



International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Computational and Applied Sciences (IJETCAS)

www.iasir.net

SOCIAL AWARENESS THROUGH NEW MEDIA

Niket Mehta

Research Scholar and Assistant Professor, Department of Animation and Multimedia,
Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Ranchi, Extension Centre Noida, Uttar Pradesh, INDIA

Dr. Suparna Dutta

Associate Professor, (Humanities), Department of Management,
Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Ranchi, Extension Centre Noida, Uttar Pradesh, INDIA

Dr. Asit Bandyopadhyay

Associate Professor, Department of Management, Jaypee Business School, Noida, INDIA

Abstract: Today we are living in a networked world where everybody is 'connected' to others through various modes of communication. New tools and techniques of communication have made this world a small place. The prevalent new media culture of computer-mediated forms of production, distribution and communication has revolutionized the communication. It has eased all the stages of communication, including acquisition, manipulating, storage and distribution. Current technological advancements in the field of communication have paved ways for digital multimedia-rich communication and communication has become more informative and rich with entertainment and engaging content. After experiencing the Internet revolution, we are already taking our initial steps into the virtual world revolution. Just like the World Wide Web had forced content creators to reconsider how they craft and distribute their messages, the rapidly developing virtual world, or 3D Internet, is changing the game again. There is strong need to design and develop effective digital modes or content for communication to address social concerns. This paper explores and brings conclusions through literature review and qualitative studies about the possibilities of social message communication through digital ways.

Keywords: New media, digital communication, social message, innovate, customization communication, visual communication

I. DIGITAL WAYS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication enables man to ever remain a capable and sensitive social being. Communication also has the potential to make man more responsible as well as conscious and aware. However, it is not possible to ignore that we cannot communicate without the help of technology any more. We have become a generation of digital communication consumers and producers. New internet applications enable even cursory users who have little technical knowledge to construct, share and broadcast their own media and information contents, as they do, for example, on social networking websites. These social media applications also make it possible to showcase the collaborative efforts of potentially millions of users. These new technologies have brought us many wonderful things – perhaps not happiness or contentment, but at least computers, the internet, and new ways of creating and delivering information and art. Yet these advances still remain human tools. The future points towards a communications-driven economy where economic opportunities are not limited by time, distance or geography. In the future, innovations in telecommuting and teleconferencing will reduce our need to commute and travel long distances, saving money, time and reducing environmental impact. E-commerce and advances in the technologies that enable distance learning and virtual doctors' visits, mean more people will have access to quality products, services and resources, regardless of where they live. And this personalisation of the things we create and how they are consumed for example, e-books, streaming video, music, etc. will continue to transform the global economy. This "communications-driven economy" is not so far off. Imagine for a moment a world where instead of hearing the thump of the morning newspaper against your front stoop, you take in the day's news on your tablet. This electronic version of newspaper is environment friendly also apart from being graphically rich it is easy and faster to send and receive as well. It can be multimedia rich and interactive where readers can watch videos, give instant feedback and create content as well. User generated content is the best gift of new media and regardless of their levels of technical expertise; users can handle technologies in more active ways. Users build and maintain social networks, they tag and rank information and get involved in to virtual world. They do all these things in collaboration, pooling knowledge and constructing content that they share with each other, which is subsequently re-mixed, re-distributed and re-consumed. This growing phenomenon suggests that users are pleased in significant ways by the ability to play an active role in generating content, rather than only passively consuming that which is created for them by others. New media technologies work differently as per users' tastes. For example, the history of email has taught us that users may use

computer-mediated technologies and fashion them for their own purposes, which sometimes supersede or are at odds with the original purposes of designers. Email which was incorporated as a convenience for systems operators and computer scientists to facilitate database and other resource sharing, but its use subsequently by managers, researchers and ultimately many other types of individuals has overshadowed all other network applications in volume of traffic. We should explore the possibilities to use this new digital media for the benefit of mankind and should spread social awareness through it. Let's take an example where new media helped in the development of a nation: - For much of modern history, China has been remote, racist, and self contained with little interest or involvement with Western nations and their affairs. All of that, of course, has changed. With a vibrant economy and spectacular growth and modernization, China has become thoroughly integrated in globalization becoming a major player in world trade and finance and communication technologies have played a great role in it. India too is not an exception which has a huge number of internet and smart phone users. Technology now eventually dominates the lives of children through toys and electronic games as well. Given the immense popularity of computer games, as well as the increasing role played by the digital technologies in childhood activities, it is not surprising that the world of play has come to exist at the borders of technological production and consumption. Since India is the third largest consumer of Internet and 76% of Indian population uses mobile phones as compared to 75.32 % of Chinese population and 103.9% of USA population. That's why new interactive technology should be tapped for communication.

II. NEW COMMUNICATION TRENDS

New Digital Media options like the YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Mobile Phones, Video Games, etc. are being used extensively by everyone including social workers, government officials, and activists to spread the message. Yet, most of the times this communication remains a mechanical action only. Consideration remains focused on mechanical details like 'user friendliness'. One takes care of the font and the format but the form that matters is only beginning to assert itself. This is where innovation has to work– the interdisciplinary domain which takes into focus both the heart that feels and the mind that think– the left as well as the right hemisphere of the human brain. For example, the author has done a study where he used an interactive computer based video game to spread the message about female feticide to a sample population in a problem affected area in Haryana state of India. Author observed that in-spite of the fact that the area which was of a small town and villages was not very advanced in terms of infrastructure and social conditions yet common people had understanding of computers and smartphones and could understand and enjoy the digital content very well. But if the content is designed as per their tastes, knowledge and culture then it will leave more impact on them. In fact, in India small town people are considered a good consumer of mobile internet and information. They are quite active on social networking sites and explore the information on internet. While talking to a doctor in a small town, researcher found out that patients nowadays are exploring the disease on internet and coming to doctors with great knowledge and expectations, which is a good as well as a bad effect. Doctors feel that half knowledge is a dangerous thing and it becomes difficult to convince such patients. New communication tools and techniques have made end users more self-aware and conscious. Smartphones and mobile applications are acting as virtual opinion leaders. For example, these days a viral disease "Swine Flu" is spreading and people are sharing information on whats app – an instant messenger app on mobile phones regarding this flu – like symptoms, precautions, preventive measures etc. This surely helps to spread the awareness and this awareness leads to better health and many other advantages. Similarly there are groups of users on social networks or chatting mobile apps where people communicate about their interests and social concerns which help in building awareness and healthy society. No doubt, these are being used for the sake of fun and entertainment also by many but there are positive and negative sides of everything. Another example is of Facebook pages where people like some page of particular interest and get related information and updates from the administrator. Facebook has groups option also for example Green Yatra group which is working to spread environment awareness and each such features by one or other company is different and has its own qualities. These are the tools to attract the online users towards some particular news, concern, product and event, etc. New digital modes of communication are multimedia rich hence more attractive and appealing provided they have been designed aesthetically. For example, In India a political party won election because of its successful social media campaign which was designed by professionals and it touched the hearts of common Indians. Another worth mentioning example is of a social campaign 'Save Our Tigers' by a leading mobile operator Aircel in association with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) India in 2010. This campaign was targeted to save the gradually dying tigers in India. Throughout the campaign, a fact that only 1,411 Royal Bengal Tigers are left; was emphasized upon to create a stir. Though people were aware of the fact that the tigers were an endangered lot and few of the species are left in the country, not everyone had an exact idea of how many were actually to be found and the extent of the damage or its consequences. Aircel highlighted the number, 1,411 in its communication and succeeded to bring people together and lots of strong personalities and organizations came forward which brought the system into action and thankfully the tigers could be protected and awareness had been generated. While mentioning new ways of communication how can we ignore the power of video games,

researcher had conducted a study using a game Food Force II which was developed by United Nations to spread the awareness about food wastage and food management. When players played this game, even if they did not like the game, they liked the message given through the game and when they complete the game it was assured that they got the message since they could not complete the game without solving the given tasks.

III. INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION

There's an old saying in biology: "Ontogeny Recapitulates Phylogeny" which points to the fact that the human embryo goes through successive stages that closely resemble fish, reptiles, small mammals, then man. Same is true with communication which has reached to current stage by crossing many stages. We cannot compare linear (for example – story, drama, movies) and non-linear communication (for example – interactive games) to previous forms of media which are broadly non-interactive. Interactive entertainment is a fundamentally different proposition than linear, involving quite different psychological mechanisms. Interactive games are there since ages. Although this history stretches back as far as the beginnings of human culture yet when we think of games today, we tend to speak of the digital games that have so recently captured our imaginations. Digital games are something you do, something you do to your head, a world that you enter, and, to a certain extent, they are something you “become”. Digital games which are interactive, participatory; entertainment activity are a window to a new kind of intimacy with machines that is characteristic of the nascent computer culture. The holding power of video game is almost hypnotic fascination. Digital games, as one of the first, best developed, and most popular truly digital mediums embody a wealth of knowledge about interface, aesthetic, and interactivity issues. Historically, video games have been on the technological cutting edge of technically of what is possible, whether it is building online communities on the Internet, creating rich worlds using 3D graphics cards, or allowing dynamic synchronous interaction play by streaming information over the Internet. Indeed, even a cursory glance at the latest games can blow us away by what is currently possible with technology and inspired by the sleek interface or production values games contain. Digital Games have an explicit and carefully thought-out educational purpose and are not intended to be played primarily for amusement. Contemporary developments in gaming, particularly interactive stories, digital authoring tools, and collaborative worlds, suggest powerful new opportunities for educational media. Digital games evoke powerful emotional reactions in their players, such as fear, power, aggression, wonder, or joy. In a game emotions are created by balancing a number of game components, such as character traits, game rewards, obstacles, game narrative, competition with other humans, and opportunities for collaboration with other players. Understanding the dynamics behind these design considerations might be useful for those who design interactive digital learning environments. Digital game playing occurs in rich socio-cultural contexts, bringing friends and family together. Digital games which are legally recognised by United States as an art can also be called multimedia art. The computer game is an art form because it presents its audience with fantasy experiences that stimulate emotion. Computer acts as a medium for emotional communication art. When we communicate through emotions and we get the feedback also then communication become perfect and its digital games which can make our communication multimedia rich, can inculcate emotions into it and gives the feedback also. Digital games are another form of entertainment, a form of cultural expression – especially for the younger generation. You can hunt down a civilisation, you can explore continents... there's so much you can do. And there's something for everyone. Games fail in education because of mismatch between the goals of games and the objectives of school-based learning. Efforts to integrate games into the curriculum may fail either because games designed to educate do not engage their intended audience, or because truly engaging games do not provide enough educational value. In digital games the communication is rapid and in both directions. The game tells you what you need to know, and you respond very quickly with what you want the game to do. Give players tools and information enough to solve a problem set up by you and that is what game is all about. Author has observed in a study conducted using Tetris game on teenagers that gaming is an entertaining experience, games are a good learning experience, create curiosity, makes the players goal-oriented, people react by emotional, facial, body gestures during game when they play games, make them take part in game-play, games are participatory and immersive, rewards in the form of score games motivate players, games motivate and sound effects played role in making players engaged in game. Games are a major cultural force. Games that are too hard kind may bore us and games that are too easy may also kind of bore us. As we age, games move from one to the other. We all play games in our lives. To play any game you need to follow certain rules but we have forgotten those rules. A small child is sent to school at three so that she gains knowledge and discipline to play this game later in her life. At this age children are pure and open to receive and retain all information downloaded into them. When we play games in life also so why not to utilize them in communication also? Opinion leaders and experts of various fields also believe that games can serve as a great source of communication. A scientist shared his experiences with author that how once they created a cartoon character and made some animations to communicate children about some science principles. If non interactive animation can serve the purpose of teaching then non-interactive applications can surely prove more useful. An app developer gave suggestions that safety of women can be ensured through mobile apps. A woman can download

this app on her mobile and can turn it on if she doubts some danger. She can send alarm which will automatically detect her location and alert the police and concerned security officials. Similarly there are apps which can help in getting blood from blood bank, helps to locate someone or some information in case of emergency and most importantly the entertaining representation of information in the multimedia application makes them best tools for communication.

IV. CONCLUSION

Digital games have the capacity to take us to amazing new worlds with fantastic characters and fully realized interactive environments. Games are designed by teams of professional game developers who work long hours at specialized tasks. The technological and business aspects of these digital games are mind-boggling. Games are best tool to teach something and when we intend to communicate message for social awareness we cannot do it straight forwardly through some lecture, print or television advertisement or even by a video or animation film. Social messaging is important because development cannot come only through infrastructure and economic development, social development has to accompany economic and infrastructure development. If games are used to communicate social messages which can be done indirectly through games as a hidden message in game we can be assured that message has been delivered, learned and adapted by the player of game because player will not be able to complete the game until he finishes the task or challenges offered to him through game play which will demand him to fulfil certain conditions and he can fulfil those conditions by solving the difficulty offered to him in the game or in different levels of game. Game designer can offer various levels of challenges to communicate different messages and it can be done in an interactive, participatory and entertaining way through interactive games. That's why new interactive technology should be used for communication because current generation of people across the globe appears to have easy access to such technology enabled options like the internet, telecommunication, smart phones and other such gadgets of communication and 'infotainment' and they are quick adopters of technology as well as new forms of communication and for them interactive communication can be a best option.

REFERENCES

- [1] Choudhary Vidhi (2013) - Choudhary Vidhi, Livemint.com, *Use of video apps on mobiles more popular in smaller towns*, <http://www.livemint.com/>
- [2] Digital Media Across Asia, India Case Study, accessed from <http://comm215.wetpaint.com/page/India+%3A+Case+Studies>
- [3] Drypen (2010), Aircel, partnering with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) India, has launched the 'Save Our Tigers' initiative (Campaign), accessed from <http://drypen.in/marketing/aircel-partnering-with-world-wildlife-fund-wwf-india-has-launched-the-save-our-tigers-initiative-campaign.html>
- [4] Eric Feigenbaum, Electronic Methods of Communication in Business, Demand Media accessed from <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/electronic-methods-communication-business-2934.html>
- [5] Freeman David (2003) - Creating Emotion in Games: The Craft and Art of Emotioneering, New Riders Publishing USA
- [6] Games For Change, Accessed from <http://www.gamesforchange.org/>
- [7] Green yatra.com, <http://greenyatra.org/>
- [8] Has the introduction of electronic means of communication, shifted the relationship between speech and writing?, accessed from <http://iain12790.hubpages.com/hub/Has-the-introduction-of-electronic-means-of-communication-shifted-the-relationship-between-speech-and-writing>
- [9] Internet world Stats.com (2013), Accessed from <http://www.internetworldstats.com/top20.htm> on 17 February, 2013
- [10] James F. Scotton and William A. Hachten (2010) - New Media for a New China, Wiley- Blackwell Publication, ISBN 978-1-4051-8797-8
- [11] Kim Krause Berg (April 2011), Using Social Awareness Streams To Learn What People Care About accessed from <http://searchengineland.com/using-social-awareness-streams-to-learn-what-people-care-about-74904>
- [12] Koster Raph (2005), A Theory of Fun for Game Design, Paraglyph Press, USA, ISBN 1-932111-97-2
- [13] Meaghan Edelstein (May 2010), 8 Tips for a Successful Social Media Cause Campaign, accessed from <http://mashable.com/2010/05/10/social-cause-campaign/>
- [14] Protalinski Emil (2011) - Techspot.com, On May 9, 2011, 9:00 AM, The US legally recognizes video games as an art form, accessed from <http://www.techspot.com/> on June 16, 2013
- [15] SEETHA, accessed from <http://seeta.in/j/products/food-force-ii.html> on August 19, 2014
- [16] Squire Kurt (2003) - Squire Kurt (2003), Video Games in Education, Comparative Media Studies Department, 14N-205, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA. 02139 USA, Accessed from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/> on 23 May 2011
- [17] Telecom Tiger.com (2012), Aircel-NDTV Tiger initiative concludes "Save Our Tigers" Telethon at Ranthambore, accessed from <http://www.telecomtiger.com/>
- [18] Tom Van Vleck, The Risks of Electronic Communication accessed from <http://www.multicians.org/thvv/emailbad.html>