

NEW MEDIA AND CONVERGENCE: A DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *The work is to endeavor the development of communication through the hands of new media and how it works to transform society through technology giving new insights into Cultural, social and environmental aspects so as to reach not only mere development but sustainable development. Today we need this new form because it has taken over all the other forms and has converged them into one super effective form of communication which has fluidity, electronics, interface, interactivity and many more qualities. This convergence has simultaneously transformed our society our culture and a new social structure and a new culture that is the cyber culture is about to emerge and take over the world in the next few century. Is this the 'utopia' or 'Shangri-La' that we seek? The answer to this lies in our future.*

Key Words: *Quality of Fluidity, Human-Computer Interface, Interactivity, Digital code, Convergence, Cyber culture, Cyberspace*

Introduction

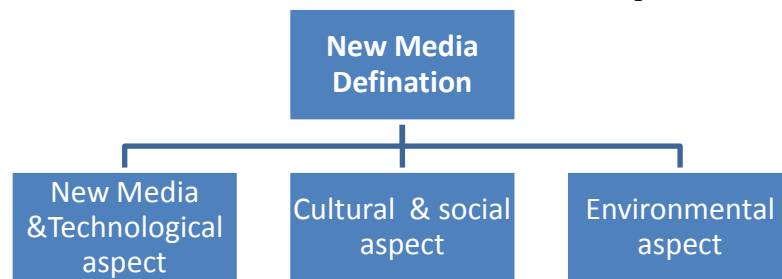
'New Media' is a hybrid practice involving a wide range of practical skills and intellectual resources, refers to as essential components of practice in associative terms with new media like 'New territory', 'Emerging fields', 'Uncharted space', 'New frontiers'. If we tend to travel in cyberspace we should choose internet rather than any material form of knowledge is what new media is all about. The power of new media guides us through a space of no end. New media is a way to map something for example air currents or air routes which are in a state of flux (unreal). Anything that is 'new' always draws attention as if its a time lapse of the present and past or what the future might withhold.



Print media in the year 1450 in Europe was new, from then the journey started and every discovery or invention at that present time was new. What is new today will be old tomorrow. Today is the age of convergence and digitization of all other forms of media into one most powerful of all other forms. This form of communication will bring development in each and every sphere today and may be in the future to come.

New Media defined

New media cannot be defined on black and white or compartmentalize in a very small domain because it is a conception arising from various other fields which added together produce a humongous domain. Thus new media is nothing but the amalgamation of all types of media into one new form, all the conceptions, ideas and theories of the original media are embedded into the new form. The definition of New media can be divided into three distinct aspects as follows:-



Technological aspect

New Media is both techno-based and techno-bias as it is techno-based it can be defined from the technological point of view as New Media is nothing but a **new technology which helps in sustainable development in the field of communication**. New Media is not without the blessings of the technological advancements in fields of communication (Information Communication Technology), computer technology (Silicon Chip), Physics (Quantum & nano-Technology) this new advancement has brought about New Media

Cultural and Social aspect

New Media is also Techno-bias there has to be biasness because of the fact that everyone cannot use the technology only the one capable of doing so has the upper hand over the others and hence he/she tries to monopolize the new form of media and control the developmental process in the developing nations. One basic fact is that technology is developed by human beings for a reason. And the reason is development. But the question is what kind of development? And the answer to that is social development. Only mere technology does not possess the power to induce developmental change in the society so we can define New Media as a **new technological advancement to induce socio cultural change in the developing society**. To justify the statement it can be said that as communication is the vehicle for development



Environmental aspect

When we hire new technology or think of social change we tend to look towards the pros side of New media while uncontrolled development of technology brings about the dark side where advancement of technology like adaptation of non renewable power energy source has wounded the environment greatly and threatens our existence. So we can define new media as a media which works not only for technological, social or cultural development but also for sustainable environmental development.

In a nut shell analysis we can define “New Media as a new technological advancement not only for the field of social or cultural aspect but also working hand in hand with environment for sustainable development.”

New Media and Development Communication

The word development is defined differently by different people. some say

- Technological advancement = Development
- Better GDP = Development
- Increased standard of living = Development
- Better HDI = Development
- Freedom to choose = Development

If we look closely to all the conceptions we will find that development without communication is not possible and as new media is a new form of communication it has a dynamic role to play.

New media has entered development communication process by holding the hands of e-governance. We can call e-governance a new form of media for Development support

communication in rural areas in developing countries. Thus we can call new media is a vehicle for dissemination of developmental message in rural areas for better understanding and growth. Finally It can be inferred that

$$\text{New Media} + \text{Development} = \text{Development Communication}$$

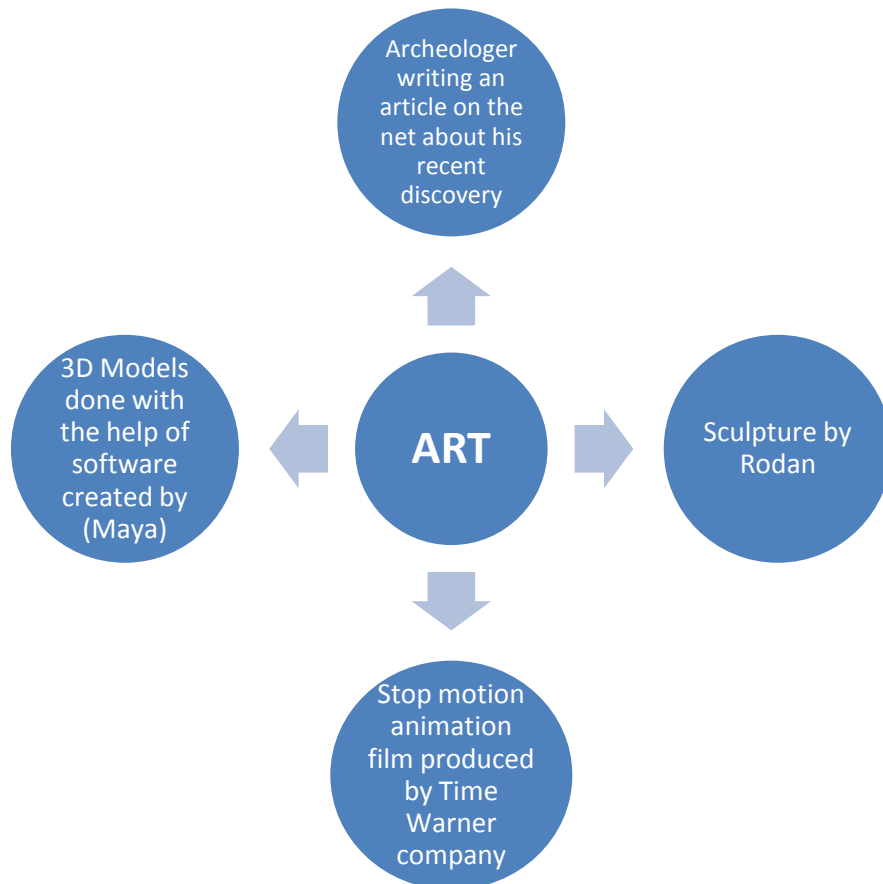
New Media with the quality of H₂O

Fluidity is the most important characteristics of new media. It means to say that new media is such a concept that it is just like any fluid wherever we place it. It takes the form of that container. That is why it is so dynamic in nature and a very powerful medium of communication. Wherever it is used it will allow itself to be a part of it and act accordingly to prove itself the victor of all other forms of media. Fluidity can be explained with the following example:-

If we take an imaginary domain like Art and see four facets of art like

- (i) Sculpture by Rodan
- (ii) Archeologer writing an article on the net about his recent discovery
- (iii) 3D Models done with the help of software created by (Maya)
- (iv) Stop motion animation film produced by Time Warner company

These four areas can be amalgamated by new media technologically and made into one form digitized and posted on the internet. Such is the power of fluidity that is of H₂O and of New Media.



From this fluidity characteristics the concept of convergence comes up where companies like Time Warner has multiple ownership and use all kinds of media and converge it into one new form.

New Media or Electronic Media

Everything related to electronics is electronic media it must not be confused with the term new media because electronic media is a part of new media. Electronic media is the power source of related technologies for new media. Telegraphy, Telecommunication, Satellite Communication are all part of electronic media. Its relation with new media is that of the message and channel where the message is created in the form of new media but the medium is electronic that of telecommunication.



MacLuhan says that since the content of any medium is always another medium then the medium is also, always, the message. For example content of electronic media is electronic music from an electronic guitar then the channel is electric and the form of the sound digitized is new media.

Electronic media for the next generation is inevitable because it has become the genre. Everything is getting digitized thus converged digitally whether be it arts science or commerce.

Forms of New Media

Human-Computer Interface

Humans and computer alike are machines of a unique kind HCI is a method by which users communicate with their PC through GUI (graphics user interface) in the 1980s and in turn get in touch with the whole world. This form of new media came into use after CUI (Character user interface) developed into GUI. After the advancement communicating with the computer by the computer developed into a new high.

Dream Machine was a vision ten years before apple Macintosh launched its first desktop in 1984. Apple corporations Macintosh computer is far more advanced than any other desktop in the world, a revolutionary advancement indeed. Physical interface with mouse screen and keyboard as an input devise without which interaction would not have been possible before there were only screen and keyboard later mouse developed which made the work easier and much more faster now recent development in optical technology has brought about changes in these spheres with LCD and TFT monitors, Optical wireless Infrared mouse and keyboard. Avatar the word refers to an incarnation in relation to new media it is nothing but the incarnation of user (human) in the computer that is the cursor recent research have developed ways to produce avatars (life

like) as a representative in 3D through AI and Virtual reality. Other than this development of smarter computers to understand diversity in human beings, to detect and solve errors, give users as much user friendly control as possible (as in LINUX), using site map index for each and every IP address. These developments will surely uplift the atrocities of communication in the near future.

Interactivity

Interactivity is a naturalized everyday term in new media with two or more participants, interactivity has been crowned with the founding principle of new medium. CMC (computer mediated communication) stands on the principles of interactivity. Not only in CMC but also in GUI interactivity is the central concept. It encourages new thinking over old media. It is not new but it has gain importance recently through new media. Interactivity would be vague if language of the human and language of the computers cannot be communalized thus the use of Hypertext. Hypertext was developed by Ted Nelson in the year 1960 and coined the term hypertext in the year 1974. It is a way through which we can interact with the computer normal text are compiled and interpreted to form hypertext and the language that is made from hypertext is called HTML (Hypertext markup language) all around the world it is the most commonly used form of language in world wide web (page development). Pages contain music, pictures, videos, and writings thus convergence of several media into one. The new form of media is termed as Hypermedia. Hypertext Markup language is universal and this language defines URL (uniform resource locator) and HTTP (Hyper text transfer protocol) URL are useful to find the sender or the web page the user seeks. And the HTTP is the decoding of the hypertext to be viewed in the language that it has been encoded. Digital media are more interactive and linear than analog media which is of a non-linear type CD-ROM, DVD are interactive through which we play games, watch movies, listen music and do all kinds of work. In the recent future interactivity will keep on increasing and new forms will come up and new ventures will open.

Digital code

Digital coding or in computer sense BC (binary coded) everything is coded and has a value in binary. Computer represents any form of data through binary codes and does not understand any other language, to make the computer understand a compiler and an interpreter has to be used. And in case of size bytes indicate the amount of data that has to be worked with. Say a digital CCD camera captures video format in digital and with the help of a capture card the data analog is captured in the computer digitally and can be edited digitally instead of going on with a tedious process. Digitization has helped mostly in convergence of new media which has brought about radical change in the society and in media ownership patterns as well.

New Media and Convergence

New media is a broad term that emerged in the later part of the 20th century to encompass the amalgamation of traditional media such as films, images, music, spoken and written word, with the interactive power of computer also called convergence, computer-enabled consumer devices and most importantly the internet. New media holds out a possibility of on-demand access to content any time, anytime, on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, creative participation and community formation around the media content. Digital code is the technological basis for media convergence, enshrined in Nicolas Negroponte's (1995) phase, 'from atom to bits', in which he recognized the transformative power of converting words, sounds and images into bits of electrical information. The potential of digitally converged media technologies has been an object of widespread attention for over a decade and has been most specifically focused on convergence of broadcast Television and the networked computer meaning to merge TV and Computer. This triggered the dream ticket for media conglomerate giants to grip the new form into its own clutches and AOL-Time Warner merger controlled the major U.S market and thus started monopolization of new media in the broader sense. Convergence of the new media includes both technological and social advancement electronic development of telecommunication, development in interactivity with computers has helped in the development of communication in the past and will do so in the future.

For example

AOL-Time Warner merger brands included:

AOL, Time, CNN, CompuServe, Warner Bros, Netscape, Sports Illustrated, people, HBO, ICQ, TBS, TNT, Cartoon Network, Digital City, Warner Music Group, Spinner, Winamp, Fortune

This is an example of New media convergence of Television in U.S later on it stirred quiet a lot of TRP attention and foreign media intervention creating monopolization, privatization, Cultural hegemony, and so on.

Convergence will bring about changes in the social political structure of the society as companies will harness the power of new media convergence 'buy 1 (new media) get all forms of media free'

New media and the journey from Cyberspace to Cyber culture

By Cyberspace we mean the entire network of satellite communication all around the world through computers and protocols. The most used form of protocol is Transmission control protocol (TCP) this protocol controls the sending of digital data all around the globe through the cyberspace. It uses identification numbers call Identification protocols or commonly known as Internet protocols for uniquely identifying the sender and receiver of the data collectively called (TCP/IP). The data are send in the form of small packets as the data are broken down into small packets (Encoding) and send to the receiver where the packets are then combine to form the

meaningful message (Decoding). By the advancement of this form of technology human interaction with the computer has increased and AI or artificial intelligence has become part of cyberspace where multi-users can multi-task and even interact with the computer (AI). Now this has broadly changed and become a part of education called cyber studies (Bell and Kennedy in the year 2000) the cyber studies include studies in the field of chat rooms, video conferencing, internet gaming, social networking, AI, IA(intelligent software agents), Robotics, Cyborgs (hybrid machines having similarity with humans), virtual reality. Due to studies in this new form of medium of communication the social structure has started to change and change in culture is vibrant change from post modern world to a world of cyber culture where new generations instead of chatting with friends sitting on the lush green grass under the blue sky prefer to sit and chat on the computers and instead of playing their sweats out they tend to play on their computers. The world may be coming close together converging it may be at the tip of our hands which is a good thing but we have to pay the price sooner or later.

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