COM 318: Modern Media and Persuasion

Five major human communication innovations, tied to mediums or technology

1. The spoken word
   1. Before – grunting, mating, killing, consuming
   2. Revered, God used spoken words before creation.
   3. Revered, we are sworn in to testify and speak in court
   4. “You have my word”, “speak for themselves”
   5. Allows sociability and transmission of knowledge and even stories.
   6. Elderly held knowledge of numerous survival methods, thus were valuable.
   7. Lakota Old Ones, elderly teachers offer advice and help with babies.
   8. Only allows dramatic narrative, no concrete history.
2. The written word
   1. Allows collection of knowledge and storage of it for long periods.
   2. Complex sets of knowledge, legal systems, behavior patterns and allows assigning deeds and other possessions and to declare behavior illegal or legal.
   3. Detailed and accurate recall of information, low fallibility.
   4. Requires literacy, this type of info was hoarded by the rich and powerful.
   5. Form of power, information could be property in the form of books or scrolls.
   6. Benjamin Franklin offered lending libraries in 1700s.
   7. Without access, people would be and remain ignorant
   8. Vast difference in thought process between Oral and Written
   9. Perceived as more trustworthy than spoken
   10. Critical to us as much now as long ago
3. The printed word
   1. Cheaper to produce, less expensive
   2. Portable
   3. Allowed common man to learn producing a middle class
   4. Renaissance and Reformation
   5. Censorship began
   6. John Peter Zenger challenged freedom of printing and information
   7. Made extended childhood education necessary for success
   8. Born was childhood, since children were sent to work when capable
4. The electronic word
   1. First born in 1844 with telegraph
   2. Not as information dense
   3. Telegraph
   4. Telephone (1876)
   5. Surrounded by messages and ads
   6. Serious affects on human behavior and development with Computers
   7. Despite ad-blocks, still the most effective way to convince and persuade
   8. Withholds the oral power of spoken and uses it with much faster methods of transmission.
   9. Experience rather than think through
5. The interactive digital word
   1. The words that we can write ourselves
   2. Up until now, we were interacted with, not the ones doing the acting
   3. Surgeons use medical training simulators
   4. Sorties flown using simulators

Schwartz’s Perspectives on media use

* Theory compares two competing models of explanation for radio and TV media’s persuasive power

1. Evoked Recall
   1. Highly emotional and motivating recollection of previous memories move us to action.
2. Transportation Model – receivers are logical and learn and believe good reasons for why they should act as directed.

Aristotle’s empathematic model of communication is similar to Schwartz’s theory.

Schwartz’s evoked recall relies on resonance principles, which are defined as using messages or message elements that elicit or trigger memories or ideas stored in conscious or unconscious parts of the mind. This combines with the cues of the persuader to create emotional or logical meaning.

This connection between past memories and current messages produces resonance or harmony between the source, message, and receiver.

“Produce messages from receivers”

Hope receivers re-experience message when action must occur.

Experiential meaning is produced from using cues of past experiences to produce current experiences.

When people respond or react to our ads or attempts at evoked recall, and they feel it or “feel right”, they are experiencing resonance. This is a **responsive chord**.

Verbal Script – the message in words we see or hear, not entirely words and content remembered. Includes evoked feelings in the receiver.

Much advertising is focused on the words and topics presented rather than the emotional content of a message.

Auditory Scripts which are sounds or onomatopoeia. This can be sizzles, pops, buzzes, klunks, or screeches.

These can cue powerful unconscious emotions.

Sight and Visual Scripts are images which are the source of experiential cues.

The cross-section shot that displays juicy meat or stretchy cheese.

Movements of cameras can also evoke certain ideas or thoughts.

Costumes and props also evoke this experience. Scenes and settings also evoke these messages.

McLuhan’s Perspectives

Any medium is an extension of our senses or body parts. Print is an extension of our eyes.

Speech is slower than reading, so more information is covered during spoken word.

Radio and telephone is an extension of our ears, more things could be heard from farther away.

Computers may be an extension of our brain.

Mediums change our thought processes, we close distances with new mediums, making our world seem smaller than it is.

Lonely Crowd – we rarely know the people around us.

Access code – the requirements to use some medium, TV has low requirements

Signals – the indicator used by a medium

Signals stimulate our information processing receptors, print stimulates the eye, radio the ear

Signals come to us in high-fidelity forms, while others are low-fidelity.

Hi-Fi forms involve complete words or sentences, music and film.

Lo-Fi forms involve some translation into something understandable, electric impulses or dots and dashes.

The derived meaning of either forms will offer a different meaning.

Hi-Fi offers little requirements for involvement in decoding a signal.

Lo-fi requires high participation in decoding the messages.

Hot Media rely on signals having hi-fi or definition.

* Includes film, digital music, and books.
  + Not analog music, TV, or comic books
  + Require little sensory decoding

Cool Media rely on signals having low fidelity or definition.

Requires great amount or moderate amount of work to process.

* Includes television, telephone, computer screens

Uses and Gratification Theory

How do users use media to gratify themselves and meet their needs. Assumes we have primary, secondary, and even tertiary needs for various types of information.

It is essential for us to use various media in different situations to get critical and non-critical information.

The first need is surveillance or the need to keep track of our environment. This can range from gas prices to new candidates to office. Too much occurs to keep track of all of it. We will turn to media to keep up to date.

The second need is curiosity the need to discover and learn of unknown information that is not always important but may be important.

Diversion is the third need, this is a relief from daily mundanities and problems we face. We watch TV, listen to radio, etc. to avoid the boredom or silence.

Personal identity is the last need. We all feel uncertain about who we are, our life goals and the impact of certain events that occur in the world. We then turn to media to help clarify what we stand for and what we should believe in.

We learn what we are through political channels and what we are not by watching Trash TV.

Tertiary competence needs are fulfilled through watching game shows, we see if we know more than others.

Agenda-setting is a way that mass media persuasion functions in our world.

This theory posits that what is important in the public-eye is that which is being discussed by people.

This theory holds that public agenda is shaped and directed by the news that media outlets highlight.

The main point of agenda setting is that mass media does not tell us what to think, but what to think about, believe, and act on.

The people who air certain stories or present cases or issues are called gatekeepers. These include reporters, editors, photographers, and many others. This is their title since they determine what is covered in the news.

Since there is an economy of space for news, it must be selectively balanced between what will garner the most attention.

A basic criterion used to perform news selection is “least objectionable programming” programming that is least likely to be turned off.

The ultimate purpose of media is to sell audiences to advertisers.

When ratings are high, news outlets or media giants can sell advertising to companies to earn money from them.

Another criterion for determining what news to present is the nature of the audience, called the target or prospect by marketing experts.

Those who watch one program may be more inclined to be conservative than those who watch another, thus this will determine ads present or news displayed.

Criterion – speed of delivery, quick display through short ads or magazine story.

News bite – less than 35 second long story told energetically.

Criterion – dramatic quality of a story, its audio, or video.

This can include dramatic instances where a family may have just been told about a murder of a loved one.

Criterion – the degree to which people are getting their news from the internet.

Diversify your sources of media and news as a competent persuader.

Learning from the Media and Persuasion

The way we learn to behave from media is called the theory of Social Learning and Cultivation.

Social Learning – what to think and do with ourselves in any given situation

Cultivation – what to expect from future possible situations or to think of it in another way, we learn what to prepare for in future situations in media.

Through social learning you learn certain actions or how to do things that may harmful or helpful.

Cultivation theory resembles surveillance need.

This theory tells us what is happening around us and what we should expect. It cultivates a view of the world and expectations of it.

Specific programming can build a specific view of the world.

Attitudes are easy to change, while behaviors are fickle. Cultivation predicts change only after extended viewing over long periods of time.

What have you learned from media sources? What thoughts are in your subconscious?

News Manipulation and Persuasion

News is obviously mediated to support sponsors and their views. It is biased.

Key News Sources and Conglomerates

Major wire services used to supply most of the news that we would see, hear, and read. Only three existed, but this wasn’t an issue as long as news was reported honestly and wholly.

However, currently that is no longer the case. Groups must limit length of programs and information delivered in order to maintain a base of viewers and meet their capabilities to consume news.

Trying to gain the attention of a specific market segment can lead to redesigning stories to be dramatic and sexy.

Methods of manipulation

1. Ignoring – simply ignore certain stories.
2. Favoring the Sponsor – (Don’t bite the hand that feeds) News outlets may trim negative news regarding their sponsors to keep the money flowing. Ask who the sponsor is for certain outlets to discover possible biases.
3. Pseudoevents – not all news is entertaining or pertinent. News reporters may be drawn to bizarre or dramatic events as a result.
   1. Events that are vetted to appear newsworthy.
   2. Events which are created from nothing to gain attention
4. Biases: Verbal and Nonverbal
   1. Interviewers can alter to appearance or presentation of certain interviewees to produce an inaccurate image of that person.
   2. Verbal statements and nonverbal cues can be elicited and used against some group of people.
   3. This can also be done through video alteration.
   4. It is hard to prevent this type of bias
   5. Judge all information that you can gather and gather as much as you can in a short period.

Internet and Persuasion

The internet allows the coalescence of information that allows consumers to make competitive bids against dealers for different cars and allows people to bypass travel agents.

Information on Demand

Constant inflow of information be aware of the advertising targeted at you.

Borders are no longer an issue for markets

Troubling behavior of malfeasants on the internet. Exploitation of others and untrustworthy retailers.