article is convergence culture. Convergence culture is not exclusively regarding technological advancements but also, importantly, encompasses cultural and sociological changes. As Jenkins (2004) defines, 'Media convergence is more than simply a technological shift. Convergence alters the relationship between existing technologies, industries, markets, genres and audiences. Convergence refers to a process, but not an endpoint.' New media technologies have altered the production and distribution of news, and consequently the economics of it. They have enabled what was previously the audience to become the author, editor and distributor of the news. It has blurred the role of the journalist and of the news publisher with that of the audience. Consequently, this changes the economics of news delivery, and of course the power. This will be further explored later in the article.

In reference to the convergence of the blogger into mainstream media, this transition occurred due to a combination of their capability to do so with personal technological devices, their presence in time of need and the societal feelings of craving community and empowerment. The online environment provided a new and easily accessible and social environment for this to occur in. News audiences adjusted easily to the freedoms provided by the online world and this converged also into the expectations of their news delivery and participation in it.

## The Rise of the Citizen Journalist

The blogger, or the Citizen Journalist as it can commonly be referred to, in its infancy was most popular in the political arena. But significantly, the blogger's importance catapulted in times of disaster. On September 11 2001, when four planes were hijacked and two flown into the World Trade Centre in New York City, blogging was at a fraction of the popularity it currently is. However, as the news sites and telephone lines failed to keep up with public demand, the world turned to any form of mass communication it could find. Some of New York City's bloggers kept running commentary of what occurred in the city. They uploaded information, eyewitness accounts and photos and were considered credible sources of news publishing. The information was then also later utilised by traditional news publishers in order to formally inform the world of the chaos that they were not otherwise able to instantly communicate. 'The chaos was a galvanizing point for the blogging world' (Gillmor, 2006) <http://www.wired.com/techbiz/media/news/2006/09/71753>). As technology progressed, and more citizens owned better quality camera-phones and the ability to upload quickly and directly to the Internet, the more important a role the citizen and the blogger became during times of catastrophe. This was evidenced during the 2004 Asian Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina and the London bombings in 2005. The internet, corresponding advancements in personal technology and the proliferation of social media required journalism as a profession, and news publishing as an industry to encompass the social nature of the online environment.

It was times such as these that required the media to evolve quickly, and remove the barriers ordinarily placed between broadcaster and public. The contributions of the public to such powerful news helped to highlight the collective intelligence (Levy, 1997) that can be delivered through citizen journalism. Citizen journalism is a form of journalism that fosters community, (Deuze, 2005) and a sense of community and empowerment is very important for citizens in times of large-scale catastrophe. With reference to the impact of citizen journalism on the BBC at the time of the London bombings, Richard Sambrook (2005) advises 'The quantity and quality of the public's contributions moved them beyond novelty, tokenism or the exceptional, and raises major implications that we are still working through.'

Since these important years, the inclusion of citizen journalism in mainstream media increased exponentially. These examples may have been causal in showcasing public contributions as something more than novelty, however there are many other important factors that have continued to increase the notoriety of the blogger within mainstream media. The incorporation of user-generated content such as commenting, responding and including relevant links and videos alongside journalistic content became a standard inclusion as part of much needed revenue building. News publishing, as a business model had been in decline and news publishers needed to be more innovative in their bid to increase revenue. The regular involvement of the public and of bloggers was one way to do this. The blogger motivates interaction and two-way conversation by the very nature of their format. It provides a high level of engagement, binding participants in conversation. The increase in participation and consequential feeling of community on these news sites increases revenue. The more times a user visits, and longer they stay on the site, the more advertising revenue is generated. Platforms for (traditional) information consumers to become self-producing informants flourished in every aspect of the digital world. The news world also needed to provide a platform for users to produce and publish to the world, or they would be left behind. To ignore this growing societal need, was financially not an option.

Consequently, convergence culture increased the acceptance of the blogger from a credible, yet sporadic deliverer of news to a regular feature whose self-produced exposure provided a financial boost to the news industry.

The rise of the citizen journalist and their importance continued to the point of almost journalist-free news publishing.

## Examples of News Publishers Staffed By Bloggers

In 2005, The Huffington Post was launched. It is a news website/content aggregating blog containing the tagline 'The Internet Newspaper: News Blogs Video Community'. Apart from a small core group of contributors including the founder Arianna Huffington, the Huffington Post content is either aggregated news or originally written by bloggers. These bloggers contribute on a range of topics from politics to business to alternative health and culture and entertainment. Some of these bloggers are celebrities, some are considered experts in their field and others are simply citizen bloggers. The majority of these bloggers

are/were not paid for contributions, but received the extensive exposure and notoriety of being viewed by the millions of readers visiting the Huffington Post each month. The Huffington Post was sold in February 2011 for \$315 million. The creation and rise of the Huffington Post as a news publisher was done with limited content contributions from professional journalists. The high value and profitable sale highlights the worth of these contributions, despite the majority of the writers not being those that are trained, accredited or bound to a professional body. It highlights a very large change in what we consider to be high value news and how we access and often contribute to it. With the entire newspaper being written by bloggers not journalists, Arianna Huffington changed news publishing forever.

And although this model of publishing has proven to be extremely profitable in this example, the Huffington Post has also had a class action filed against it for not paying the bloggers that have provided its content for the past 6 years. Although it seems unlikely that the Huffington Post will be considered liable for payment to the bloggers, it is significant this new model has raised a reaction that could potentially change its future legality. And even without the weight of the law, this may set a precedent that many bloggers won't continue to produce content on behalf of a news publisher only to receive the exposure they gain from it.

In 2009, 'The Punch', the digital venture from News Limited saw an online newspaper based on a similar model to The Huffington Post launch in Australia. In the words of David Pembarthy (2009), editor-in-chief of the site, 'Every day it will present diverse opinions from its own small team, and a rolling roster of almost 100 outside contributors, to give you real-time commentary and analysis of news and current affairs.' And 'We not only want to encourage a civil and illuminating standard of debate, we want to give every reader the opportunity to write for the site, under their own name.' The Punch, similarly to The Huffington Post, also serves as a news aggregator and links to various other news sites including those outside the News Limited ownership.

The Punch recognises, acknowledges and relishes in the media convergence that has occurred – basing their entire business model on it. 'It's the mode of delivery, for sections of the media, which is under pressure - but journalism itself is in great shape, because it has never been more diverse, it has never faced

more scrutiny, and there have never been more ways of telling a story.' (Pembarthy, 2009) Essentially The Punch displays the collective intelligence approach theorised by Levy, with bloggers and journalists competing for editorial space online. Working within this framework, this should provide the best information from a large group rather than that of a select few.

Another example showcasing the seriousness of this convergence is the expansion of Australian shield laws for professional journalists to also cover bloggers from revealing their sources. This demonstrates in totality that the role of the blogger has impacted news delivery so markedly that they are largely considered to require the same rights as professional journalists. This focuses on the idea that journalism is considered keeping the public informed, and that anyone that provides that service should be protected by that law. The person and/or news site publishing information still needs to maintain and prove that content is true to avoid being prosecuted for slander, however they can now be protected from having to unnecessarily reveal their sources of information.

## Conclusion

Media convergence represents the technological and cultural revolution that has come to be expected within a digital society. However, it is that very distinct and important changes have resonated throughout almost all facets of news publishing, including economics and law that emphasises how heavily the news industry has been impacted by this culture.

News publishing has been heavily reconfigured in recent years as it has adapted with the technological advancements thrust upon it. Production, distribution and creativity within news publishing have all been enabled by technology. Consequently, so have the economics. However, technology would not have had this impact if it were operating completely independently. The impact of technology has been and continues to be a constant negotiation process with the individuals that manage and utilise it. This includes the social and cultural events with global impacts such as natural disasters and terrorist attacks. It was due to the unprecedented technology capabilities at such times that allowed citizens to replace journalists with both quantity and quality reporting, that many editors and news sites embraced the blogger to regularly do this. As citizens harnessed the social nature of the online world, this feature became routinely incorporated into mainstream online news sites. Citizens began

to self-produce and publish into the digital world on a plethora of platforms that this became their expectation for all facets of their digital lives. Consequently, media moguls such as Rupert Murdoch saw the changes occurring in younger generations in relation to their media consumption and more importantly, their production and encouraged movement within his media empire to ensure he could capture their attention. He recognised that this required allowing users to contribute and not just receive news.

This spawned further evolution within the publishing world with the launch of sites such as The Huffington Post and to a slightly lesser degree, The Punch. Sites that not only encompassed elements of participatory journalism, but that relied almost entirely on bloggers as its business model. The sale of The Huffington Post (and for such high value), the continuation of The Punch confirms that at least until this present time, they should be considered successful examples of contemporary news publishing. This consideration should remain true despite the lawsuit filed against the Huffington Post, as at this point, it has not changed the business model nor the practice of these publishers or many of their bloggers. If this changes in the future, this statement of success may need to be reconsidered.

The move within Australian law to protect bloggers with the same rights to shield law as professional journalists, emphasizes the importance placed on bloggers within current news publishing and the minimizing differentiation between bloggers and journalists.

However, as with the definition of convergence culture being an ongoing process of negotiation, these developments and reconsiderations will continue. And despite the protestations of many journalists, bloggers and their content plays a vital role in the delivery of online news.

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# The New Design of Digital Contents for Government Applications: new generations of citizens and smart phones applications

Lorena Hevia

## abstract

“But where some see crisis, others of us simply see changing patterns of engagement, and opportunities that will reshape the notion of citizenship in this new century.” (Bennett, 2008)

The new generations of digital natives(1) will become our future citizens in next years and although most of them do not vote and they do not show any interest in traditional forms of politics and politicians, they still feel like citizens and engage with certain and specific causes. Empowered by new technologies, new generations of digital natives behave differently than traditional citizens. For that reason, it is necessary that government institutions understand the online social behaviour of young people and change its digital and communicational strategy in order to improve its public services and engage new generations of citizens. This article examined how digital natives and governments are using smart phones and touch screen devices to communicate via digital environments. Focussed on teenagers from developed countries aged between 13-17 years of age (future generations of citizens within the target of digital natives) and their social and technological practices, this essay analysed new forms of citizenship and its relation to new technologies and government applications for smart phones and touch-screen devices. Finally, the article suggested some communicational strategies and design recommendations to improve the communication between government and citizens via mobile and touch screen applications.

(1) Teenagers aged between 13 and 17 years old, born in developed countries after 1980s, with access to the latest technological advances due to better economic level, high levels of broadband access and high rates of literacy. Digital Natives grew up surrounded by digital technologies, they are always connected from virtually anywhere and they tend to mediate their social relationships through digital technologies (Palfrey et al., 2008)

## keywords

Smart Phone - Touch Screen Technology— Digital Natives – Government – Citizen- Collaborative Practices – Design – Interface - Usability

## Introduction

The emergence of new technologies – more natural, friendly and accessible - is changing traditional forms of human-technology interaction and the way that people relate to their peers and institutions. For instance, smart phones and touch-screen devices have introduced new understandings about what technology can do, proposed new forms of human-technology interaction and introduced new forms of interface and usability of contents.

On the one hand, the smart phone technology converges multiple devices and performs multiple tasks. It merges computer features with mobile phone features, allowing users to operate multiple applications in only one device. In this way, the smart phone allows users to develop different and multiple tasks through the same technological device such as making and receiving phone calls, listening music, watching videos, taking and sharing photos, keeping in touch with friends via sms, emails and social network sites, reading books, publishing contents, playing games, buying things and surf the web (Fling, 2009).

On the other hand, the smart phone incorporates touch-screen technology revolutionising the traditional forms of interaction between human and technology. According to Danus (2002), tactile interfaces could influence users attitudes in relation to technology, making people perceive technology and information in a more natural way (as a kind of artificial prosthesis of themselves that allows individuals to communicate easily). Additionally, according to Cranny-Francis (2007), the sense of touch can influence people’s interactions and their feeling of proximity. As Mark (2007) notes, the touch-screen devices tend to reduce the sense of distance and enhance the sense of being together, allowing individuals to interact with another and feel

his/her presence and company artificially through the screen. In other words, new touch-screen technologies are generating new forms of connection, bringing the remote into nearness in a virtual way and making individuals less dependent on physical contact.

Finally, the new design of smart phone devices has replaced the traditional plastic keyboard by a touch-screen control in order to give priority to the screen space. This physical feature has revolutionized not only the traditional design of phones as objects, but also it also has changed the traditional design of graphic interfaces for cell phones; creating new forms of usability and visuality for digital contents (more friendly, visual, iconographic and intuitive).

This article will analyse new forms of human-technology interaction in teenagers related to smart phones devices and social network sites in order to visualize how new generations of citizens will interact with government institutions via mobile technologies.

### **digital natives and their social and technological practices**

New technologies are changing social behaviour and the way that people communicate / interact with their social networks. Recent studies evidence new social practices in digital natives related to new technologies and how they use smart phones and touch screen devices.

On the one hand, new generations of digital natives use the new technologies to stay connected virtually from anywhere with their social networks. For instance, according to Nielsen (2010), digital natives behave as connected collective actors; they are constantly connected via social media platforms, they show a behaviour tribe, they are highly influenced by their networks (most of their decisions depend on their peer approval) and they tend to change their identity depending on their network's opinion, they are highly participative and collaborative in online environments and they prefer to express themselves and co-create opinions via digital platforms.

Another study from Flowtown (2010) goes further about how teenagers use smart phone technology. According to this research, young people use cell phones mainly for friendship applications and for managing their social lives via social network sites (such as Facebook and Twitter). Smart phones allow digital natives to

stay connected to these social platforms all time sending and receiving instant messages, co-producing contents, making comments, posting messages, chatting, uploading photos and browsing the information of their networks.

On the other hand, some studies illustrates that digital natives prefer some specific forms of communication when they use their smart phones. According to Piper Jaffray (ABCNews, 2011), new generations of digital natives prefer to use text message instead voice calls. According to Nielsen (2010), teenagers prefer text messages because of they consider it faster and more convenient than phone call.

All these studies evidence that digital natives use smart phones mainly to connect with their networks via social network sites and text messages. And, at the same time, it illustrates that current teenagers are highly participative and accustomed to act in collective forms online.

### **digital natives as future citizens**

Current digital natives are the citizens of the future and because they are accustomed to interact with their peers and environment via technologies and smart phones, it is highly probable that they will try to access, interact and deal with government institutions via digital environments (as it happened in Arab countries last months (Fitzgerald, 2011)).

Could we consider the new generations of digital natives traditional citizens? Could we consider their political / technological participation a new form of democracy? According to Bennet (2008), the traditional concepts of the citizenship and democracy are changing due to new technological advances and citizens' access to the technology. As he notes, new civic patterns and new forms of political participation related to new technologies have begun to appear among young citizens in recent years (young people engage and interact with specific political issues via digital technologies, they behave as a collective, they share and co-create contents online and they are highly informed (Nielsen, 2011)). One example of that were the protests and democratic movements in Egypt and other Arab countries against different dictators' regime and how young people form these countries used their smart phones and social network platforms to organize and inform other citizens about the political cause and protests (Fitzgerald, 2011).

In other words, new generations of digital natives behave di-

fferently than previous generations of citizens (new technologies empower them as citizens) and, at the same time, they understand the democracy differently than their parents do (more transparent, more direct and less hierarchical, more participatory and without political intermediaries) (Carrasco, 2011). According to Ranu (2010), “today’s teenagers already make up a generation that rarely stays unplugged... future citizens behaviour must be taken into consideration to offer more available government services”. For that reason, Governments should understand the new conceptualization of citizen and democracy, their social / political behaviour and how they use new technologies in order to engage and deal with future generations of citizens and new forms of democracy and offer people better public services via online platforms.

### **smartphones and governments**

The Internet and mobile technologies explosion are affecting all the fields and transforming the form that traditional institutions function. As Ranu et al. (2010) states, “The Internet and mobile communication technologies are a key catalyst for transformational change”. According to him, governments should have its services available for mobile phone format and improve their mobile applications in order to reach more people in the near future. As he notes, government applications for smart phones could be used as a communicational strategy to enhance the relationship between government and citizens (reduce the barriers between governments and citizens), encourage citizens’ empowerment (make information more accessible and encourages people to use public services) and generate more participative and democratic opportunities (optimize its communication processes). Additionally, mobile phones applications could increase the government capacity to keep in touch with more citizens (mobile penetration exceed Internet penetration) and help to decrease digital divide (adoption rates of cell phones are faster than PCs and mobile phone are accessible everywhere and all times) (Ranu et al., 2010).

All these points should be taken into account in order to improve communications between government and citizens and design better and more accessible government’s services for future generations of citizens.

### **recommenadtions for the new design of digital contents focus on government applications for smartphones and touch-screen devices**

This paper focuses on the design of new smart phone applications for governments targeted at young citizens and digital natives. The aim of this part of the article is to propose some communication strategies for future government sites based on general recommendations for the design of new government applications for smart phones and touch-screen devices.

Digital natives (future generation of citizens) are constantly connected to the virtual world and accustomed to interacting with their peers and environment through social network sites and smart phones (Palfrey, 2008). Governments should therefore improve the design of their digital platforms in order to engage new generations of citizens and anticipate to their future needs and demands (make government information / services portable and accessible). On the one hand, new websites and smart phone applications for government sites should take into consideration the different smart phone devices and its screen size, touch screen technology and new forms of usability of information and, on the other hand, new mobile applications should consider new social behaviours of digital natives related to connectivity, collaborative and collective practices. Some design recommendations that should be considered for future government applications for smart phones and websites design are:

#### **1. ALLOW A DIRECT ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES VIA SMART PHONE APPLICATIONS**

The majority of government institutions have not yet developed their websites for smart phone applications. It is important that future institutional web pages consider smart phone access and improve their contents design without the necessity to download a special application. One recommendation for that could be to install standards and visible icons on institutional web pages that redirect citizens to the smart phone versions of the same website.

#### **2. DESIGN CONTENTS FOR LIQUID AND FLEXIBLE LAYOUTS**

The liquid layout is a flexible layout for web design contents based on the adaptation of digital contents size according to the

percentages of the screen size. This layout is used to readapt and resize automatically and consistently the contents on the screen regardless the size of the monitor, the screen resolution and the technological device. And show everything on the same screen without incorporate scroll in the horizontal axe of the screen to navigate contents. It is recommendable to use liquid layout for smart phone applications in order to resize texts and images automatically and do not affect the usability and the visuality of contents because of the new size of the screen.

Additionally, it is recommendable to take into account specific forms of layout to distribute contents and read images on the screen, considering users points of attention such as Gunter Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen model of wester visual material based on 4 quarters (for new information, information already know, information details) and one centre (focus point) (Ann Cranny-Francis, 2005).

### **3. CREATE SIMPLER INTERFACES FOR SMALL SCREENS**

Traditional websites are very difficult to see and navigate through the smart phone screen because of the size of the monitor and the layout of contents.

The point is that not everyone has a perfect vision to read traditional websites contents through a mobile screen and not everyone knows exactly where and how to find the information they are searching. For that reason, government institutions should re-think their websites and mobile applications and implement simpler but more interactive versions of their official websites for smart phones.

One example of that is the White House website ([www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)) and its iPhone application. The White House allows American citizens to access official government information via the official website or via an iPhone application with a special interface (application that need to be installed from a special website). The iPhone interface is simpler than the official website and contains the same information but displayed in another form. Nevertheless, the White House application for iPhone is not much more interactive than the official site and citizens access to contents without the possibility to collaborate or participate as digital citizens through the institutional website.

### **4. IMPROVE THE USABILITY OF CONTENTS THROUGH A BETTER AND SIMPLER DESIGN**

The visual design and aesthetic effects for government web-

sites and institutional applications for smart phone should be thought as a communicational strategy to improve the usability of institutional contents in digital environments. For that reason, it is necessary to consider the usability of each element on the screen separately before beginning the design of new institutional contents for digital applications. Some digital elements to take into consideration are:

#### **The colour and the form of widgets**

The use of colour can help organizations to manipulate de visibility of contents. For that reason, colours could be used as a strategy to highlight or hide information (colour and contrast). Additionally, colours can produce unconscious meanings and effects in users´ behaviour associated with their cultural background (for instance, in western cultures red icons are associated to warn or precaution).

In the same way, the shape of images can highlight or hide contents. Nevertheless, it is recommendable to avoid over-blown visuals and design simpler interfaces in order to help users to navigate contents in a more easy way. Be consistent with usability conventions will reduce the confusion of users (Komarov, 2009).

#### **The size of texts and images**

Because of the small size of the smart phones screen, it is necessary to ensure the readability of information independent of the size of the window. For that reason, it is necessary that government institutions consider new versions of their official websites for smart phones and, at the same time, optimize / prioritize its display of contents according to the space on the touch-screens devices. In other words, it is necessary to improve the visuality of information for mobile applications; increasing the size of certain contents giving priority to main information such as titles, images, videos, icons, etc.

#### **The space between widgets**

Because of the most of smart phone interfaces are based on touch-screen technology; future institutional contents for digital applications must be designed for users fingertip interaction (users will browse and access to contents directly with their fingers). For that reason, the future institutional design must consider the relocation of digital elements according to tactile user interaction contents. One recommendation is to consider the use of empty spaces in order to facilitate user navigation

and a better accessibility to tactile contents.

### **The navigation menu**

The navigation and layout of contents for smart phone applications must be simple and obvious (do not confuse mobile phone with computer). Navigation menu should be designed as more intuitive and easy to learn and remember as possible (Komarov, 2009).

### **Branding location**

Because of the graphic presence of a brand in a website conveys security to users, it is recommendable to incorporate the brand of government institutions on smart phone applications. As Komarov (2009) notes, the place for branding in digital applications follows usability conventions and it must be located on the top of the screen.

## **5. REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF STATIC INFORMATION AND INCORPORATE INTERACTIVE CONTENTS**

The way that young people are now communicating, reading and interacting with the information is different than prior generations. Digital Natives grew up surrounded by technologies and are accustomed to have instantaneous access to information via digital platforms and search engines. In addition, in accordance to recent studies, Digital Natives tend to read images and skim texts (bottom and edges) searching and skimming for specific information before read the whole texts (Jukes, 2008). For that reason, it is recommendable to reduce static forms of contents (texts) and incorporate more interactive forms of information (video, images, audio) due to new social / technological patterns, the size of smart phone screen and contents, and the interactive nature of new mobile interfaces.

## **6. INTEGRATE INFORMATION SEEKERS ON THE SCREEN**

In order to reduce the length of texts and allow users to access and find institutional information in a more efficient way (more easily and quickly), new government websites and institutional applications for smart phone and touch-screen devices should incorporate graphic searchability systems for users inside their mobile applications as part of their main options of menu.

## **7. INTEGRATE COLLABORATIVE APPLICATIONS**

New government websites and institutional applications for smart phones and touch screen devices should adapt to the collaborative behaviour of new generations of citizens who are ac-

customed to share contents online and participate in virtual discussions (Palfrey, 2008). For that reason, governments should consider new communicational strategies (similar and /or same participative models used by social network sites applications) to engage and listen young audiences via online platforms (give to young citizens the possibility to express, complain, co-create ideas, collaborate in online discussions and share opinions via government platforms).

It is important that government understand that new citizens demand more and more participative instances. For that reason, new forms of communication should be based on two-way communication levels (digital platforms allow people to express, share, link, transform and distribute information). At the same time, governments should comprehend that new forms of communication require their participation and their immediately responses (independent of time and space) in order to maintain citizens' confidence and respect (Ranu et al., 2010).

## **conclusion**

This article examined how new generations of citizens and governments use smart phones and touch-screen devices to communicate via digital environments. The research was focused on digital natives and their citizens' behaviour. The study evidenced that digital natives act and behave differently than prior generations of citizens. In order to improve the relationship between new citizens and government institutions, this article proposed some design recommendations for mobile and touch-screen applications to enhance the communication flow between people and public organizations. This document stressed the fact that governments should understand the new conceptualizations of citizens and democracy and change their communicational strategies; implementing their services for mobile technologies (using the same communicational language that young people are accustomed to use today to interact with their peers) in order to engage and deal with new generations of citizens.

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# Solving the Digital Divide: how the National Broadband Network will impact inequality of online access in Australia

Michael Roberts

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## **abstract**

In 2007 the Labor party announced the largest infrastructure project in Australian history by building a Fibre to the Premise connection to 93% of the country and connecting the remaining 7% using wireless infrastructure.

The digital divide is a problem while shrinking in some respects as Internet access improves within Australia, is growing as the term evolves to outline the lack of ICT skills and fast broadband connections and skills required to participate in a digital economy.

The conditions the government has placed around the NBN will alter this landscape, but also presents new research and training challenges.

## **keywords**

NBN, Broadband, Digital Divide, Internet, Australia, Governments

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## **Introduction**

In 2007 the Labor Party as the opposition government put forward a policy paper entitled “New Communications: A Broadband Future for Australia” which outlined Labor’s plans to create a National Broadband Network (NBN) accessible to all Australians (Australian Labor Party, 1998).

The NBN is designed to tackle the problem of both the digital divide within Australia (particularly the rural/city divide) and improve Internet connectivity to allow Australians to compete on an international marketplace with an emphasis on small businesses, health, digital publishing and education.

Yet the investment in infrastructure must be matched with appropriate training in digital skills. Labor Broadband Minister Senator Stephen Conroy has suggested broadband can become “embedded” into people’s lives, yet the NBN network must be coupled research, development and training at both an occupational and community level for the network to be used to its full potential in delivering benefits socially and economically.

### **Defining the Digital Divide**

The term ‘Digital Divide’ became popular when used by US President Bill Clinton in 1996 in a speech, referring to the lack of access to hardware and software by lower income earners, specifically ethnic groups. (Bill Clinton, 1996) In the 1990’s the digital nature refers to lack of hardware and software required to connect to what Clinton labels the ‘Information Superhighway’.

The meaning of this term has been challenged since this point. Mark Warschauer suggested that the term should encompass more than ‘connectivity and computers,’ but also the tools, training and software to make this technology useful. He proposed that this is best measured in the ‘technological transformation’ that takes place within communities. Warschauer suggests that the biggest difficulties is “overcome the people’s minds themselves” (1993, pg 787)

As the use of the Internet has evolved, particularly faster broadband speed, the term ‘digital divide’ has become problematic. This term suggests a dichotomy and often is applied to distinguish particular stereotypical socioeconomic groups. Rather, there is a gap in ‘usage’ (Hacker and Van Dijk, 2003, pg236 ) between users, due to Internet connectivity and digital skills that place limitations on the usefulness of the technology. For example, some may have Internet connectivity that allows for an online ordering system to be maintained adequately but others may allow for full online conference functionality. Yet the ‘digital divide’ concept highlights the difficulty that the distribution of new technologies occurs within pre-existing class structures. Chen and Wallman (2004) use four key criteria that contribute to the digital divide.

1. Socioeconomic Status – Internet users are more likely to have higher levels of education and higher incomes.
2. Gender – Men are more likely to have access to the Internet
3. Life stage – Internet penetration rates are significantly

higher amongst younger generations

4. Region – Geographical location impacts significantly to technology availability.

Whilst technology has the potential to act as great class leveler and promote equality, the above criteria significantly limit this. There is not one set trend however, and some factors are more significant than others in various countries for accounting for the inequalities in access to the Internet. Willis and Tranter highlight in the US income coupled with age and location being the most significant factors, yet in Germany education level is by far the most important. (Australian Labor Party, 2007)

The Internet has experienced more boundaries than most other technologies in distribution. To obtain access to the Internet, substantial infrastructure must exist, a user requires competence, technical skills and confidence to play an active role in updating online content. The Internet is also a medium, which is shifting quickly in meaning and expanding rapidly in variety of content types.

### **The Digital Divide within Australia**

There has been little recent research into which factors are most significant for Australia. Lloyd and Hedwig’s major study in 2000 demonstrated that education levels and income were the most prominent factors in Internet accessibility. In 2003 The Australian Government released a communications report which evaluated of perceived gaps in the digital divide, and offered funded initiatives to address these issues.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) research confirmed in 2003 that whilst Internet use was broadening generally, it failed to be “distributed proportionately” (Black and Aitkinson, 2003, pg 7). The ABS reported in 2009 that amount of people accessing the Internet at home had quadrupled in the previous decade to 72%, and 90% of Internet users upgrading from dialup to broadband. Yet of most interest in this report, those with the highest income were most likely to have Internet access (90%) and most likely to have broadband (Lohan, 2010). Those who live in metropolitan centres are also most likely to have Internet access.

These ABS statistics show evidence that while Internet connectivity is increasing; a digital divide still exists prominently amongst those with lower income levels. Willis and Tranter argue that evaluating the disparities in connectivity highlight tho-

se in struggling socioeconomic groups are least likely to access the Internet. This research is the last major study that has taken place in Australia and the 2011 Census will assist in understanding these trends further.

### Household Computer or Internet Access 1998-2008/9

FIGURE 1.1: HOUSEHOLD COMPUTER OR INTERNET ACCESS. Proportion of all households—1998 to 2008–09

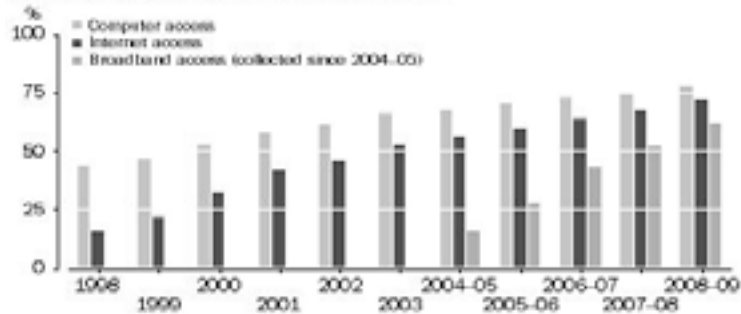


Figure 1.1 Source: Computerworld 8th Feb, 2010

Black and Aitkinson highlight the issue of location as a significant cause to the digital divide (2007). An example of this is the rural town of Chiltern, VIC. 45% of the town's population would be classified by the ABS as being socioeconomically disadvantaged, with the median income being below \$700 a week in 2003. Chiltern also has a 32.4% regular Internet usage rate, in comparison to metropolitan usage rate of 41.6% in 2003.

### Government Intervention to Close the Digital Divide

Government Intervention to improve Internet connectivity and basic Information Communications Technologies skills in Australia dates back to the major Networking the Nation (NTN) project that ran from 1997 to 2004. NTN invested \$321 million in community based projects in rural and regional Australia. This project aimed to "address issues around the availability, quality and cost of telecommunications".

The Access@Schools program was aimed to address problems with accessibility to technology, and in Chiltern a program was established where families could borrow a notebook from the library. While this improved computer literacy skills, most fa-

milies did not have internet connections and were still required to visit local libraries, school or internet cafes to access the Internet. Aitkinson and Black found that those who participated in the notebook program increased their familiarity and ability to use computers and benefits included being able to perform tasks and access information faster, including environment.

The establishment of "online access centres" across the country allowed informal Internet and email training to be undertaken in hundreds of rural towns. Lindsay MacDonald from Blackall in QLD, one of the NTN community board members commented that telecommunications companies did not have the incentive to provide access to these extra services beyond the Universal Service Obligation (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). The NTN was able to fill these gaps in access as well as provide the training required to make these tools meaningful.

A more recent example is the Digital Education Revolution announced in 2009 that aims to establish a 1:1 computer ratio in Australia for students in Years 9-12 by the end of 2011 (mostly by providing laptops for Year 9 students to keep) at a cost of \$2.3 billion (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008). This program aimed to develop online learning and access that will improve their ICT "skills and tools" for not only the students, but incorporating their parents within this learning process to be apart of a "digital society". This program is currently being rolled out and is too early to evaluate the results. The bold 1:1 ratio of students to computers across the country will address the boundaries of cost and location within the digital divide, and has the opportunity for students to share their new ICT skills with their parents.

### The National Broadband Network

The National Broadband Network is 'Fibre to the Premises' network that is currently being rolled out to 93% of the population, with the remaining 7% being connected using wireless and satellite technologies. The NBN was launched in August in 2010 in Tasmania, and is being rolled out across the country over the next five years. The NBN would be competitively priced, feature speeds up to 1GB per second. It is Australia's largest infrastructure project ever at a cost of over \$35 billion (NBN Co, 2010)

One of the key rationale behind this network was to improve Australia's service industry and the ability for "small busines-



ses” to be able to compete internationally as well as create new e-health, e-education and new media opportunities as well. It is important to note that the NBN is not specifically designed to address the problem of the digital divide, but rather is aimed on moving Australian into a digital economy.

Government projections suggest that the NBN could generate between \$12-30 billion per annum for the Australian economy, but is difficult to calculate the exact numbers, or jobs created. Labor Senator and Broadband Minister Stephen Conroy announced reports that forecast telehealth alone could contribute \$750 million – 4 billion per annum to the economy. (Foo, 2010) He has also highlighted that if the poor Internet Speed that businesses currently experience was to continue, this would become a significant threat to the Australian economy.

### **Digital Publishing on the NBN**

One of the key benefits of the NBN that it will improve accessibility to digitally published content. John Johnson (2009) suggests such technological advancements can add real value to users. He argues that the digital revolution creates a new ‘ease of access’ to content and no longer governed by the restraints that typical bricks and mortar institutions face such as time, space and location constraints. He also argues this new content can be of a much broader scale at a fraction of the cost, easily searchable, and content can be updated very quickly.

One key problem is that traditional media outlets have been slow to adopt new online distribution technologies. Currah (2006) contributes most of this notion on the oligopoly between the major media production companies, and suggests that if we should be able to share media content between our social networks and P2P (peer to peer) technologies with some government regulation.

Schilz, Truyen and Coppens (2007) argue for the principle of ‘Open Access’ in that information is available online without price and permissions barriers. They note that these barriers were required due to the cost of print production, but are no longer applicable. They also argue the knowledge is becoming more ‘social’ and that information is more easily being disseminated through social networks, and that this is changing the very fundamental understanding of knowledge. In contrast to transmitting and remembering knowledge, we rather understand how to access and ‘activate’ knowledge. This has great potential as it

is possible to obtain and understand a much greater spectrum of knowledge than ever before.

The NBN will assist in allowing a much wider range of information to be accessed, and ‘activated’. For example, a farmer in West Wyalong is able to access the most recent trials in seed growing and is able to alter his technique accordingly.

### **Will the NBN close the digital divide?**

The structural basis of the project provides safeguards to ensure that there is equality in the access to the NBN, and this in turn will assist in combating the digital divide within Australia. Senator Steven Conroy has stated that the “NBN will break down barriers and ensure improved economic and social opportunities”(Conroy, 2003). The NBN’s website outlines that one of the key advantages is that the NBN will “give regional and remote Australians better access to specialist services, information sources and tools typically found in major cities” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010)

The NBN is being constructed by NBN Co, a fully owned Government company. The network will be government owned and will act as a wholesaler to Internet Service Providers. One of NBN Co key objectives is to: “offer uniform national wholesale pricing over the network, from a POI (Point of Interconnects) to a premises, on a non discriminatory basis”.

NBN Co have also outlined that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will closely watch the prices put forward from ISP’s to ensure there is equality, particularly for rural areas, and have suggested that in some cases subsidies may be required.

The project has also clearly had an emphasis on rural and regional Australia. The government statement of expectations of the NBN is that it would be “rolled-out simultaneously in metropolitan, regional and rural areas” (Conroy, 2003). The support of independent MP’s for the NBN during the 2010 hung parliament became a deciding factor to form a minority government with Labor. Independent Rob Oakshott in particular utilised this situation to fast track the roll out of the NBN in regional areas and obtain written guarantees regarding the uniform pricing structure from the Prime Minister (Packham, 2011).

Tasmania was deliberately chosen for the location of the proto-

type for the NBN with only 54.6% of homes having access to the Internet, almost 10% lower than the national average in 2006 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011) David Barlett the Tasmanian Premier in 2009 outlined the key opportunities Tasmania had to create server farms and data centres.

It is difficult to forecast the effectiveness of the NBN in closing the digital divide. Using Chen and Wellman's criteria, the NBN has addressed at least two of these four criteria by ensuring an equal price structure and rural connectivity. Gender and age are two key factors that must be addressed through raising public awareness and education. It is possible, however, to examine the effectiveness of similar strategies to the NBN in countries such as South Korea.

South Korea is a country that embarked on significant broadband projects from 1998 onwards and addressed this through the creation of 'Information Culture Centre' to foster the development and awareness of the 'information society'. Apart of this was a policy of 'universal information service', ensuring that each household had access to one computer and affordable Internet access. Internet accessibility spiked significantly through this program.

### Percentage of Internet Users in South Korea

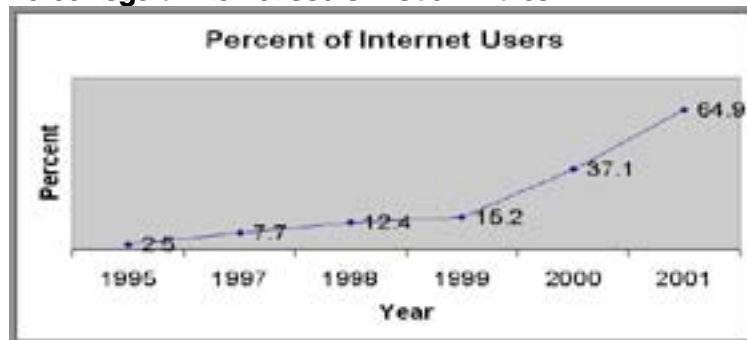


Figure 1.2 Source: Ham Wuo Park 2003

One key observation from South Korea, is that while the population had easy access to the Internet, a large number did not bother to obtain the technical competency required for use as survey respondents they did not need the Internet for their lives. Older women and those without a university education were more likely not to use the Internet out of necessity. One key observation Park makes is that there is an increasing 'usage' gap occurring within Korea, in that part of the population

and continually developing new digital skills, while the majority of users are only utilise basic skills such as email and word processing. (Park, 2003)

### Training and Education to close the usage gap

One key lesson from South Korea is that they invested more significantly into education and training for groups that were likely to be marginalised from the Internet project. Unlike the NTN project which partnered investment in infrastructure and training, there is no funding allocated at the current time for community education on harnessing the new benefits of the NBN. Certainly, one of the positive side effects of the Digital Education Revolution program is that some families with school-aged children will have access to hardware, software and have skills they will be able to teach their parents.

For the NBN network to result in the projected growth in the Australian economy, thorough research, training and development must be undertaken to ensure to improve Australian's skills, on both a skills level at a work level, but also at a community level. The government has announced that \$2.6 billion allocated to the NBN project would be used in public-private partnership between 2009-2012 to accelerate the growth of high tech jobs in Australia and improve work skills and productivity using the NBN.

Jennifer Hewett raises two key concerns regarding the NBN – whether the cost required to produce a such a fast network is justifiable, and whether most of this speed will be underutilised as homes will be only using the NBN to allow “teenagers to play online games against people in Estonia and Brazil and download movies” (2010).

Whilst there is still time for the government to announce future programs (as the major rollout of the NBN is still to occur), Tasmania provides a perfect opportunity to refine such programs with those who statistically have a below average ICT skill set. Indeed, for the government to achieve the objective for small businesses to compete on an international marketplace, these skills are pivotal for Australia's digital economy.

### Conclusion

The Digital Divide is an evolving term and problem that not only relates to one's access to ICT resources, but also the user's

level of ICT skills and level of access. Those who have a lower income and education level, and live in regional or rural areas are most likely to suffer from this 'divide'. This is a problem that has been addressed through various initiatives of the Australian Government over the past 15 years, most recently through the Digital Education Revolution and the National Broadband Network. Yet for the government to obtain the full economic and social benefit from the NBN significant research and funding must be put into improving work productivity, and also basic ICT skills at a community level.

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# The Blurring of Roles: journalists and citizens in the new media landscape

By Nikki Bradley

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## **abstract**

The introduction of web 2.0 technologies has changed the landscape of media and publishing, in particular journalism and the means of reporting news. The advent of blogs, social networks and micro blogging sites has given rise to citizen journalists and bloggers. As events unfold around the world citizens are increasingly taking an active role in the real time reporting of events. The speed of distribution of content is now also creating an expectation of immediacy of news delivery by consumers that can have social, legal and economic impacts for both the distributors of news along with news consumers.

This article explores the role of citizen journalists and professional journalists and the impact of their merging. Can the two groups work together or should the "professional" journalist still be the dominant source for news in the media landscape? Who is really shaping the news and will we see the evolution of a "new" media landscape or the development of another form of mass media? Can technology dictate the path of our future media or is the future shaped by how citizens make use of technology? These questions are addressed through the examination of a series of recent examples that were reported by traditional media organisations, citizen journalists and media or technology focused blogging platforms. This includes natural disasters, terrorist attacks, abuses of power, issues with validating content, possible distribution models and examples of mainstream media purchasing web sites that were populated with content that primarily came from citizen journalists.

## **keywords**

New Media, Web 2.0, citizen journalist, journalism, news coverage, broadcasting, publishing, bloggers

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Prior to the introduction of the digital network and the development of Web 2.0 technologies citizens were reliant on either the state or traditional media organisations to report on and deliver news and current affairs. This was delivered through television, radio and print newspapers via a framework of mass media - a one to many broadcasting model. Aside from being able to submit a letter to the editor of a newspaper or participate in talk back radio, citizens have, up until recently been restricted in their ability to take an active role in the reporting, analysis or distribution of news and current affairs.

The introduction of the Internet and web 2.0 technologies; along with the mass production of inexpensive recording and distribution devices such as video cameras, mobile phones and editing software has changed the landscape of our traditional media broadcasting platforms. This change has impacted the means of production and distribution of news and current affairs. Alex Gyr examines this in a 2010 paper where he states: "technological progress is providing consumers with countless new ways of receiving and distributing information and content." (Gyr et al, 2010:1) The introduction of such technologies has also changed "...the balance of power between those who control the means to publish and those who have something they believe is important to say" (Ludtke,M: 2005) Technological advancements mean that much of the worlds population lives in an ever increasing networked society that "...has become radically interconnected, interdependent, and communicated in the formations and flows of the media" (Allan,S. Thorsen,E 2009:ix) , where "...citizen journalism provides a new challenge to a news industry which in many developed nations faces significant permanent problems." (Deuze et al. 2007:2) Technology has impacted how and who records events and how that content is distributed or broadcast through networks. Reliance on the State or traditional mass media corporations in order to receive news is no longer the only channel available to many citizens of the world. There are still citizens for whom this is not the case but this is not being explored as part of this paper.

New technologies have seen the rise what is known as the "citizen journalist". A citizen journalist is someone not employed by the mainstream media but who through the capturing of vision, sound and commentary records, publishes and distributes news and current affairs. Citizen journalism is seen to revolve around "...crisis reporting" (Allan,S. 2009:18), a person who is often just at the wrong place at the wrong time. "Citizen journalism

though certainly not without historical precedents, has evolved rapidly across recent years and is expressive of the surrounding culture, organizational structures, and politics of civil societies" (Allan,S. Thorsen,E 2009:XI) There are many early examples where citizens captured images that were later incorporated into traditional news media reporting of events.

Examples of early recording by citizens and then reporting by mainstream media include, in 1954 Virginia Schau capturing an image of a man being rescued from a truck that dangled over the side of a bridge along with the assassination of American President John F Kennedy in 1963 being captured on home movie camera. As technology changed and recording devices became more prevalent so did the capturing of news events.

The 1991 beating of Rodney King can be seen as an early turning point in the evolution of the citizen journalist and their role in mainstream media. On March 3, 1991 George Holliday was awakened by a noise. He looked out his window and saw a group of police beating a man and started to film, "he captured a scene that put a city in flames." (Myers:2011) Unlike today Holliday had no means of self mass distribution for the content he captured. Holliday was still reliant on traditional media to broadcast the footage and he had no way of knowing if they would broadcast the event, edit the footage or have the ability to control the style of the report that would be broadcast. The footage was broadcast by KTLA News and led to the LA Riots and eventual police charging. What was evident to the media of the day was that through the new technologies "...anyone with a video camera could become more than a witness to the events of our times" (Gillmor,D: 2011) If not for Holliday capturing this event and providing it to a traditional media organisation this crime may have gone unnoticed by society.

This is just one early example of a citizen recording an event that would become a news story. It would still be another 10 years before traditional media was seen to 'collide' with citizen journalists. The combination of Web 2.0 technologies and natural disasters in the mid 2000's saw the media landscape change dramatically. By 2004 the tools for recording and distributing content had become cheaper and easier to use. Citizens were now able to publish their content via their own distribution channels on sites such as Youtube and Myspace where their own networks would aid in the further distribution of the content. Facebook only launched in February 2004 and initially was only able to be accessed by US college students, therefore isn't part of the early distribution model. Citizens could control what was

published and not have their content edited by an editor of a news organisation. 2004 saw a number of events occur which can be attributed to the collision of the citizen journalist and traditional media organisations. The Asian Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina and the London Terrorist bombings. "Beginning in December 2004, coverage of calamities has brought us to a tipping point for user generated content, a new term for citizen involvement in the news" (Schaffer, J. 2005) Major events were occurring where traditional media outlets were being overtaken by citizens in the release of footage and first hand accounts of events. Part of this was due to "...the emergence of a population that is ever more willing to record, and share, their experiences: mash them up and submit them to their friends and other community members for evaluation, and allow their reputations to be built via these assessments" (Cooke, Buckley 2008: 274)

At the time of the London Bombings the BBC reported that "... within six hours (they) received more than 1000 photographs, 20 pieces of amateur video, 4000 text messages and 20,000 emails. ...By the next day, our main evening TV newscast began with a package edited entirely from video sent in by viewers" (Sambrook, R: 2005) The BBC, for the first time incorporated this user generated content into their primetime broadcast of the events surrounding the London Bombings. This can be seen as a tipping point for the traditional media realising the importance of incorporating the content and first account accounts being reported and self broadcast by citizen journalists. Allen (2009) describes this new style of reporting as capturing "...something of the countervailing ethos of the ordinary person's capacity to bear witness, thereby providing commentators with a useful label to characterize an ostensibly new genre of reporting" (Allan, S. 2009:18)

Despite this realisation for some organisations, "citizen journalism continues to be an evolving and frustrating concept for mainstream media" (Bowman, S. Willis, C 2005) Many media organisations, including the BBC were embracing the concept of incorporating citizen journalism into their broadcasting models but not all were necessarily embracing this new form of journalism. Although many organisations were starting accept content from citizens they are still unwilling to allow complete access. They still control the agenda, act as the gatekeeper of authority and ultimately decide "...who is permitted to enter their news domain, under what conditions, when and how" (Allan, S. Thorsen, E 2009:XI)

What is clear in 2011 is that many news organisations are

now outsourcing "...production of news to the audience or consumers". (Deuze et al. 2007:2) The BBC have embraced this form of participatory journalism which Deuze (2007) describes as "... any kind of news work at the hands of professionals and amateurs, of journalists and citizens, and of users and producers bench-marked by what Benkler calls commons-based peer production (Deuze et al. 2007:3) The BBC now operate a User Generated Content (UGC) hub that is staffed 24 hours a day by 23 BBC employees whose primary role is to monitor the Internet, blog sites and online communities in order to gather content that can be incorporated or support their news broadcasts. The BBC however do not appear to have a model in place whereby there is an exchange of money for the content they obtain.

In 2008 Helen Boaden, BBC director of news was quoted as stating "Our journalism is now fully embracing the experiences of our audience, sharing their stories, using their knowledge and hosting their opinions...we're acting as a conduit between different parts of our audience; and we're being more open and transparent than we have ever been before". (Allan, S. Thorsen, E 2009:4) This came about as a direct result of the 2004 London bombings and the realisation of the importance of the role of the citizen journalist in reporting of news by traditional broadcasters. During 2010 and 2011 there has been a rise in mainstream media in Australia soliciting images, stories and feedback directly from citizens. You can join a conversation with a journalist on twitter, facebook or various dedicated online forums. Broadcasting Networks such as Channel 9 have also developed mobile application for users to not only view content but also directly submit images they capture of events to Channel 9.

These examples demonstrate how mainstream media is now incorporating citizen journalists into their models. On the other side is the blogging community, specifically bloggers who report on news, and the impacts on their distribution models when mainstream media 'collides' with their system. Citizens can self publish or blog anything (within the law). From cooking sites, to holiday updates through opinions pieces on politics or entertainment reviews. There are over 100 million blogging sites, some with little traffic and others who have garnered enough traffic to act as an alternate voice to mainstream media. Recent examples of this are the Huffington Post and Tech Crunch. Initially both were independent sites who relied on contributions by bloggers, citizen journalists and a small staff of writers and editors. These sites like many others have

"continued to challenge the mainstream news media and shake up the political parties"(Jenkins. 2006: 3)

The Huffington Post, launched in 2005 by Arianna Huffington is a 'liberal' American news site that boasted over 9000 unpaid contributors. TechCrunch is an influential technology blog site. Both sites have been respected as being independent from traditional media and allowing bloggers to submit content that if published will reach a large audience. These sites are examples of the merging of citizen journalist and mainstream media, not always with a positive end result. Both sites have been bought out by the mainstream media company AOL with Huffington now controlling content across all AOL properties.

One of the fall outs of the purchase of the Huffington Post has been the reaction of the non-paid blogging contributors. The Huffington Post is being sued for \$315million dollars "by a freelance journalist claiming unpaid bloggers should be compensated for the value they created for the website" (Staff writers: 2011) The 6 Journal of Digital Research and Publishing Huffington Post released the following statement in relation to the law suit:

"The lawsuit is wholly without merit. As we've said before, our bloggers use our platform"as well as other unpaid group blogs across the Web" to connect and help their work be seen by as many people as possible. It's the same reason people go on TV shows: to promote their views and ideas. HuffPost bloggers can cross-post their work on other sites, including their own. Aside from our group blog, to which thousands of people from around the world contribute, we operate a journalistic enterprise with hundreds of paid staff editors, writers, and reporters."

This purchase opens up a range of discussions regarding the commoditisation of content. Is there any difference between supplying content for free to an independent site or to a traditional media site? The current system that has emerged for many citizen journalist is in order to have their content distributed to a larger - mass audience it is generally done for free and without any rights to retain the ownership of their content. The Huffington Post maintains that these contributors should not be paid as they are not professional writers. Media organisations are willing to embrace citizen content but still want to maintain a division between the professional and the citizen contributor. One major change that has occurred with the AOL purchase of the Huffington post was that, according to TechCrunch, AOL let go of the bulk of the freelance contributors. The blogger who reported this on Techcrunch was one of the writers who was

let go. Interestingly he didn't seem to mind now submitting his content without pay as he was in the process of promoting a book and saw it as a means to reach over 40million readers a month. (Carr,P: Techcrunch 2011) One organisation that does pay for any content that is supplied by citizens is a German tabloid - Bild. This media organisation pays for content that it publishes. (Gillmor,D: 2011) This may be a model that other organisations adopt in order to secure "citizen content"

The merging of traditional content, citizen content and the speed of distribution also presents a difficult balancing act between validating content and a consumers and media organisations desire for real time updates or being the first to break a story. Traditional news organisations race to be the first to publish a story and at times this race for immediacy can have detrimental impacts, not only to the viewer but also to the voice of the publication. This race to be the first is not just limited to traditional media outlets. The rise of sites such as twitter where users can distribute content has also seen individuals in a virtual race to be the first to publish up to the minute information about news and current affairs. Although being the first to publish can be seen as a coup it can also lead to confusion, economic issues and a sense of distrust of publishers. Examples of this include a number of incorrect social media postings of a QANTAS airline crashing leading to "...a collapse in the airline's share price" (Moses,A: 2011). On the 26th June 2009 Channel 9 entertainment reporter Rickard Wilkens incorrectly reported the death of Actor Jeff Goldblum. In his race to be the first to publish Richard had picked up on a hoax tweet and rather than checking the facts issued the story on national television. During the recent Japanese earthquake and Tsunami citizen journalists were able to post images of the devastation up to an hour before the traditional news broadcasters could, however it was also discovered that many of the images had been doctored in photoshop. (Laube,W:2011) The role of the journalist in any disaster situation should still be to verify facts, images and videos that are presented to them, rather than rushing to be the first to publish. Fenton (2007) describes this desire for immediacy as "... turning journalists into "robohacks" practicing "churnalism" rather than reporters and editors" (Fenton,2010: 7) There is a risk for journalists in placing the desire to be the first to publish above that of being right if they do not check their facts and sources.

It is impossible to predict what will happen in the future with media broadcasters and citizen journalists. It is clear that both

now have a role to play in the production and distribution of content. Once thing that is clear is that certain key elements need to be explored and a framework developed that takes into account the quality of content, validity of content and rights. These key elements need to be incorporated into any discussion of a new media or participatory journalism. "No one size fits all in this evolving landscape. But an overarching narrative emerges: We are witnessing the creation of a robust infrastructure of media participation" (Schaffer,J. 2005)

Bardoel and Deuze (2001) predicted a new form of journalism that would embrace a cross-media functionality "publishing news across multiple media platforms" as well as an interactive relationship with audiences (Deuze et al. 2007:2) As of 2011 some news organisations are doing just that while others appear to be utilising new technologies in an attempt to move back to a mass media form of distribution. The Washington Post has just announced the launch of a new site called Trove.com. Trove will not only aggregate content but will also rely on a combinations of traditional journalists, citizen journalists, bloggers and sharing technology across social networks, while incorporating advertising sponsorship. This is a news organisation acting as a gatekeeping on one hand while also displaying content based on reader likes and popularity. There is no mention of payment for non staff contributors so it may be for this organisation there is still work to be done on a financial model for content contribution.

News Corp are currently exploring a variety of models, some that include content from citizen journalists and others that seem to be leaning more towards a traditional mass media model. Rupert Murdoch has announced the release of application only news publication The Daily. Murdoch is utilizing current technologies to attempt to move back to a mass media form of news distribution under a closed model. This model will mirror that of a traditional newspaper "...in which one person buys the product and uses it at any one time, and cannot easily share its content with large numbers of others." (Farrer,G. 2010) The application will also restrict the ability to copy to content, share it to others or have any of the content available via any search engines. This appears to be an example of an extreme paywall where content will become invisible to anyone apart from the one person viewing the app. Deuze summarises this when he states; "In spite of the involvement of citizens as contributors, some such sites retain a degree of conventional editorial control over what is eventually published, while others publish

all submitted content immediately, or allow registered users to vote on what passes through the publications gates." (Deuze et al. 2007:4)

It can be seen that technology has evolved whereby citizens and eyewitnesses are not only able to capture events as they unfold but are now also able to self publish and distribute their content not only via their own networks but also via traditional media outlets. Many news organisations are seeing the benefit in combining the professional reporting alongside citizen journalist content. The benefits can range from financial - no longer always relying on having their own "man on the ground" through to immediate access to first hand footage and commentary. Technology and its usage can be seen to be allowing for more open news platform where by traditional journalism and citizen journalism can operate side by side. The future media landscape may be one where multiple platforms operate. One being closed and application based which is controlled by traditional media, others being open, search-able and feed by a mix of citizen journalists and traditional media. One important fact remains regardless of the media model that eventuates is the need for accuracy. For anyone who wants to be seen as a reliable voice due diligence must prevail in ensuring fact checking and validating content and sources before publication.

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# Wikileaks and its Spinoffs: new models of journalism or the new media gatekeepers?

By Nadeemy Chen

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## **abstract**

The sudden fame of WikiLeaks has brought with it reams of predictions about whether this digital publisher is the new model of journalism. This article examines WikiLeaks from within the framework of the Dewey-Lippmann debate (an old contention over the role of journalism in a democracy) and retraces the short, but volatile, history of the organisation as publishing model. It then asks whether the emergence of a number of copycat and mirror sites should be seen as separate phenomena or as an integral part of this new model. Then, through a further analysis of both WikiLeaks and its copycats, the ways in which this so-called new media model both challenges and complies with the traditional top-down model of media production is discussed.

## **keywords**

Wikileaks - copy culture - open society - technocultures - new media models - media theory - digital publishing - digital rights - Dewey-Lippmann debate

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## **introduction**

One of the latest developments in the WikiLeaks saga is the emergence of several copycat sites. Now numbering over twenty, these sites include: OpenLeaks (a start-up by ex-WikiLeaks staff); topic specific sites such as: TradeLeaks and GreenLeaks; and a host of localised sites such as: BalkanLeaks, IndoLeaks and FrenchLeaks (Greenberg 2011). Attempting to replicate the WikiLeaks model of a secure drop-box for leaks of classified information, these organisations are at the forefront of a digital movement that appears to be challenging the traditional top-down model of mass media production and distribution. But whilst WikiLeaks and its copycats provide an example of how

digital media models are forging new ways and faster channels for disseminating information, do they really dismantle previous models of production and distribution? And, do they really challenge the traditional gatekeeping practices of publishing?

This article will: contextualise WikiLeaks within the framework of old and new media models using the Dewey-Lippmann debate; consider what WikiLeaks offers in terms of a media model; and offer an analysis of its spinoffs in terms of media models and copy culture. It will then discuss how the WikiLeaks movement is both resisting and complying with traditional media structures in terms of gathering, producing and distributing information.

### **the dewey-lippmann debate**

The rise of digital media has pumped new life into the old Dewey-Lippmann debate that began in the 1920s. The debate heatedly contested the role journalism and journalists should play in a democratic society, and has been used in many contemporary discussions on 'new' media models (Crick 2009; Alterman 2008). For Dewey (1927), the foundation of democracy lay in 'conversation' rather than 'information', and what he saw as important was 'the ability to discuss, deliberate on, and debate various perspectives' (Alterman 2008). Lippmann, on the other hand, was the forerunner of a more familiar media model: 'the twentieth century model, in which newspapers strive for political independence and attempt to act as referees between competing parties on behalf of what they perceive to be the public interest' (2008). Inherent in this model has been the distinction between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Dewey 1925:215) – the few who know, are qualified to know and have the right to speak/publish, and the rest who don't know, aren't qualified to know, and can usually only participate as passive consumers of media (Gerhards and Schäfer 2010:144). Indeed, Lippmann (1925) likened the average citizen (or 'outsider') to 'a deaf spectator in the back row' who 'cannot see, does not understand and is unable to direct'. Lippmann's faith in a class of 'knowledge-based elites' (Alterman 2008) was refuted directly by Dewey (1927:364), who claimed: 'a class of experts is inevitably so removed from common interests as to become a class with private interests and private knowledge'.

As Dewey predicted would happen within a Lippmann-style model, the twentieth century saw a rising class of media elites who found their peers amongst politicians, CEOs and

celebrities, rather than their readers. This powerful subculture of 'media insiders' (who rarely collaborated with 'outsiders') is exemplified by the experience Daniel Ellsberg, the Pentagon Papers whistleblower, had with the press in 1971. Ellsberg said of his dealings with the *New York Times*: 'As a source, I saw myself as part of the team ... but, they clearly didn't see it that way' (Ehrlich and Goldsmith 2009). This is confirmed by *New York Times* reporter Hedrick Smith: 'Once someone gave us material, it was our job to determine what to do with it, how to play it, what to use, and whether or not to use it' (2009). This closed set of conditions, determining who has the right to participate in knowledge production and who does not, has been unsettled by the rise of digital networks – the blogosphere, social media and powerful new players like WikiLeaks. So, in a Dewey-style backlash, driven by the rise of digital publishing, the 'conversation' does appear to have grown – at least for the moment.

### **the wikileaks model(s)**

A popular rumour circulating on the web is that 'WikiLeaks has produced more scoops in its short existence than the *Washington Post* in 30 years' (Huor and Lidquist 2010). Although more hearsay than fact, it touches on an important point – the speed and capacity of digital media is rendering print and analogue models redundant. It also forces the question: If WikiLeaks is so 'successful' as a model of journalism, what exactly is the 'WikiLeaks model' and is there even such a thing? Political analyst Micah Sifry (2011:171) points out that over the last five years, WikiLeaks has already had three distinct models.

The first model, which Sifry (2011:171) describes as 'a wiki-fied conduit for raw information dumps', lasted from 2006 to 2009. The original WikiLeaks 'about' page read: 'To the user, WikiLeaks will look very much like Wikipedia. Anybody can post to it, anybody can edit it ...' (Wikipedia 2011). It was during this period that WikiLeaks posted 'troves of documents on corruption in Kenya' (Sifry 2011:171) and 'the collected secret "bibles" of Scientology' (Wikipedia 2011), and adhered somewhat to the idea of a wiki – a collaborative website that is open for users to edit its content. It was the collapse of this model that brought Jimmy Wales (the founder of Wikipedia) to begin denouncing WikiLeaks for not being a wiki at all (Richmond 2010) – no longer a wiki may have been more accurate.

The second model, most clearly exemplified in the release of the Collateral Murder video in April 2010, is what Sifry (2011:171) refers to as a model of 'tight editorial control and production'. According to the documentary WikiRebels (2010), Assange invested all of WikiLeaks' resources in the production of Collateral Murder – a strategic move to generate interest in a stockpile of leaked US military documents that he was holding. Collateral Murder was a hit. By not making a huge dump, Assange managed to 'attract the attention of some of the biggest players in the news business' – players who, as planned, would 'help him handle the rest of the leaked US material' (Huor and Lidquist 2010).

This event led directly into WikiLeaks' third model (the current model) where 'deals are negotiated with major media on the timing of data releases' (Sifry 2011:171). Following the release of Collateral Murder, five major newspapers – *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Der Spiegel*, *Le Monde* and *El País* – agreed to publish WikiLeaks' material (known widely as the Iraq War Logs) in a coordinated fashion with 'Assange pulling the strings' (Huor and Lidquist 2010). According to Assange, what was new about this model was: 'us [WikiLeaks/a digital player] forcing cooperation between competitive organisations ... to do the best for the story rather than what would be best for their organisation' (2010). The newspaper establishment clearly saw things differently, despite all five organisations conceding to Assange's conditions on the timing and release of the documents. Still deeply vested in the Lippmann tradition, New York Times editor Bill Keller (2011) said: 'We regarded Assange throughout as a source, not as a partner or collaborator.'

### **wikileaks' copycats and the 'fourth model'**

In December 2010, five days after 'CableGate' (the US diplomatic cables leak) began, WikiLeaks was forced offline after being dropped by its host, Every DNS. Additionally, Amazon, PayPal, Visa and Mastercard cut their connections to WikiLeaks, despite the fact that WikiLeaks was yet to even be indicted for breaking a law (Sifry 2011:38). The backlash online against the 'undemocratic' treatment of WikiLeaks went viral. The organisation 'Anonymous' attacked the sites of companies that had severed their ties with WikiLeaks (2011:38); and within days, close to 2,000 WikiLeaks mirror websites had appeared (Muller 2010). Furthermore, by the end of the month (on the invitation of Assange) the copycats had begun to emerge (Abadi

2010) – some complete with their own mirrors. Taking the 'instability' of the Wikileaks model into account, it is necessary to ask what exactly these organisations were copying.

The simple answer is that almost all of them offer a safe way to deliver leaked information (Abadi 2010) – the one fixed element in all of the WikiLeaks models. The notion of providing a secure conduit for leaks, however, is not the aspect of the WikiLeaks models that has caused debate in the leaking community. The debate has reignited in nitting out the fairest, most transparent and most inclusive ways of producing and distributing leaked content (Greenberg 2010). These debates tie broadly into 'participatory theory' and its relation to the structure of communication on the internet (Gerhards and Schäfer 2010:145); and the internet's potential to function as a catalyst for greater democracy. These ideas will be discussed further later. At this point, however, it must be mentioned that the only one of these new sites to generate any of its own headlines was OpenLeaks (Greenberg 2010) – a start-up by ex-WikiLeaks' members that are claiming a new and improved model that will also be discussed later. The other sites have only attracted attention as a collective phenomenon linked to WikiLeaks (Abadi 2010; Hosenball 2011).

Whilst these spinoffs are probably best seen as a collective phenomenon rather than separate entities, a closer analysis of their platforms reveals how copy culture has extended to encompass entire modes of production and distribution, and how this may well be the factor that distinguishes online models from print and analogue models. Indeed, in terms of production and distribution, these new leak sites have imitated the full range of 'WikiLeaks models'. Sites such as TuniLeaks (Tunisian Leaks), RuLeaks (Russian Leaks), ThaiLeaks and BalkanLeaks are basically web syndications of translated and localised WikiLeaks content. TuniLeaks (2011), for example, claims to 'exclusively' release secret documents about Tunisia revealed by WikiLeaks; and ThaiLeaks (2011) states that they make 'all Thai-related content from the WikiLeaks website available for direct download'. Other sites such as IndoLeaks and TradeLeaks, however, seem to more closely emulate WikiLeaks first model of a 'document dump'. IndoLeaks, in particular, seems to have a reasonably large backlog of original documents, and TradeLeaks (2011) claims to be 'dedicated to empowering individuals through allowing open information' by

not moderating any content contributed to the site. GreenLeaks.com (2011) appears to be most closely modelled on WikiLeaks second phase as they produce and publish their own news and have a clear political agenda; however, backpedalling technologically, they ask for submissions to be made by post rather than digitally. Other sites, such as CrowdLeaks, which is focused on crowd-sourced journalism and does not even have a drop-box for leaks, and FrenchLeaks, which is hosted by the digital information journal Mediapart, are basically independent publishers offering analysis of leaks. CrowdLeaks (2011), for example, aims to connect with 'socially and politically conscious readers, interested in playing an active role in the production of knowledge,' and suggests that those interested in getting involved 'take a look through the cables appearing in Wikileaks CableGate for something that hasn't already been covered on our site' and then 'submit it in our Research Center.' FrenchLeaks (2011), in stark contrast to the philosophy of TradeLinks for example, says that no document will be posted directly on FrenchLeaks if it has not been edited and contextualised by Mediapart's journalists.'

Where WikiLeaks' first model was criticized for ineffective delivery of information, and its second model for becoming too politicized and narrow because of its high production costs, the third model has come under fire for: 'vest[ing] too much power in Assange personally'; and being embroiled in power struggles with its media partners (Sifry 2011:171). In an attempt to move quickly into a fourth model, a number of WikiLeaks' deserters (led by Daniel Domscheit-Berg) are setting up OpenLeaks. Domscheit-Berg (2011) claims that OpenLeaks differs from WikiLeaks in that it will be 'decentralised' – essentially meaning that OpenLeaks will not be a publisher. Instead, OpenLeaks (2011) will simply provide a secure conduit for leaked documents that will then be distributed to the media outlet nominated by the leaker. Perhaps this 'fourth model' would be better named the 'half-model'. Despite not having done anything yet, OpenLeaks already has its own brand of copycats. LocalLeaks (2011), managed by the City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism, has an 'anonymous leak submission box that allows users to submit tips to over 1,400 local and state news organisations'; and GreenLeaks.org (2011), which also has an ex-WikiLeaks member on the board, is a dropbox only model. Likewise, GlobalLeaks (2011) claims to be about 'crowd sourcing and decentralisation', not publishing.

Whilst there has been much talk about this 'half-model' being fairer, more transparent and more inclusive (Hosenball 2011), it is yet to be seen how this model will fare. It is already becoming clear just how easily leak sites, set up as 'middle-men', could be made redundant by major news outlets. The New York Times is already mooted the creation of an 'electronic tip line so that leakers of classified documents can go direct instead of having to use a middleman like WikiLeaks' (Ingram 2011); and the Al-Jazeera Transparency Unit (2011) has 'already launched its own drop-box for leaks' and released 'thousands of documents related to the conflict between Israel and Palestine'. British-Canadian journalist, Doug Saunders, once stated that WikiLeaks was 'nothing more than a middleman' (Ingram 2011). What Saunders appears to have overlooked, however, is that WikiLeaks is also a publisher, and as Balkin (2004:2) asserts, there is power vested in the act of publishing. WikiLeaks under Assange may not have devised a stable working model as a publisher, but their content is widely distributed. The fact that all the conflicts and transformations linked to the WikiLeaks model have been based in its modes of production and distribution could well indicate that the power vested in the WikiLeaks model lies in its capacity to publish (or negotiate publishing deals). It does not lie in its capacity to receive leaks.

### **resistance and compliance**

Digital networks and new media models like WikiLeaks have revived not only the Dewey-Lippmann debate but also the Deweyan aspirations for conversation to trump information and make, according to Gerhards and Schäfer (2010:143), 'previously marginalized actors and arguments more visible to a broader public'. Gerhards and Schäfer (2010:145), go on to claim that the many scholars advocating 'participatory' theories and models believe the internet 'has the potential to fundamentally change societal communication', as 'internet communication makes a better [fairer and more inclusive] public sphere than the old mass media'. According to Sifry (2011:42), WikiLeaks' connections to both new media and hacktivist culture make it a key player in this conflict between the 'closed systems' of the past and the 'open systems' of the present. However, in its current form, WikiLeaks is a complex case. It is: open in terms of content, but closed in terms of editorial production; viral by nature (as its digital), but autocratic in its organisational structure; de-



fiant in the face of information restrictions, but compliant in its emulation of old media structures. From the moment WikiLeaks abandoned its first 'wiki-fied' model, it has functioned much like any other big media player – top-down editorial control with Assange as the gatekeeper.

The question is then: Can sites like WikiLeaks be part of a movement for 'openness' without necessarily being open or inclusive themselves? Guy Rundle (2011:12) asserts that Assange's 'break with the open-source and networked tradition that has dominated activist politics for the past two decades' was a decisive and calculated rejection of 'openness' in order to fight governmental 'conspiracy' on more equal ground. In other words, Assange rejected openness for the sake of a more 'open' and 'transparent' future. When WikiLeaks is examined in this narrow light, it does not appear to offer much in terms of its contribution to 'Dewey's conversation' or participatory models of communication. Arguably, it has contributed to 'democracy', but from the position of a Lippmann-style media gatekeeper; WikiLeaks has spoken for a range of 'marginalised actors' (as have other journalists and activists), but that does not equate to fostering a more diversified public sphere. If, however, WikiLeaks is seen as a movement, rather than a single organisation – a movement of thousands of users putting up mirror sites, posting and reposting WikiLeaks' content, and modelling their own sites on WikiLeaks – the outlook for Dewey's conversation starts to look up.

### conclusion

This essay has placed WikiLeaks within the framework of the Dewey-Lippmann debate over the role of journalism and journalists in a democracy. It has argued that there is no single WikiLeaks model as WikiLeaks has moved through three distinctly different models of distribution and production in the last five years. However, it does consider that this 'unstable' nature may be characteristic of new digital media models, which potentially include: mirror websites; copycats; and the posting and reposting of content. It then argues that the power in the 'WikiLeaks model' is in its ability to produce and distribute content, not receive leaks. Finally, it considers the position of WikiLeaks within the 'open systems' of the present, and discusses the ways in which WikiLeaks remains closed. As with everything digital, there are more questions than answers and any predictions are bound to be inaccurate. The case of

WikiLeaks and the WikiLeaks movement is no exception.

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