

A Theoretical Approach to Today's Mass Media, Social Media and Technological Evolution

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Abstract: *This research attempts to offer a theoretically comprehensive overview of the key issues that are now affecting the growth of social media and mass media in the context of the rapid advancement of new technologies. It is a gradual but clear transformation that has a significant impact on human civilization. We propose the use of the Postmedia concept in this context, which describes the shift from traditional to new (digital) media while taking into account both the advantages of quick communication and linking as well as the tensions resulting from the threats posed and the pressures placed by various changes. The analysis addresses the primary forms of communication convergence, the incorporation of new tools and technologies, the generalisation of interconnection, the expansion and variety of handling arrangements, and the requirement to rewrite moral and professional standards for those using digital platforms.*

Keywords: Technologies, Human Civilization, Communication, Digital Platforms.

I. INTRODUCTION

Deep changes in communication have occurred recently, and they have done so more quickly than, say, two decades ago. This calls on communicators to adjust to the changing realities, particularly in light of technology advancement. Because communication is changing and becoming more diverse, it is necessary to analyse these difficulties. The identification of two stages in the development of communication serves as the foundation for the debate. The first is that of conventional media, which includes print media, radio, and television as well as cinema, analogue audio and video records, posters, and other forms of advertising. In the present environment, conventional media are being revalued in the digital system alongside new media. To draw a theoretical distinction from traditional media, this second stage is referred to as Postmedia. The capacity to engage and converge at the level of content creators, in the creation of communication goods, and in their dissemination on many platforms is what defines the digital age. This study's goal is to draw attention to these trends by offering a composite portrayal of the many forms of convergence.

When Félix Guattari predicted that mankind will live in an age of freedom in 1990, he used the phrase "post-media period" to describe how the usage of media had been reappropriated and resingularized (access to data-banks, video libraries, participant interaction, etc.). The French thinker defines uniqueness as the combination of components that gives a person, group, or community a particular vibe; this combination is viewed as distinct from the rest and distinct when contrasted to the traits of the other phases. This distinction entails not just a distance from the past but also a position on the present that affects and transforms the established order, occasionally even in a radical, revolutionary manner.

Guattari believed that in the postmedia age, everyone and every organisation will have easy access to a wide range of information and cultural goods. According to famous research, "the intersection of television, telematics, and informatics is taking place before our eyes, and will be finished within the decades to come." was said in just a few words. Guattari argues in favour of a "collective-individual reappropriation," which, within the context of the current study, is within the bounds of technological and emotional convergence, in contrast to other thinkers who have suggested that the development of digital media would lead to alienation and act disruptively in terms of communities. The strengthening of liberties is not always a result of this form of growth and the methods of collective action. Guattari argues that such growth and community action strategies might instead result in authoritarian backsliding, using the Iranian Islamic Revolution as an example, rather than the advancement of liberties and liberal democracy. Obviously, the current situation is far more complicated and goes beyond Guattari's forecasts, necessitating a postmedia-appropriate response to the brand-new reality.

Postmedia offers a framework for investigating the disruptive aspects of modern communication, dissolving the lines between reality and virtuality, or for attempting ever-narrower forms of influence and manipulation. Postmedia not only increases the likelihood that bogus news may surface, but also emphasises the necessity to comprehend it. It's crucial to understand how to create successful fake news in order to combat it, and this phenomenon can be examined both in terms of its detrimental effects on society and in terms of their capacity to guarantee the accomplishment of activities aimed at manipulating, consolidating, or undermining a person's or organization's public image.

In keeping with the development of concepts like postmodernism, post history, and post-industrial, the term "Postmedia" must be interpreted as a process of media transition rather than as a stage after the media. It also denotes a period of meditation on both the past and the current state of affairs. It stands for both a departure from the past (modernism) and a fresh start. In the postmodern environment, to which the Postmedia specifically refers, the word "MetaMedia" may be appropriate as a working tool. Jensen (2011) reserves the word "MetaMedia" for the technological aspect of communication, specifically referring to the tools like the computer and cell phone that enable it.

1.1 Types of Convergence

Today's public realm is seeing a fast spread of information, whether true or misleading, as a result of significant developments in the communication industry. Users are frequently lured into the communication process where they become content creators and message providers, and as a result, the number of data and communication products is growing. Additionally, they can engage in interactive processes that attempt to disseminate, edit, or enhance current communication products while interacting with others on digital platforms. Due to the rivalry from extremely active non-specialists, these communication realities provide difficulties for the field's professionals. Examining the several forms of convergence—technological, media, content, and emotional convergence—that are visible in the modern digital communication is essential to understanding these difficulties. The world is dominated by convergence, which makes it feasible to pursue digital progress. The communication environment in which we operate both professionally and, especially, in terms of our need for knowledge and training, is characterised by our ability to quickly gather a lot of information, manage it easily, and use it in communication content. This content is also subject to profound or surface changes brought about by large user networks, through computer-run programmes, and because of network interconnection.

The following are the top five forms of convergence in the world:

1. Convergence of technologies: the usage of a single kind of equipment for several processes is how it is demonstrated. Consequently, a phablet (phone and tablet) allows you to capture pictures, record movies, and create editable text;
2. Convergence of media: It entails removing distinctions between various forms of conventional media. With the use of digital media, you may alter traditional publications so that they can be printed or posted on numerous platforms in PDF or interactive format. Text coexists alongside images, audio files, and video clips. All of the aforementioned may be done through media or social media platforms. Because radios may create websites, media platforms where video content can also be posted, including television, the lines between media kinds blur. TV networks can post a variety of programming online;
3. Convergence of content: Publishing content is one example of a communication product that is designed for maximum effectiveness. To serve the ensemble and conform to the desired media channel type, titles, intertitles, texts, images, photo captions, video and audio files, and other visuals are thus organised;
4. Convergence of emotions: The emotional responses of users to messages they receive and while creating their own material in interactions and interactive settings with other users who publish communication goods on digital platforms are the focus of this. In other words, it represents people's capacity to organise (using communication networks) in order to accomplish a shared objective;
5. Convergence of professions: It first focuses on the interactions between communication specialists and human sources as they develop communication material. It also illustrates how some people may create communication-related items even if they lack specialised training and frequently have no prior experience. Social media undoubtedly contributes to this situation.

1.2 Shifts in Various Areas

How will the increase in global convergence affect the globe in the near future, say within the next five years? There are multiple options for the answer, and each one may be further upon depending on the individual's area of interest. Some aspects of communication and communications are quite likely.

Every user will make use of integrated electronic devices, such as widescreen mobile phones and tablets (phablet). Due to the fact that this equipment only provides a traditional voice service, landlines will see their function reduced to the point where they are practically obsolete. Even while laptops and personal computers were still popular across the world in 2020, their use will continue to decline. The mobile phone and tablet are astonishingly dependable, very user-friendly, and gain from increasing storage capacity, varied and complicated capabilities, and the capability to run a wide variety of programmes.

1.3 Generalisation of Interconnectedness

Costs will also decrease as wireless connections are expanded and more people have access to satellite services. At the moment, phablet devices may automatically connect to the internet thanks to several simple programmes. We won't be able to opt out of this feature, which will keep us online constantly. Thus, communication will be feasible practically everywhere and in any situation. By integrating a subscription-based bundle of services when purchasing equipment or by connecting to public networks, such as those in big cities or those devoted to public institutions, even ministerial, interconnection will be made available at a cheap cost. Being an excellent example is edu.ro.

Diversification of the applications and services offered. The tablet and smartphone will be utilised for both content creation and actual conversation in the form of a phablet (phone and tablet). They will be utilised in this situation to gather, store, and process data, create communication products, alter them, and archive them. The monitoring of some actions, the procedures of surveillance and control, and other crucial aspects of intelligence will all benefit from the new apps. The scope is large since initiatives to promote media and technical convergence are already in development. The major sectors are health and education. As a result, the phone and tablet will do X-rays and offer the earliest indicators of potential ailments. Many people are able to utilise advanced industrial gadgets adequately despite not understanding or needing to know how they were made.

1.4 Expansion and Generalization of Cloud Computing

These products and services, which range from the hosting of websites and the requirement for bandwidth to the use of mobile devices for medical diagnosis, may be free in certain cases (some of which have long been available) or may be paid for (by purchase or rental). In these circumstances, the idea of an online newsroom is emerging that does not require a physical workspace. The idea is generalizable and may be applied to other fields, such as education, public relations, or intelligence, by tracking the flow of information from source to receiver through gathering, selection, and writing.

Generalised communication that takes place through information sharing and content creation. Theoretically, everyone will be participating; in reality, a large number of individuals will have access to a variety of technologies and tools, and everyone will determine what, when and how to employ them. Technology becomes simple to use, enabling anyone even those with a middling level of education to develop high-quality communication products. This is professionalisation in progress, where people are practising for fun or to make money. The distinctions between experts and amateurs will vanish. All users will be quite familiar with these tools up to a certain degree, which is college education.

Communication will expand to cover a wide range of activities, including the sharing of information, services, and goods. E-commerce will take over, and financial systems' reliance on information technology will grow. Coins, bills, and other forms of physical money will become less and less common as internet bank transfers and payments take over. The addition of additional services will make the educational system even more participatory and exciting. The entertainment industry is evolving as a result of intense consumer demand for such items and the participatory nature of visual culture.

The growing usage of robo-journalists, particularly in the sector of big data, where there is a lot of information that has to be processed fast, is a contemporary problem. Without these specialised applications, it is no longer possible to

imagine stock market or currency banking operations since they require rapid access to summary data that is required to follow markets and quotations. It takes a tremendous amount of labour to complete, and using human agents would be nearly impossible. Companies that supply various services, medical facilities, or other institutions frequently utilise software, programmes (apps), algorithms, and chatbots that are built to deliver different forms of information. With the development of genuine conversations with Major operators like Google, Microsoft, Facebook, and social networks that serve as archives employ them. They aren't all that different from specialised platforms, but they need the users' permission to utilise cookies to gather data. The major goal is to save user preferences so that they may be incorporated into other offers that are sent back to them. Applications (algorithms, robo-journalists) gather the data in accordance with user behaviours, media platforms, material categories viewed, and equipment utilised. These systems have the ability to learn about interests and preferences by using social media accounts, email addresses, or entering media platforms for a certain sort of material. Individuals who are alone or in unique circumstances, chatbots started to play a therapeutic function. They can dial certain lines, where chatbots are trained to answer their inquiries and request information from them a step up in profiling operations. It involves acquiring user information from them (alone or in groups), figuring out who they are, and then using that information to give them the information they require. In the digital environment, algorithms (applications, software, and programmes) created specifically for these processes are used to carry out the profiling operation. It takes engaging with these applications only to leave (or join!) the digital world. The information will be summarised, and the individuals in question will then receive recommendations for reading various sorts of material or for the purchase of various services and goods. Different equipment can be used to access profiles or other material on different sites (phone, tablet, laptop, PC). As a result of the profile activity, the user will receive offers for goods of the sort in which he expressed interest in using other equipment. In this context, a conversation about targeted and/or personalised advertising should be started.

The expanding importance of influencers is another current trend that we can already see developing in the future. These individuals are rather well-known, particularly on social media. To increase the impact of the materials given, the concepts supported, but notably the communication content marketing certain goods or services, many of them are frequently employed concurrently. Genuinely powerful influencers have the potential to profit significantly from advertising on their social media pages, websites, and blogs. Of course, agreements made with businesses and/or people for the promotion of goods or services also result in significant financial gains. It is crucial for an influencer to have a sizable social media following, with a sizable portion of those followers actually making purchases of the things the influencer is promoting. An influencer's authority might originate from two sources. In the first instance, he or she may be an expert in a certain subject, so they suggest things they are familiar with. For instance, dentists may advocate for particular toothpaste brands. The second scenario, which is also more common, involves an influencer who derives most of his or her notoriety from social media platforms. This notoriety is demonstrated by the influencer's large number of followers and the trust that they place in him or her, with little to no doubt about what the influencer said or promoted. According to Balaban & Mustăţea (2019), the capacity of influencers to be appealing, consistent, dependable, and knowledgeable in both what they do and the issues they discuss is what allows them to get attention. These requirements are not always met, which can result in one of two outcomes: (1) the person loses followers and runs the risk of becoming anonymous; or (2) despite having trouble understanding the arguments made, confidence soars and the number of followers rises as the obvious manipulation attempts are made up for by emotional arguments.

Rewriting the ethical standards. Changes to the codes of ethics are also necessary to eliminate distinctions between professionals and non-professionals. Clearly, the internet must continue to be a place where individuals are free to express their opinions and promote themselves, their businesses, and their morals. Access and manifestation in cyberspace need a return to fundamental ethical principles since we are unable to create particular limits, as is the case in professional ethics. Some features of cyberspace that are seen negatively are causing a lot of anxiety. The intense activity of non-professionals, who are unaware of professional ethics and believe that anything is permissible, as well as communication professionals, who determine that the ethical rules are no longer required and do not need to be observed, are the main causes of the ethical problem on new media platforms. Particularly in the creation of false news information, emotional reasons are frequently utilised to hide or downplay the significance of factual and scientific evidence. It is apparent that the growth of false news as a soft power, as a weapon, might result from the exploitation of new technology without regard for ethical and professional standards. However, protection can be provided by using

already-existing legal tools and promoting moral ideals that are widely accepted rather than by imposing control. Experts in the sector are finding it difficult to begin rewriting the ethical rules. They need to adjust to the dynamics of the digital sphere and give media platform workers access to working tools.

Connectedness, communication, and uniqueness. The introduction of new tools and technology encourages human contact. The concept of the "global village," put out by McLuhan, Fiore, and Agel (1967, 63), while the phenomenon of globalisation (media) was still young, generalised news and entertainment through television, is the new paradigm that is emerging from the standpoint of pragmatism and utilitarianism. A short time later, the singularity—a threat brought on by the loss of control over technology when artificial intelligence may render humans dependent on it—was also identified as a negative consequence of globalisation. When it becomes impossible to tell the difference between physical reality and virtual reality, as well as between man and machine, in the year 2045, Raymond Kurzweil predicted that this rupture will take place. However, until that time, the most significant impact of technology advancement will be the removal of communication obstacles. Most of the world's population will be able to contact any individual, organisation, or business in the upcoming years regardless of distance. The Covid-19 virus epidemic that occurred between 2020 and 2021 emphasised the speeding up of remote communication using new tools and technology. Most individuals were able to engage, either in the public or private realm, while being forced to withdraw and maintain their physical distance (professional, educational or entertainment spheres).

II. CONCLUSION

This comprehensive analysis of the available data leads to the conclusion that, while we cannot predict exactly how communication will change over the next several years, we do have a good idea of what could occur, at least in the near future. Communication experts create change, which is then reflected upon by the new communication reality and leads to additional advances. The difficulties appear more difficult now that the ramifications of multimedia are more apparent.

Two key characteristics of those who gather and edit news are apparent when we follow some of the coordinates of the new status of the journalist in the digital media age:

- (1) Professionals are compelled to over-specialize, becoming what is called with an existing term video journalist or even universal, integrated journalist; and
- (2) The boundaries between professionals and outsiders, such as a citizen journalist, tend to be reduced by a specialisation of the latter. The traditional gathering space for reporters and editors is quickly becoming a memory as the idea of a virtual newsroom begins to take shape. The Covid-19 pandemic of 2020–2021 has made the virtual office and online communication with co-workers, the public, and students a daily reality. New technologies and methods are still being developed to better the job.

The information provided leads to the conclusion that significant changes have occurred in business communication. Although social media and mass media are still separate fields, we see them becoming combined in practise, with the distinctions often being hard for non-specialized users to distinguish. Such connections may be made possible via convergence, which also makes communication easier to do. Changes in status are also a part of the five forms of convergence that were discovered (technological, media, content, emotional, and professional). Professional communication competes with a vast array of communication goods produced by non-specialist communicators who lack specialised training but are capable of using new technology, sophisticated apps, and who are active across a variety of media platforms. The requirement for media education programmes for consumers from all categories increases the work necessary for communication professionals to continually adapt to technology progress in this complicated setting. Effective communication requires professional skills and ethical values in addition to the ability to use technology and access digital channels.

Due to the fact that this research is simply a draught of a much larger undertaking, it has certain limitations. The next step is to thoroughly investigate each concept, including case studies and data analysis on how people are coping in the new digital era and what expectations they have for the future. Each of the aforementioned aspects, taking into account recent research, would profit from a thorough interdisciplinary examination and from having strong practise examples, in order to acquire a thorough grasp of the difficulties that communication is currently facing.

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