

NEW MEDIA BRANDING

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY



FESTOON MEDIA

White Paper Release Date: April, 2010

Overview

New media is a term meant to encompass the emergence of digital, computerized, or networked information and communication technologies in the later part of the 20th century. Most technologies described as "new media" are digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, interactive and impartial. Some examples may be the Internet, websites, computer multimedia, computer games, CD-ROMS, and DVDs. New media is not television programs, feature films, magazines, books, or paper-based publications.

History

- In the 1960's, connections between computing and radical art began to grow stronger. It was not until the 1980's that Alan Kay and his co-workers at Xerox PARC began to give the power of a personal computer to the individual, rather than have a big organization be in charge of this. "In the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, we seem to witness a different kind of parallel relationship between social changes and computer design. Although casually unrelated, conceptually it makes sense that the Cold War and the design of the Web took place at exactly the same time."
- Until the 1980s media relied primarily upon print and art analog broadcast models, such as those of television and radio. The last twenty-five years have seen the rapid transformation into media which are predicated upon the use of digital computers, such as the Internet and computer games. However, these examples are only a small representation of new media. The use of digital computers has transformed the remaining 'old' media, as suggested by the advent of digital television and online publications. Even traditional media forms such as the printing press have been transformed through the application of technologies such as image manipulation software like Adobe Photoshop and desktop publishing tools.
- Andrew L. Shapiro (1999) argues that the "emergence of new, digital technologies signals a potentially radical shift of who is in control of information, experience and resources" (Shapiro cited in Croteau and Hoynes 2003: 322). W. Russell Neuman (1991) suggests that whilst the "new media" have technical capabilities to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back in the opposite direction. According to Neuman, "We are witnessing the evolution of a universal interconnected network of audio, video, and electronic text communications that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public

and private communication" (Neuman cited in Croteau and Hoynes 2003: 322). Neuman argues that New Media:

- Will 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.

Consequently it has been the contention of scholars such as Douglas Kellner, Callum Rymer and James Bohman that new media, and particularly the Internet, provide the potential for a democratic postmodern public sphere, in which citizens can participate in well informed, non-hierarchical debate pertaining to their social structures. Contradicting these positive appraisals of the potential social impacts of new media are scholars such as Ed Herman and Robert McChesney who have suggested that the transition to new media has seen a handful of powerful transnational telecommunications corporations who achieve a level of global influence which was hitherto unimaginable.

Recent contributions to the field such as Callum Rymer (2009) and his recent presentation on Wikipedia, as well as Lister et al. (2003) and Friedman (2005) have highlighted both the positive and negative potential and actual implications of new media technologies, suggesting that some of the early work into new media studies was guilty of technological determinism – whereby the effects of media were determined by the technology themselves, rather than through tracing the complex social networks which governed the development, funding, implementation and future development of any technology.

Social Media versus Traditional Media:

Brand Impact Analysis

Social media marketing, if done right, can have a significant impact on brand awareness and popularity. However, many companies fail to utilize this cheap (and in many cases free) method of marketing. By looking at social media ranks for companies, and comparing it with mainstream media ranks for the same companies we can see which brands are taking advantage of this new medium and also draw conclusions about the effectiveness of social media.

A study from Immediate Future calculates social media rankings for different brands by comparing each brand's "share of voice ranking". This ranking is determined by how successfully the brand (or the company) has embraced various different social media or how social media has

embraced the brand. The different categories used are the Blogosphere, [YouTube](#) as a measure of popularity in online video, [MySpace](#) and [Bebo](#) as measures of popularity on social networking sites, [Photobucket](#) and [Flickr](#) as measures of popularity on online photography based networks, and [Digg](#), [Ma.gnolia](#), and [Del.icio.us](#) as measures of popularity on social bookmarking and socially driven news and content sites.

Furthermore, chart below compares each brand's ranking using the "share of voice" (or mention in social media) method with Interbrand Top 100 global brands ranking which bases its ranking on each company's prospects for shareholders.

Brand	Share of voice rankings	Interbrand Top 100 global brands 2006
Google	1	24
Yahoo!	2	55
Apple	3	39
Microsoft	4	2
Canon	5	35
Sony	6	26
Dell	7	25
eBay	8	47
Disney	9	8
Ford	10	30
Reuters	11	78
Nintendo	12	51
Shell	13	89
Samsung	14	20
Nokia	15	6
Honda	16	19
Gap	17	52
MTV	18	50
Amazon.com	19	65
BMW	20	15
Intel	21	5
Toyota	22	7
Starbucks	23	91
Kraft	24	79
LG	25	94

Now if you compare this ranking with the just-released results of a nationwide Harris Poll of 2,372 U.S. adults (respondents spontaneously replied, i.e. were not given a list of options) you get some even more different results. Ranked from 1 to 10:

Base: All Adults

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Coca-Cola	*	8	7	7	*	*	6	5	7	2	4	3	1
Sony	3	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Toyota	*	=10	*	6	=6	=7	4	*	*	5	6	4	3
Dell	*	*	*	*	*	5	*	2	3	3	2	2	4
Ford	2	3	1	3	1	4	2	3	6	6	5	5	5
Kraft Foods	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	4	2	4	3	9	6
Pepsi Cola	*	*	10	*	*	*	*	7	=10	*	*	*	7
Microsoft	*	*	*	=8	6	*	7	*	5	*	=10	*	8
Apple	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	10	9
Honda	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	9	*	7	=7	6	10

Looking at these different methods of ranking brands and the results we get sheds light on important distinctions between social media and mainstream media popularity. While social media has a significant impact on brand awareness and popularity, this medium cares less about financial viability of a product and more about the product itself, its usability, and the buzz surrounding it. Furthermore, since social media is largely a niche product, the impact is more attuned to the early adopter and technology/online-savvy crowd. Mainstream media on the other hand cares more about the bottom line and what the brand has in store for shareholders.

Interactivity and New Media

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. In 1984, Rice defined the new media as communication technologies that enable or facilitate user-to-user interactivity and interactivity between user and information. Such as Internet replaces the "one-to-many" model of traditional mass communication with the possibility of a "many-to-many" web of communication. Any individual with the appropriate technology can now produce his or her online media and include images, text, and sound about whatever he or she chooses. So the new media with technology convergence shifts the model of mass communication, and radically shapes the ways we interact and communicate with one another. Vin Crosbie (2002) described three communications media in "What is new media?". He saw Interpersonal media as "one to one", Mass media as "one to many" and, finally New Media as Individuation Media or "many to many".

When we think of interactivity and its meaning, we assume that it is only prominent in the conversational dynamics of individuals who are face-to-face. This restriction of opinion does not allow us to see its existence in mediated communication forums. Interactivity is present in some programming work, such as video games. It's also viable in the operation of traditional media. In the mid 1990s, filmmakers started using inexpensive digital cameras to create films. It was also the time when moving image technology had developed, which was able to be viewed on computer desktops in full motion. This development of new media technology was a new method for artists to share their work and interact with the big world. Other settings of interactivity include radio and television talk shows, letters to the editor, listener participation in such programs, and computer and technological programming. Interactive new media has become a true benefit to every one because people can express their artwork in more than one way with the technology that we have today and there is no longer a limit to what we can do with our creativity.

Interactivity can be considered as a central concept in understanding new media, but different media forms possess different degree of interactivity, even some forms of digitized and converged media are not in fact interactive at all. Tony Feldman considers digital satellite television as an example of a new media technology that uses digital compression to dramatically increase the number of television channels that can be delivered, and which changes the nature of what can be offered through the service, but does not transform the experience of television from the user's point of view, as it lacks a more fully interactive dimension. It remains the case that interactivity is not an inherent characteristic of all new media technologies, unlike digitization and convergence.

Terry Flew (2005) argues that "the global interactive games industry is large and growing, and is at the forefront of many of the most significant innovations in new media" (Flew 2005: 101). Interactivity is prominent in these online computer games such as World of Warcraft, The Sims Online and Second Life. These games, developments of "new media", allow for users to establish relationships and experience a sense of belonging, despite temporal and spatial boundaries. These games can be used as an escape or to act out a desired life. Will Wright, creator of The Sims, "is fascinated by the way gamers have become so attached to his invention-with some even living their lives through it". New media have created virtual realities that are becoming mere extensions of the world we live in. With the creation of Second Life people have even more control over this virtual world where anything that a participant can think of in their mind can become a reality in Second Life.

New Media changes continuously due to the fact that it is constantly modified and redefined by the interaction between the creative use of the masses, emerging technology, cultural changes, etc.

The Branding

The world's traditional media structures are crumbling quicker than we ever imagined.

Unless you have been living on a tropical island for some time, cut off from the outside world, and you are reading this blog, so you will be aware of social media and the fact that the traditional communication paradigms have shifted and changed for ever. Take a quick look at the US newspaper print industry and you can see the casualties on a daily basis. Low advertising and copy sales are closing newspapers. This is a cold hard and very real business fact. And who has time to read a quality newspaper from cover to cover in any case? Not me, unless on a long aeroplane flight!

Leading, cutting edge brands are using new media outlets to engage their target audiences, like never before.

In the states, the VW Jetta, a car targeted at young drivers, is launching a new model entirely using social media! Yep, that's like no TV or Newspaper advertising for the launch of a brand new product that would have formerly utilised these channels forcefully to get across it's message.

If this campaign is effective, how many other consumer brands will duplicate a successful approach?

Humankind's consumption of information is now totally customised to our own individual needs, wants and desires. We can have what we want, where we want and when we want it. We don't have to sit through contrived and irritating TV adverts, we don't have to tolerate mediocrity and we don't have to pay money for a copy of a newspaper that is written for a demographic profile. That demographic profile is constantly changing and the new generations of ABC1's are consuming in radically different ways.

Newspapers have merely tried to place their model on line and it isn't working. The force of a new generation of consumption and the social media revolution are truly mobilising previously disparate subsections of the global community and enabling information to far flung places such as China & Iran where social revolutions are literally being given the opportunity to flourish by the use of a social networking media. And that's cool isn't it?

TV is also suffering – we can now view our favourite programmes online, and not have to tolerate the particular TV channel structure – we just consume what we want and when we want it. And the major demographic 18-34 (the Jetta/Golf drivers) are watching TV less and less. They are connecting and conversing online! And they are not consuming TV that is designed to satisfy a broad demographic.

And that's a staggering shift in consumption & it challenges consumer brands to do different things to engage and inspire their customer base.

This change is both awesome and unsettling.

Traditional 'interruption' marketing interrupts our lives no longer. We simply don't tolerate crass, unsophisticated, interruption marketing any longer. Anything we consume has to provide us with value, entertainment, education and an experience that has to make us feel good.

Even the world's book publishing industry is undergoing a quiet, but gargantuan online revolution – the advent of e-readers such as Kindle, developed by Amazon give people instant access to a book, when they want it! No waiting for delivery or browsing in book shops for your next read. And

Google is putting up to 6 million books online – books you could never gain access to are now soon to be freely available online.

And so, the story is that in developed economies, traditional media (and print goes back to the 1400's) is under significant threat. It really is, and this is not just down to harsh economic conditions.

Newspapers and magazines are seeing a decline in overall readership while new media, including the Web, online news sites and e-mail marketing, continues to increase its reach. Although the trends indicate gloom and doom for the newspaper and magazine industry, it looks pretty sunny in the world of new media.

A March 2008 USA Today article listed the media sectors expected to see the biggest gains by 2012. These sectors include:

Online video and rich media – Opportunities are opening to reach potential consumers with ads in or next to Internet video clips. In addition, many sites provide interactive services. Spending on these sites will grow 389 percent, to \$12.2 billion, in the next three years.

Online search – Spending will grow 113 percent, to \$26.1 billion, for ads and services at giants, including Google and Yahoo as well as smaller providers such as ClipBlast and Citysearch. The big attraction is that these sites, in addition to displaying ads, also generate leads as customers click through to a sponsor's site.

Event sponsorships – Companies will spend more than \$33 billion, up 72 percent from last year, to attach their brand names to sports, music, theater and other events. The trend is already well underway: Sponsors paid more than \$2 billion last year on pro football, baseball, basketball and hockey-related opportunities. Companies like the opportunities events provide to connect with new customers.

E-direct marketing – Marketers will spend \$22.1 billion, up 121 percent, to pitch messages to consumers via e-mail.

Traditional forms of media have been around for hundreds of years – the first American newspaper appeared in Boston in 1690. Don't expect your daily newspaper or Sunday Tribune to go down without a fight. Readers will continue to view traditional media as a reliable, steadfast source of information. But, the shift to the Web as our main and most accessible source of news and information is coming at us fast. And the power of new media continues to grow exponentially. It's crucial to the success of your brand to stay aware of the trends and continue to look for innovative ways to reach your target audience.

Times they are a changin' for sure. Although he most likely wasn't referring to the Web when he wrote those words, even Dylan himself couldn't have predicted how quickly things could change. He's probably surfing the Web now, downloading his own tunes.

Web 2.0 Awesome for Integrating Brand and Direct Marketing

Web 2.0 is paving the way for integrating direct and brand marketing, enabling real-time dialog with customers and the joint creation of content that increases and improves brand awareness and perception, and generates sales and leads, **according to** a new report.

The “New Media Emergence in DM & Brand” **report** from the **Direct Marketing Association**(DMA) investigates Web 2.0 - including blogs, virtual words, social networks, user-generated content, RSS feeds, and Wikis - as the platform that converges all marketing.

Eugenia Steingold, Ph.D., DMA's senior research manager, authored the report, which examines how new media is being used for brand building and direct marketing, and investigates the possibilities of new media for integrating DM and brand.

New-media elements most use by Web 2.0 direct marketers for DM are (in order) blogs, online video, user-generated content and social networks:

Other key findings from the study of B2B and B2C DM marketers who use Web 2.0:

- Despite being relatively new, Web 2.0 is apparently recognized as a brand-building channel:
 - 84% of respondents use it to raise brand awareness.
 - 82% use Web 2.0 tools to increase brand preference.
- New media is used for direct marketing as much as it is for brand building:
 - 83% use Web 2.0 to generate sales.
 - 80% use it to generate leads.
- Most marketers realize the opportunities that new media create for integrating DM and brand:
 - 85% of respondents use Web 2.0 to engage their customers and rate it as a highly effective mechanism for customer engagement (average rating is 5.3)
 - 84% of our respondents use Web 2.0 to create a community of loyal customers, and they find it very effective for doing so (the average rating is 5.0).

Other findings:

- 82% of respondents allocated a quarter or less of their marketing budget toward Web 2.0.
- 70% of those who report that they are experts in interactive marketing also allocate about a quarter of their budget to Web 2.0.

About the study: in January 2008, DMA deployed an online survey to its target audience, including B2B and B2C direct marketers who use Web 2.0 as part of their marketing strategies, and specifically strive to integrate DM and Brand. The survey was closed for tabulation in late February 2008 and obtained data from 160 respondents who completed the survey.

The Lesson

While it may come as no surprise that six million-plus fans of Barack Obama have earned the U.S. president the number one page on Facebook, the next two largest Facebook fan pages *are* surprising: as of April 2009, a page devoted to The Coca-Cola Company (boasting nearly three and half million devoted fans and gaining an average 75,000 fans each month) holds steady as the second largest page, followed closely by a page touting the charms of the chocolate, hazelnut spread Nutella, a European mainstay.

Even more surprising is that The Coca-Cola Company had nothing to do with the creation of the Facebook page celebrating its products. The genesis came from two Coca-Cola-loving Los Angeles residents, Dusty Sorg and Michael Jedrzejewski. When Sorg hunted for a Coca-Cola Facebook page to “friend,” he found almost 200 pages, but nothing he deemed legitimate. So with the help of Jedrzejewski, he launched a Facebook page dedicated to the world’s most recognized soft drink. Within seven months, the page’s fan base topped three million.

That number turned the heads of Facebook administrators and Coca-Cola executives alike. When Facebook instituted a policy prohibiting regular Facebook users like Sorg and Jedrzejewski from creating branded pages (and asked their namesake companies to take over the pages or Facebook would shut them down), Coca-Cola flew Sorg and Jedrzejewski to its Atlanta headquarters to talk about how the company could assist the creators with the page without intruding. Adam Brown, director of Digital Communications, The Coca-Cola Company, says of the move, as well as of the company’s overall attitude toward social media: “We’re taking the laissez-faire approach.”

But is Coca-Cola's decision to adopt a hands-off strategy wise?

According to Sundar Bharadwaj, associate professor of marketing at Emory University's Goizueta Business School, the company doesn't have much of a choice. "There is absolutely no way any company can control the marketplace," he explains. If a company tries to shut down a Facebook page or control content on other sites, it'll be "worse off," adds Bharadwaj, who is also the associate director of the Emory Marketing Institute. "The smart thing is to try to embrace it, and the smarter companies are clearly taking that approach."

Bharadwaj and Coca-Cola's Brown recently participated in a panel discussion, "How to Manage Your Brand in Today's Market." Sponsored by the Atlanta Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators and AIGA, the professional association for design, the discussion was moderated by Steve Beshara, former chief branding officer of TurboChef, and current president of Vista Branding. The panel also included Kevin Smith, chief marketing officer, Rollins, Inc.

Reaching out to consumers today takes a multilayered approach. According to eMarketer, total U.S. advertising spending in 2009 is estimated to reach \$25.7 billion, a growth rate of just under 9 percent. But some advertising channels—especially direct mail and print advertising—are taking a hit. Television advertising, down about four percent, is also feeling the pinch of a bad economy. However, the Internet Advertising market is proving resilient, due in part to marketers seeking lower cost alternatives. Companies like Coca-Cola realize that not everyone is Internet savvy and that traditional media still has value, but if these companies follow their customers to the places they frequent, they find themselves traversing the Internet. "Our homepage isn't Coca-Cola.com," says Brown. "It's Google."

Marketing and advertising dollars follow customers. Independent technology and market research company Forrester expects marketer expenditures on display media, search, email, mobile and social media to approach \$55 billion by 2014 (more than double the 2008 total of \$23 billion).

While social media marketing budgets should experience the biggest percentage increase (Forrester estimates 34 percent growth over the next several years), search marketing is expected to retain the biggest piece of the pie. The main reason is analytics. Companies can identify who visits what sites, how often, and what percentage of site visitors are converted to customers. Currently Google controls the lion's share of the search market, but there is no shortage of search-oriented sites poised to grab market share from Google. A site gaining momentum, notes Bharadwaj, is Kosmix.com.

Kosmix's creators point to personalization as key, and they are attempting to reinvent online publishing—Kosmix's users build a personal newspaper with topics they're interested in. Kosmix

then aligns online ads with content relevant to each consumer. “It’s the future of search,” notes Bharadwaj. “People are looking to divert their search spend and anything that can leverage conversions, they’ll use them.” It’s not just about building brand awareness, adds Bharadwaj. It’s about “influencing behavior.”

Another way to influence behavior and build brand is to embrace a company’s brand advocates—as Coca-Cola did with Sorg and Jedrzejewski. Every day, Coca-Cola brands are mentioned 1500 times on various blogs and places such as the Coca-Cola Facebook page. “We try to market to advocates and use them to promote our brand,” says Brown. “We’re focused on how to attract the pearls.” To ensure the company keeps these fans advocating, it continues to improve customer satisfaction.

While it is virtually impossible to have every post on every blog and website be a good one, what Brown has discovered is that most times, “the community has come to our defense.” If, however, someone posts inappropriate content, Coca-Cola’s laissez-faire attitude doesn’t apply. “We’re prepared to fight fire with fire—and to do so quickly,” explains Brown. How quickly? It’s imperative to strike back within four to six hours, he says. “News cycles have gone from twenty-four to twelve to eight to six to four hours,” he says. Once inaccuracies are broadcast, they can live on for months and years.

Every consumer has the power to broadcast to the world, noted moderator Beshara: “The power has shifted to the consumer.”

Last March, this was made clear when candy maker Mars, Inc. decided to experiment and replaced its Skittles homepage with the candy’s Twitter stream. While the move increased traffic to the “site” (1332% in one day according to Hitwise), individual “Tweets” not only praised Skittles, but some included racial epithets, profanity and comments about competitors. “I thought it was a very brave idea,” says Brown, although he added that the idea was flawed. “I don’t think they looked two, three steps ahead. As communicators and marketers, we need to stay two, three steps ahead.”

According to Bharadwaj, the nature of marketing is no longer about a company instilling “faith” or creating a “trust me” attitude. The marketer of today’s skill set focuses on monitoring, measuring and demonstrating the value of new types of spends to senior management. Additionally, there is a balancing act between marketing and communications and legal and security issues in terms of protecting a company’s trademark(s).

At Coca-Cola, Brown oversees a newly created department, the office of “digital communications and social media.” This office operates within Coca-Cola’s public affairs and communications

department and in collaboration with global interactive marketing, IT and consumer affairs, as well as legal and strategic security.

Other companies, such as the Atlanta-based pest control company Rollins, Inc., have added an analytics practice to help them better understand the return on investment (ROI) of marketing and advertising in these new types of media. At the moment, the easiest place to demonstrate ROI is search marketing, but the nascent monitoring/analytics field is attracting players equipped with tools capable of monitoring blogs, websites and Twitter feeds. One such company, Scout Labs (www.scoutlabs.com), offers “social media” monitoring for as little as \$99/month, though some companies charge significantly more. The Scout Labs Web-based application tracks things such as persistent searches and buzz, and can both tag and kill posts—all in real time.

Employees are an important part of the mix as well. Brown thinks of Coca-Cola’s 97,000 employees as “ambassadors,” he says. “How do we empower them and arm them with the right message?” At Rollins, the company is “sorting out how to use employees to create value,” says Kevin Smith, chief marketing officer and co-participant in the panel discussion. “I don’t think anyone has conquered that.”

While searching for ways to harness new media and justify new marketing spends may be complicated, the mission behind it is relatively simple: “To meet people with the right message at the right time through the right media,” explains Brown.

For these new media marketers, there’s no rest. “From a consumer’s point of view, we’re always on. Devices give us the opportunity to track media in multiple ways. Especially the younger population—they’re completely on,” notes Bharadwaj. “There’s no stepping back from that.”

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