



NEW MEDIA IN THE LIVES OF ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

The new media industry has grown commendably and changed the cultural landscape, specifically introducing a range of ideas, deeds, food habits, life styles and socio-economic transactions. The role of new media in the development of adolescents is emphasized in this article which is based on qualitative research method. The new media technologies are basically digital, networkable, compressible and interactive. There is no single new media device but there is a family of intelligent information technologies. New media particularly the Internet provides the potential for a democratic postmodern public sphere, in which citizens can participate in well informed, non-hierarchical debate pertaining to their social structures. The new media are no more luxuries in the present times. The use of new media has become a basic necessity for students who have acquired mental maturity much before the physical maturity. The adolescents have become eager to explore the world of new media technologies. The advent of new media technologies has changed the lives of children and adolescents. Studies have reported that new media technologies have enabled the children and adolescents to grow up with digital media technologies. The new media have created networked societies which provide linkages that benefit the mankind including the young generation. The new digital media have revolutionized the lives of young people. Other activities are also replaced by computer-based activities. As new media use among the adolescents is dramatically rising, the researchers need to know what impact the new media has on the community of users in modern society.

PREAMBLE

The new media have become an all pervasive sources of communication which ensure connectivity among the people in all walks of life. The new communication and information technologies have brought about the death of distance and facilitated meaningful participatory communication and development all over the world. The emergence of Internet replaced the one to many model of traditional mass communication with the possibility of many to many web of communication. The new media industry has grown commendably and changed the cultural landscape, specifically introducing a range of ideas, deeds, food habits, life styles and socio-economic transactions. Internet, computer and mobile phones have become sensual gadgets across urban and rural environment. New media revolution has resulted in the globalization which shortens the distance between people all over the world by the electronic communication. Internet is also one of the major tools of interactive communication in modern society. Interactivity has become a key term for number of new media use options evolving from the rapid dissemination of Internet access point, the digitalization of the media and media convergence. Many researchers have studied the impact of new media on people in modern society which has brought about connectedness. The role of new media in the development of adolescents is emphasized in this article which is based on qualitative research method.



SALIENT FEATURES OF NEW MEDIA

The new media technologies are basically digital, networkable, compressible and interactive. Broadly speaking, the Internet, websites, computer multimedia, video games, augmented reality, CD-ROMS and DVDs constitute the gamut of 'new media'. Practically, the term 'new media' refers to on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, and creative participation. The new media are also known for real-time generation of new and unregulated content. The new media entered the world during the late end of 20th century. The world also witnessed a different kind of parallel relationship between social changes and computer design. Andrew L. Shapiro (1990:16) argues that the "emergence of new, digital technologies signals a potentially radical shift of who is in control of information, experience and resources". W.Russell Neuman (1991:12) suggests that whilst the "new media" have technical capabilities to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back in the opposite direction. The people have witnessed the evolution of a universal interconnected network of audio, video and electronic text communications that have blurred the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communication.

Neuman (2003) identifies the characteristics of new media as follows:

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

Lev Manovich identified eight propositions of new media such as: association of cyber culture with new media, computer technology oriented distribution platform of new media, new media as digital data controlled by software, new media mix between cultural conventions and the conventions of software, new media as the aesthetics carrying modern communication technologies, faster execution of information services by the new media, new media as met media and new media as parallel articulation of similar Ideas. These features have led to the creation of remarkably similar images and spatial structures.

Frank Biocca (2000:03) stated that there is no single new media device but there is a family of intelligent information technologies. The characteristics of computer include: a) computer medium is evolving more rapidly than traditional media, b) computer involves a family of intelligent information technologies, c) computer involves different configurations of input and output devices, d) computer involves new interaction algorithms and techniques, e) computer combines multisensory content, various types of interface and various transmission systems for delivering information services, f) computer interfaces, content and transmission systems continuously evolve, and g) cyberspace expands rapidly. These features make computer a powerful media of communication.

Scholars like Douglas Kellner and James Bohman have stated that new media particularly the Internet, provides the potential for a democratic postmodern public sphere, in which citizens can participate in well informed, non-hierarchical debate pertaining to their social structures. Lister et al.(2003:09) have observed the positive and negative impact of new media technologies on people and stated that the effects of media were determined by the technology themselves, rather than the complex social networks. It appears that the Internet generation will be born into a world of information abundance. The Internet has become an informal university to the mankind. There is an incredible growth of web usage during 1984-2013. The household's worldwide have become increasingly connected to the Internet at home and on the go. Scholars have also pointed out that with technological advances and an increasing number of startups focused on mobile apps, Internet and mobile device usage continues to skyrocket.



The rise of new media has allowed the people to express themselves through blogs, websites, videos, pictures and other user-generated media. New media have brought about the globalization of all kinds of transactions according to Flew (2002:05). Globalization is termed as more than expansion of activities beyond the boundaries of particular nation states. The electronic communication has also killed the distance and enhanced the social relationships across the globe. Volkmer (1999:20) has noted that the new media have brought about a new trend of the globalized public sphere as a geographical expansion from a nation to worldwide and changed the relationship between the public, the media and state.

The new media have also created virtual communities which transcend geographical boundaries thus eliminating social restrictions through online communication. Howard Rheingold (2000:14) observes: "People in virtual communities use words on screens to exchange pleasantries and argue, engage in intellectual discourses, conduct commerce, make plans, brainstorm, gossip, feud, fall in love, create a little high art and a lot of idle talk". The new media offer multi-services and connect like-minded persons worldwide.

Manovich (2001:10) contends that mass media corresponded to the logic of industrial mass society, which values conformity over individuality while the new media follows the logic of the postindustrial or globalized society whereby every citizen can construct his/her own custom lifestyle and select her ideology from a large number of choices. Interactivity has become a new way of life because of new media intervention. The digitalization of media has brought about media convergence that facilitates user-to-user interactivity and interactivity between user and information. The convergence of new methods of communication with new technologies shifts the model of mass communication to 'many to many' communication. Interactive new media has become a true benefit to the mankind because people can express their thoughts and deeds in more than one way with the help of technologies.

The new media have created virtual realities which have expended the horizons of understanding and interaction. The new media industry has gained the advantages of two-way dialogue with consumers primarily through the Internet. Interactive websites and kiosks have become popular in modern times. Scholars have defined new media industry as cook, creative and egalitarian. The industry is also dominated by the young generation of people. The studies have revealed that the amount of time young people spend with new media has risen dramatically. The 8-18 year-olds devote about 8 hours of time on infotainment and edutainment services across the globe. The new media are also used for active social and political mobilization all over the world. There is a well-established connection between the amount and degree of voter engagement and turnout according to Owen (2011:13).

The young generation of students in schools, colleges and universities are attracted by the online sources which facilitate active involvement, communication and mobilization. In particular, the social media have provided a deliberative space to discuss and encourage political participation, both directly and indirectly, note Halpern and Gibbs (2013:07). The new media networked information will continue to grow at a rapid pace in future. The number of access points into the Internet is expanding in number, variety and mobility. It is estimated that members of the Internet generation normally spend as much as 20 years of their lives in front of Internet.

The new media have brought about remarkable changes in the attitudes, behaviors and transactions all over the world. In fact, globalization processes and technological developments have changed the experience and sensibility of people about time and space. The individual and collective perceptions have been increasingly structured within national and global frames and shaped by new media technologies. Lipscomb noted that new media technologies allowed people not only to witness and share events in a more direct and personal manner, but also to produce memory themselves, through various devices. The social media have moved into the real world. The new media have created a new information age which has spread its influence to all walks of life including education.



The new media have transformed the environment remarkably. Even ordinary people possess a deeper understanding of life, environment and other aspects of business with the help of new media. This tendency will increase in the future since the new media have created an 'information society' which tends to erase the distinction between subject specialists and ordinary people. The globalization of knowledge has become an inevitable historical process and functions as a rearrangement of world systems.

ADOLESCENTS AND NEW MEDIA

The proliferation of Internet and other new media has changed the media scenario completely in India. A rush of new media technologies has re-oriented the media habits of children and other young generation. The pace of development of new media has both encouraging and alarming consequences according to empirical evidence. The present generation of children and adolescents has the world at their fingertips because of new media revolution. The Internet, computer and mobile technologies have created new vistas of learning to the young generation all over the world. The new media are no more luxuries in the present times. The use of new media has become a basic necessity for students who have acquired mental maturity much before the physical maturity. The young students have become eager to explore the world of new media technologies. The advent of new media technologies has changed the lives of children and adolescents.

New media today are indeed a ubiquitous feature of the lives of adolescents. The adolescents consume media services considerably to fulfill their multi-purpose needs in modern society. A great majority of adolescents spend longer hours of the day at home and outside, watching television, playing video games, surfing the net or using mobile and other forms of new media gadgets. The adolescents' new media landscape has become a subject of great concern for the contemporary researchers across the globe. In reality, the technological breakthroughs in the new millennium have completely changed the new media landscape, writes Chintana Monthienvichienchai (2009:11).

Lievouw and Livingstone (2006:08) have stated that accounts in which technological innovation is the cause and society is the effect. The technological developments and social practices are entwined. The new media have brought about a new digital era according to Bill Gates (2007). The distinctive characteristic of new media is interactivity. The ongoing development and new invention of media technologies also offer exciting ways of communication for children and adolescents. The young people grew up surrounded by, or submerged in, the world of computer networks and information technologies.

There are millions of websites created on the World Wide Web. They are designed with different purposes and audiences including adolescents. The Children and adolescents can communicate in real time with their counterparts through chat rooms and instant messaging. They play games with their counterparts in the other side of the world. They have gained new friends and harmed soft skills according to Biggins (2007:02). The computer, Internet, mobile and other gadgets are opened a new way into the world of knowledge and activities. Scholars have also cautioned that children and adolescents must be given immunity from the negative effects of new media. The parents must become new media literates to place certain checks and balances and protect the young audience.

New media technologies offer several opportunities to the young audience to build the electronic network that connects people and information via computers. The new media have brought about globalization according to Fleur (2003:04). Rice (1984:15) defined new media as communication technologies that enable or facilitate user-to-user interactivity and interactivity between user and information. The Internet replaced the 'one-to-many web of communication'. The new media have enabled the people to produce individual online media including images, text and sound of their choice. The children and adolescents have also learnt the basic skills of computer use which has become part of their curriculum. The Internet has provided adequate social space for children, adolescents and others. The Internet offers new opportunities for inter personal relationship. Baym (2006:01) has



suggested that anonymity and its associated lessening of social risk may allow people to be more honest and take greater risks in self-disclosure than they would offline. The Internet provides Anonymity to the users and enables them to reveal more about themselves.

Studies have reported that new media technologies have enabled the children and adolescents to grow up with digital media technologies such as computers, Internet, videogames, iPods, cell phones and other electronic gadgets. Experience reveals that the younger generation is very technology savvy, very adept and enthusiastic about using the new media for personal and academic purposes. Today the new media including Internet are used to seek information, exchange ideas and make decisions. The new media have become a part of young generation's lives as schools, books and television. The new media have created a new virtual world where the audiences enjoy freedom of expression.

The mobile phones have well established as a technology which has bridged the social divide in modern society. The next generation mobiles are expected to become further miniaturized, converged and interactive with each new development and model. The use of mobile by the children and adolescents has been observed by scholars. The mobile phone penetration is increasing at a remarkable speed all over the globe. Even though the advantages of mobile phones to children and adolescents are many and obvious, there are many different and often valid viewpoints or discourses expressed as to their disadvantages, harms and potential and actual abuses. There is a need for examination of all issues related to mobile phones. This would help users, society at large and its institutions to examine measures to optimize the advantages, and minimize the disadvantages of this useful and ubiquitous technology, observes Weerakkody (2009:22).

The video gaming habits of children and adolescents are increasing in modern times. But the video game console market is still very low compared to cell phones and PCs in India, The young audience use computer to play video games. Gustin et.al (2002:06) reported that video games were overwhelmingly the primary use of the computer (91%) and the primary purpose of Internet usage was fun and games (75%). The users play games and also use game consoles and hand-held gadgets. Studies have revealed that on an average the mime children spent playing games ranged from two hours per week to eight hours per week. The boys spend substantially more time playing video games than do girls, according to a recent study. Scholars have identified the major concerns of video games namely physical health, displacement of activity, video game addiction, educational impact, social involvement, pro-social behavior, gender stereotyping and violence in video games. The parents are required to take advantage of new technological tools to protect their children, suggest Walsh et al. (2006:21)

The adolescents have grown up in the digital era. India is in the forefront in respect of new media applications. The children are introduced to new media in their very engage since they cannot escape from the digital media according to Sunderaj (2009:18). The adolescents are also exposed to new media which are informal centers of learning in modern times. The Web is accessible to the world to the greatest possible extent. The young students require guidance and supervision of their parents and teachers to avoid harmful effects of new media. The urban-rural gap and male-female gap also exist in the use of new media according to review of literature. The new media are known for positive and negative effects. The parents, educators and manufacturers have to be sensitive to these issues and change their mind set in order to make new media true instruments of people connectors, communications and collaborations devices in the new millennium, state past researchers.

Studies have reported that Internet is a powerful communication tool which connects adolescents to others. They use e-mail, chat rooms and instant messaging to connect with other people. Girls use the Internet for education and boys use the Internet for entertainment and games according to empirical evidence. The participatory quality of new media makes the adolescents active gainers of knowledge and recreation facilities. In reality, the adolescents and other young people experience various ways of learning through their consumption and production of digital contents. The new media enable the young generation to learn soft skills, team work skills



and creative methods of learning. They also develop a sense of personal identity and establish social relations across the world.

The new media have created a new electronic generation which is more democratic, imaginative, responsible and skilled by nature. They have overthrown traditional hierarchies of knowledge and power. The new media have also attracted the adolescents better than other traditional media of communication. The economic status and educational progress of family members matter most from the point of view of new media habits of young generation of students. The new media habits have also impacted other activities of the young generation. The children and adolescents use the new media for multi purposes.

The new media have created networked societies which provide linkages that benefit the mankind including the young generation. The new digital media have revolutionized the lives of young people. Other activities are also replaced by computer-based activities. The surfing of Internet is more interesting than television to the PC owners. The youngsters normally consume a wider variety of media for longer states Tungate (1999:19). In particular, the adolescents are attracted by the new media power as a prominent source of information, education, entertainment and advertisement. The new media offer even more possibilities of multitasking. The children, adolescents, parents, teachers and other stakeholders of human resources development need to be sensitized on issues concerning the positive and negative impact of new media. Adequate studies are required to create suitable checks and balances and safeguard the interest of young generation.

CONCLUSION

The new media were developed as powerful sources of communication during 1975-2000. The new media are a ubiquitous feature of modern society. The new media have considerably changed people's lives in terms of reaching, disseminating, creating, and evaluating a huge amount of information easily and quickly, communicating with many different kinds of people separated by space and time, and reallocating time for their daily activities. The New media, computer and mobile technologies have been used by all sections of society including the students since their outstripped reading and other media habits of people. The children, adolescents, women and other sections of the society are affected by the new media both positively and negatively in modern society. Many researchers in various fields, such as education, psychology and sociology, have studied the impact of the new media including new media on people and society and reported the advantages and disadvantages of using the new media. According to the latest new media survey, the penetration of new media is highly remarkable since they have killed the distance. The studies have also revealed that all educational institutions in the world have new media access regardless of level, region, or poverty concentration. As new media use among the adolescents is dramatically rising, the researchers need to know what impact the new media has on the community of users in modern society.

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