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Viral Video Development from Technology Determinism

พัฒนาการของสื่อวิดีโอไวรอล จากแนวคิดกลุ่มเทคโนโลยีเป็นตัวกำหนด

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Saha Puksirivongchai (สหะ พุกศิริวงศ์ชัย)*

Abstract

Through new media, videos are produced and shared to viewers rapidly, called viral videos. These viral videos are based on technology determinism concept. According to technology determinism, it is said that the discovery of technology innovation and development makes change to society. These video have distinct presentation techniques and contents, and they usually capture unusual or strange events. Pictures and sounds attract viewers' interest to watch the video, and share with friends or network. Then the videos are 'viral', which means widely and rapidly circulated.

The rapid transmission of information changes the way of communication. Traditionally, there was the limitation of mass media channel within the country, but nowadays people can communicate beyond borders via the Internet. The comparison between traditional media and new media are mentioned in 4 aspects.The senders in traditional media limit to the group of people who have communication channel. New media everybody can be a message sender. The messages in the traditional media have to pass the screening process before disseminated to the public. However, from the independence of new media, some information is checked and some is not. In traditional media, the communication channels are limited, so that time and place of delivering message are fixed. people can be both senders and receivers, since there are several channels open on the Internet, connecting all people in the world. The audience cannot receive pictures and sounds everywhere, contrary to new media, which messages are easily accessed through internet network.

Keywords: 1. viral video 2. traditional media 3. new media 4. technology determinism

* Assistant Professor Saha Puksirivongchai Department of Educational Technology and Innovation, Faculty of Education, Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University

ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ สหะ พุกศิริวงศ์ชัย สาขาวิชาเทคโนโลยีและนวัตกรรมการศึกษา คณะครุศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏนครปฐม

บทคัดย่อ

การสื่อสารที่มีประสิทธิภาพ ทั้งข้อความ ภาพ เสียงและภาพเคลื่อนไหว ทำให้ผู้คนสามารถสื่อสารผ่านช่องทางอินเทอร์เน็ตเชื่อมกันทั่วโลกทุกที่ทุกเวลา ข้อมูลสามารถส่งผ่านทั่วโลกอย่างรวดเร็ว ทำให้การสื่อสารของผู้คนบนโลกเปลี่ยนแปลงไปจากเดิม ซึ่งแต่เดิมถูกกั้นด้วยช่องทางสื่อสารมวลชนของแต่ละประเทศ ในยุคปัจจุบันอินเทอร์เน็ตทำให้โลกไร้พรมแดนทางการสื่อสารเกิดขึ้นอย่างชัดเจน ตามแนวคิดของนักวิชาการในกลุ่มเทคโนโลยีเป็นตัวกำหนด (Technology Determinism) ที่พบว่าการคิดค้นเทคโนโลยีใหม่และพัฒนาการของเทคโนโลยีจะทำให้สังคมเกิดการเปลี่ยนแปลง อุปกรณ์การผลิตรายการโทรทัศน์ในยุคดิจิทัลมีราคาถูกลงกว่าแต่ก่อนมาก ทุกคนสามารถที่จะเป็นเจ้าของอุปกรณ์การผลิตได้ รวมถึงช่องทางการสื่อสารในยุคดิจิทัลที่ทุกคนสามารถเป็นเจ้าของช่องทางการสื่อสารได้ ทำให้เกิดอิสระในการส่งสาร โดยเรียกว่าสื่อใหม่ (New media) ทุกคนสามารถเป็นทั้งผู้ส่งสารและผู้รับสาร ช่องทางการสื่อสารไม่จำกัดเวลาและสถานที่ มีอิสระในการสื่อสาร ส่วนสื่อดั้งเดิม (Traditional Media) ผู้ส่งสารจำกัดเฉพาะกลุ่มมีการคัดกรองเนื้อหาก่อนเผยแพร่ ช่องทางการสื่อสารจำกัดตรงกันข้ามกับสื่อใหม่ ยุคสื่อใหม่ทำให้มีการผลิตภาพเคลื่อนไหวถึงผู้รับชมจำนวนมากอย่างรวดเร็ว จนเรียกว่า วิดีโอไวรอล มีการนำวิดีโอไวรอลไปใช้ประโยชน์กับวัตถุประสงค์ของงานที่แตกต่างกัน วิดีโอไวรอลมีรูปแบบการนำเสนอ เนื้อหา ที่ไม่ธรรมดา ไม่ปกติและไม่ได้เกิดขึ้นบ่อย ภาพและเสียงที่กระตุ้นให้คนต้องการเข้าไปดู ดูแล้วต้องการส่งต่อ จนเป็นลักษณะของสื่อภาพเคลื่อนไหวในยุคสื่อใหม่ที่เรียกว่า วิดีโอไวรอล โดยเกิดจากแนวคิดกลุ่มเทคโนโลยีเป็นตัวกำหนด(Communication Technology Determinism)

คำสำคัญ : 1. วิดีโอไวรอล 2. สื่อดั้งเดิม 3. สื่อใหม่ 4. เทคโนโลยีเป็นตัวกำหนด

Introduction

The digital revolution is the change from analog technology to digital technology. In digital age, internet communication makes people sending and receiving information independently. The information rapidly disseminated to wide audiences. The communication has been changed; then new media occurred and mixed with traditional media. Maybe in the future, they replace traditional media. Regarding technology determinism, the change happens in the whole communication system, in macro and micro level and in media themselves.

Content

1. Definitions of traditional media and new media

1.1 Traditional Media

Traditional media are media which senders solely send message to receivers, while receivers cannot send feedback to senders. Traditional media can be divided into 2 groups. The first one is media delivering a single message—messages, sounds or pictures to receivers, i.e. newspapers, telegraphs, and radios. The second group is media delivering two messages, for example sending both pictures and sounds at the same time, i.e. television and movie. (Giraffe, 2016)

Traditional media, or as some refer to as old media, has been used in the marketing advertising world for years. When related to advertising, traditional media encompasses that of television, newspaper, radio and magazine ads. These forms of communication are the steadfast ways that businesses have reached both consumers and other companies for decades. (Kelsey, 2012)

1.2 New media

New media as the two-way communication which both parties, senders and receivers, can send and receive message. Through new media, several messages—pictures, sounds and information—can be transmitted at the same time. With the integration of traditional media technology and the advance of information system, new media can make two-way communication via network and contain properties of multimedia. At present, there are a variety of new media and they are well-known and popular. (Giraffe, 2016)

New media is the future of advertising. More and more consumers and businesses rely on new media to find their information. Ultimately, new media refers to content that is easily accessible via many different forms of digital media. When related to advertising, some examples of new media include online advertising, online streaming (radio and television) and social media advertising. (The Cultural Impact of Viral Videos in Society, 2017)

The change from traditional media to new media is determined by technology. The discovery and development of technology make change to society with the determination of communication academics in technology determinism. It is believed that technology is prime mover of society change, as shown in Figure 1 (Keawtep, 2001)

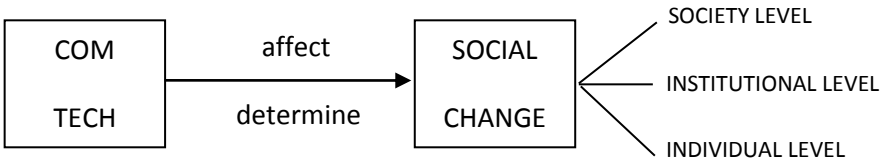


Figure 1 Basic concept of technology determinism

2. Technology determinism

D. McQuail (1994), a theorist of technology determinism, stated the characteristics of the theory as follows:

2.1 Communication technology is basic of every society.

2.2 Each type of technology is suitable for each model of social structure.

2.3 Production process and application of communication technology lead to social change.

2.4 The revolution of communication technology is usually followed by revolution of society.

Additionally, there are two theorists of technology determinism form Toronto University, Canada. Innis realized relationship between social civilization and mode of communication. In the past the importance of technology affected social change and structure of power. Types of media such as radio and television which is the centralized media; the power is in hand of soldier and government. However, the decentralized media such as computers, mobile phones, and facsimile; the power is changed to business group. Moreover, McLuhan, another technology determinism theorist, agreed with Innis that technology development caused society change, but he paid more attention to micro analysis about extension of experience by media.

3. The comparison between traditional media and new media

Furthermore, as technology determinism, it is showed that technology development in form on internet network made change of traditional centralized media to new decentralized media. The comparison of traditional and new media is in the table below.

		Traditional Media	New Media
1	Sender	specific audiences	mass audiences
2	Message	screening process	independence
3	Channel	limit	several options
4	Receiver	limit of time and place of information reception	no limit of time and place, can select content of interest

According to the table, the comparison between traditional media and new media are mentioned in 4 aspects.

3.1 Senders. The senders in traditional media limit to the group of people who have communication channel and productivity potential, including expensive transmission devices. In contrast to traditional media, people who are able to use digital technology can have their own sending devices, which are a lot cheaper comparing to traditional devices. Moreover, they can use internet to be a communication channel with low price. Everybody can be a message sender.

3.2 Messages. The messages in the traditional media have to pass the screening process before disseminated to the public. However, from the independence of new media, some information is checked and some is not. There are both fact and lies, good and bad message communicated. The audiences have to aware of the new media content. The producers have to maintain credibility of information sources. The names of information sources from traditional media are still reliable, and are able to apply with internet communication. These sources are accepted by a number of receivers following news and information from traditional media.

3.3 Channels. In traditional media, the communication channels are limited, so that time and place of delivering message are fixed. Messages can be screened finely before transmitted. The screened messages are sent to mass audiences, revealing mass culture. However, the cost of time and place of production of traditional media is higher than new media. In the digital age, people can be both senders and receivers, since there are several channels open on the Internet, connecting all people in the world. The digital devices are lots cheaper than in the past. The internet connecting devices can make people receive messages and access information online without limitation of time and place. With variety of channels, the cost of time and place of new media are much lower than the traditional media, depending on a number of audiences.

3.4 Receivers. Due to the limitation of time, place and content, as well as analog technology, the audience cannot receive pictures and sounds everywhere, contrary to new media, which messages are easily accessed through internet network. The time of receiving message are fixed, because the time table are allocated and managed to meet the target audience. Moreover, the marketing conditions cause senders to present contents with profit or income earning. The content, therefore, depends on senders' limit of time and place of production. In new media, the audiences can access information every time and everywhere; moreover, they can view the message repeatedly as they like. These illustrate the dependence in accessing new media. As mentioned in Giraffe Magazine (2016), the coming of new media allows people to create personal experience more easily, people can view preferred dramas again and again, or listen to 80s songs with one press. These reduce the power of traditional media. (Alan, 2014)

4. Development of Viral Video

As above mentioned, technology development has changed communication process, and made change to macro and micro level. In traditional centralized media, contents were broadcasted from television network. The senders controlled the content and transmit to massive recipients, while the receivers could not. Radio and television are important media which can attract audience attention. McLuhan is interested in micro change of society through media, especially electronics media. It extends people experience, so that massive audience can receive information with no time and space limit. In other words, present communication technology reduces difficulties in time and space to nothing.

The new media technology has generated massive social changes in the behaviour and lifestyle patterns of the consumers. New media have shaped modern culture, by affecting the way people behave, communicate, learn and conceive of themselves and their world. (Kelsey, 2012)

Influences of new media on television, traditional television is the media that lose more supporters that any other media in favor of the Internet as the broadband connections to the Internet are spreading. In the same time, the Internet opens new possibilities for the evolution of classical television. So that, a few years ago, after the resounding success of Youtube, (famous for his huge collection of video clips that are seen by millions of visitor everyday), there came out the first television which are broadcast only on the Internet. Today, the scenery of the TV audience is changing in the whole World. (Marie-José Montpetit, 2014)

The internet is changing the TV business forever that viewers are in control, creating personal playlists while digital recorders, applications and TV web sites accommodate binge-watching. Commentary moves immediately to social media, not to a weekly TV Guide or the daily newspaper. YouTube and commercial content intermingle. (Marie-José Montpetit, 2014)

Technology and user behavior can also have an impact on the television creation of tomorrow. There is an opportunity for content creators, distributors, and consumers to create a new TV that pro- rather than reactive, and constructive rather than limiting. (Marie-José, 2014)

The way we watch TV has changed; we now watch whole series on weekends, provide spoilers over Twitter and download or watch TV online. As a result, TV's business model is under pressure to change (although it's resisting), as new technologies enter the arena to shake things up. (John, 2017)

The experience of watching television is rapidly changing with the progression of technology. No longer restricted to a limited number of channels on network television, or even to a TV schedule, viewers are now able to watch exactly what they want to watch, when they want to watch it. (Influence of New Technologies, 2017)

Television has always had commercials, but social media and the Internet have changed the way they’re presented. For instance, companies are always trying to come up with commercials that’ll turn into viral videos on YouTube. (Teddy, 2017)

As above mentioned, regarding development of production technology of radio and television and the development of digital technology, there are channels to send large files, so that video communication is widely spread both as a sender or a producer and a receiver or an audience. Additionally, the video producing devices are easily available for general level to professional level. Even recording from a smartphone, the quality is good due to the advanced digital technology. The video production and viewing through internet network is widely popular. A large number of video clips are shared, with mass viewers. A video clip circulated among numerous viewers is a viral video.

5. Definitions of Viral Video

A viral video is a trend of certain content in the form of information, pictures, videos, etc. which is widely and rapidly spread. ‘Virality’ is originated form ‘viral’ which assimilated from ‘virus’. The idea is that virus is widely and rapidly infected, so viral means widely and rapidly spread or circulated. (Viral Video, 2017)

A viral video is any video that becomes popular by being passed from person to person via the Web. (Mike, 2013)

A viral video is a video clip that is able to spread quickly through the internet, similar to virus infection. (New Dimensions to Online Advertisement, 2007)

A viral Video is a video that becomes popular through a process of Internet sharing, typically through video sharing websites or email. (Wikipedia, 2013)

A viral video is a video that gets extremely popular through Internet sharing. (Kevin, 1990)

From the above definitions, a viral video is a video sharing through the internet that is circulated to a lot of audiences and has its popularity in the short period of time.

Viral videos can consist of just about anything. Many are funny videos that make people laugh. Others may contain actual events that just happened to be caught on camera. The common theme of viral videos is that they're interesting and they inspire people to share them with their friends. (What Does It Mean To Go Viral, 2017)

To produce a video to be a viral video, the presentation techniques, content, pictures and sounds should attract viewers' attention and interest, so that they share that video to others, as a viral video. The two factors of viral video production are as follows:

1. Presentation techniques. There are two techniques of viral video production.

1.1 Reality show. It aims to present natural event or actual action with no script or setting.

1.2 Drama. A plot is planned to tell a story from the beginning to the end.

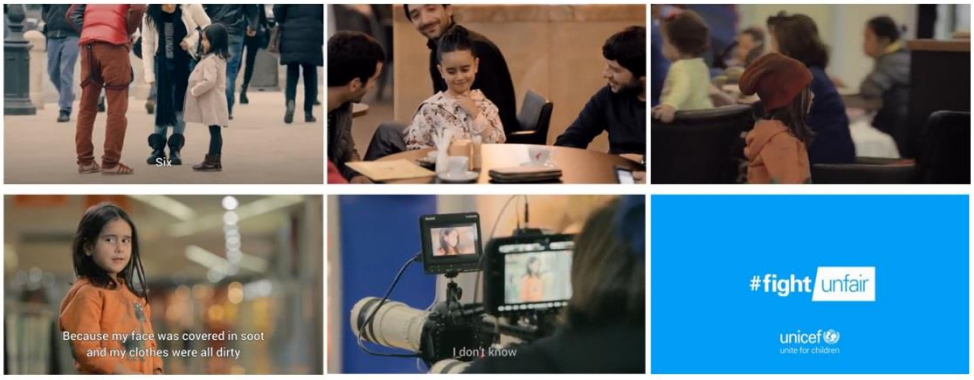
2. Content. The content of a viral video usually presents unusual, strange, or unexpected events. The story includes comedy, strange, impressed, pity, or scary. If it is a comedy story, as a viral video, it should be an event that does not happen frequently or never happen before. The content must be in the top level, never or rarely happen, cannot be encountered in daily life.

Furthermore, most viral videos contain humor and fall into three broad categories.

1. Unintentional Viral Videos, videos that the creators never intended to go viral. These videos may have been posted by the creator or shared with friends, who then spread the content.

2. Humorous Viral Videos, videos that have been created specifically to entertain people. If a video is funny enough, it will spread.

3. Promotional Viral videos, videos that are designed to go viral with a marketing message to raise brand awareness. Promotional viral videos fall under viral marketing practices. (Megan, 2011)



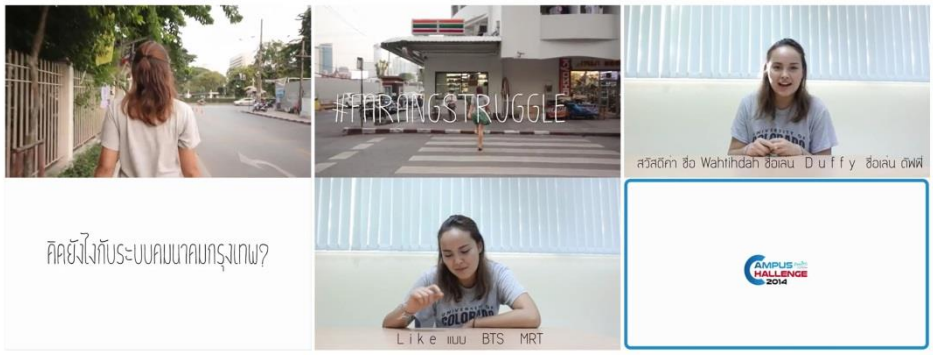
Picture 2 UNICEF viral video, 'Would you stop if you saw this little girl on the street?' (UNICEF, 2016)

UNICEF viral video, Would you stop if you saw this little girl on the street?, as in Picture 2 is a reality video, captured a real situation to attract the viewer attention to the experiment issue. The video shows the comparison of how people react to a well-dressed 6 year old girl and the same girl in a dirty cloth. The hidden cameras captured the real reactions of passers-by. In smart cloth, the girl draws more people's interest and attention than when dressing in dirty cloth. As a dirty girl, people shun and ignore her. This viral video aims to promote equal rights. There are lots of opinions and comments from viewers, both pros and cons, affecting goal achievement of the video. Through new media the viewers can express opinions freely; therefore, media producers have to think and review clip videos neatly before disseminating. Both content and presentation techniques affect the level of video achievement.



Picture 3: Nautilus Tuna Spread viral video, The Break-Up (Nautilus, 2016)

The Break-Up, Nautilus Tuna Spread viral video, aims to advertise the product. It is a drama with storytelling procedures as follows: 1. Introduction, 2. Conflict, 3. Rising action, 4. Crisis, 5. Climax, 6. Falling action, and 7. Solution and Resolution. The main theme is to say goodbye to the traditional snack with understanding. The video begins by the message—Breaking up is hard to do but somehow you have to do it anyway. The story is told by 2 main characters: a grilled pork sale man and his customer. First, the seller asks the woman customer whether she wants to get grilled pork as usual, which means she is a regular buyer. The conflict occurs when the woman says that today is the last day she stops by. The situation is intense when reasons are listed why not to buy grilled pork to answer the issue of breaking up with understanding. In the conversation scene, the director can design picture and sound which is suitable for the situation. The work uses the space in the foreground, more than background. The rhythm of conversation is slow at the beginning when the woman hesitates to break up, and quicker when the conflict happens. To the climax, when the woman raises lots of reasons, until the seller accepts the result from giving the tuna spread to the woman. Then the situation happily ends with the understanding of reasons to change. This 5.45 minute video can tell a story, use good rhythm, and give detail and content best fit with rule of communication. If this would launch in a traditional media, for example, in television, the cost will be very high with this length of video. Consequently, long videos usually are seen as an internet viral video more than in a television commercial.



Picture 4: Viral video of The Gun-Chon Project, FarangStruggle Ep.1 Foreigner

Source: The Gun-Chon Project, 2014. (The Gun-Chon Project, 2014)

The viral video of The Gun-Chon Project, FarangStruggle Ep.1 Foreigner, aims to promote a campaign to reduce accidents in Chulalongkorn University area. The clip is the interview of an American-Thai girl, named Duffy, who is a student in Chulalongkorn University. She has just lived in Thailand for 3 months and can speak a little Thai. The interview is about her opinions on driving habits of people in Bangkok. Then it links to driving in the University which is fast and scary, leading to this campaign. If this is a video interviewing those who can speak Thai very well, it may be not popular because it is ordinary. However, Duffy is the beginner Thai, she sometimes use wrong words, wrong grammar, bad pronunciation, but looks funny and interesting. This video is rapidly and widely popular, that is 'viral'.

The specific characteristic of viral video is the information dissemination to mass audience in a short time, resulting from the availability of digital devices and the internet communication channel. The viral videos are used in different purposes with mixtures of the roles of traditional video. Due to low cost in production and dissemination, viral videos are used in the following objectives.

6. Viral video marketing

Viral video marketing is a marketing technique used to promote brand awareness, products, services, or to achieve other marketing objectives. This technique uses social networking and other tools to gain traction for the video. (Alan, 2014)

In marketing, traditional mass media are used to advertise products and service. Viral videos then are used in a similar purpose as viral marketing, but with independent presentation technique, longer length compared to traditional media which time depends on the audience money. The number of viewers is the indicators of advertising cost. The more viewers are the more expensive of the cost. However, the cost for new media is a lot less than traditional media.

Additionally, viral videos are used in delivering messages for public relations, campaigning, educating, expressing opinions and entertaining. There are video clips captured by smartphones showing individual special abilities or group activities, after that going viral and popular among online viewers or social media community. Some of them are selected to be part of advertising or campaign, according to a number of viewers. There also are video viral created to earn advertising cost.

Conclusion

The digital technology leads to the development from traditional media to new media. The communication process, channel and receivers, and video and sound message have different roles from traditional media, as shown in table of comparison between traditional media and new media. What makes viral videos plays roles instead of mass media is the ability to deliver message to mass audiences in the same level or better than traditional media. Therefore, viral videos are popular, and can be support or replace traditional media in the future, while pictures and sound technology in digital age is developed continuously. In conclusion, technology development create new media to make change in society in macro and micro level.

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