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Abstracts for panel
Division 7
Organization, Communication and Society
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15.30-18.00

Panel: Convergence: Spheres of Influence in Digital Age

**Niina Uusitalo**, *Rhetoric strategies of content marketing*

**Hanna Reinikainen & Vilma Luoma-aho**, *Building parasocial interaction in video blogs*

**Matti Mäntymäki & Najmul Islam**, *The Bright and dark sides of self-promotion as drivers of status update frequency on Facebook*

**Jenna-Riia Oldenburg**, *New forms of digital content as tools of customization in real estate marketing process*

**Juhani Linna**, *Virtual Reality and Business Reality – Approaches for Content Monetization in the Media Industry*
Inspecting rhetoric strategies of content marketing

Niina Uusitalo, University of Tampere, Niina.uusitalo@uta.fi

Key words: rhetoric strategies, content marketing, rhetoric analysis

Abstract

Content marketing is often said to mix and blur established modes of communication. Content marketing refers to the practice of creating and distributing valuable content in order to engage target audiences and ultimately drive consumer action. By creating valuable content for target audiences content marketing in many ways avoids a straightforward request to buy. Content marketing may converge different modes of influencing as well as using multiple forms of media. This paper inspects the modes of persuasion of content marketing by inspecting rhetoric strategies used in Finnish online content marketing cases (n=50). The paper presents a framework for analyzing content marketing rhetorics and provides information on the rhetoric strategies of influencing used in Finnish content marketing. The study is also connected to researching commercialization of the digital media environment.

The analysis of the modes of persuasion used in content marketing is integral in order to understand the multiple ways content marketing builds credibility, appeals to audiences and builds valuable content. These modes are analyzed through the classic rhetoric modes of ethos (building credibility in the eyes of the audience), pathos (appealing to the audience’s emotions) and logos (the subject matter and facts of the content).

The method is a rhetoric discursive analysis of selected online cases. The cases are coded and analyzed according to three different viewpoints: Firstly the editorial elements of content marketing cases are distinguished (headlines, images, videos, text, links, links to social media services). Secondly the publication platform is noted (media platform, company/brand platform, blog). Thirdly the rhetoric elements of content marketing are analyzed (speakers, modes of address, legitimating vocabulary, storytelling elements). Editorial elements, the publication platform and rhetoric elements all have meaning for ethos, pathos and logos constructed in content marketing.
Building parasocial interaction in video blogs

Hanna Reinikainen & Vilma Luoma-aho

Jyväskylä University, School of Business and Economics, Finland

Corresponding author: hanna.m.reinikainen@student.jyu.fi

Abstract

Video blogs are an emblematic form of YouTube, usually presenting one single person talking about his or her own life, directly into the camera\(^\text{12}\). Video bloggers appeal specifically to a younger audience\(^\text{4}\) and in addition to their own personal feelings and opinions bloggers often also comment on different kinds of products and services\(^\text{5}\), which raises their interest also among brands and organizations.

Due to their popularity and influentiality YouTube stars are in fact much like traditional television performers, but differences are nevertheless clear\(^\text{6}\). Video bloggers don’t for example have a broadcast network behind them, nor are they working professionals in the same way as for example television journalists\(^\text{7}\). YouTube has in fact been described as “post-television”, where “users construct their own viewing experiences from user-generated videos, which have no institutional imprint”\(^\text{8}\). In this research video bloggers are perceived as a “new form of authentic online celebrities”\(^\text{9}\)

In this paper we look more closely at video bloggers by applying the theory of parasocial interaction. The concept refers to “illusionary interaction”\(^\text{10}\) that audiences may experience with performers, while consuming media content. Although classified as one-sided and imaginary, parasocial experiences can be very influential and affect the audience member’s identity, lifestyle, attitude and behavior\(^\text{11}\) and have the audiences returning to the content over and over again.\(^\text{12}\) Understanding the building blocks of these experiences is seen as crucial to brands and organizations interested in co-operating with video bloggers.

We analyze the contents of five popular Finnish video blogs through seven possible causes influencing the experience of parasocial interaction, recognized from previous literature and ask, which of these ways can be recognized in video blogs. As previous literature strongly guides the analysis, it is described as deductive.\(^\text{13}\)

The results show that a variety of causes for parasocial interaction can be recognized in the analyzed videos. These include informality, openness, bodily and verbal address, interactivity, blurring the line between themselves and the audience and a clever use of technical means. This can be seen as a base for building a more long-term relationship with the audiences and also creating a fruitful ground to commercial co-operation with brands and organizations.


Staying up-to-date vs. digital voyeurism: Understanding the dual nature of obtaining information about other people on Facebook

Matti Mäntymäki, University of Turku, Matti.mantymaki@utu.fi
A.K.M. Najmul Islam, Turku Institute for Advanced Studies (TIAS), University of Turku

Social media, specifically social networking (SNSs) sites are powerful tools in helping to stay informed about other people’s lives. This can be valuable in maintaining interpersonal relationships, particularly in contexts and life situations when opportunities for other, more immediate, forms of communication are limited. At the same time, staying informed about other people’s lives facilitates several psychosocially less desirable phenomena such as social surveillance, cyberstalking, and digital voyeurism.

The dark side of social media draws increasing attention in media as well as in academic literature. However, the dualities of social media, i.e. the co-existence of the bright and the dark side have thus far drawn less attention. Considering the massive-scale adoption and use of platforms such as Facebook and thus the potential psychosocial impact on their users, understanding positive and negative aspects of SNS use is a societally highly relevant issue.

Against this backdrop, we investigate the positive and negative sides of obtaining information about other people’s lives on Facebook. By drawing on media psychology and information systems literature, we focus on two focal constructs, maintaining interpersonal connectivity and voyeurism. We discuss and empirically investigate this similarities and differences between these constructs. We employed a longitudinal survey to collect longitudinal data from 191 Facebook users and partial least squares (PLS) to analyze the data.

We further investigate the dual consequences of maintaining interpersonal connectivity and voyeurism by placing them as predictors of enjoyment users derive from their Facebook use and Facebook addiction.

The results imply that maintaining interpersonal connectivity exerts substantial influence on enjoyment and to a lesser extent Facebook addiction. Voyeurism in turn contributes to Facebook addiction but not to enjoyment. Our findings advance the understanding of dualities related to social media use.
New forms of digital content as tools of customization in real estate marketing process

Jenna-Riia Oldenburg, University of Tampere, Jenna.oldenburg@almamedia.fi

Keywords: digital marketing, digitalization, online marketing, real estate marketing

Abstract

Digitalization is re-shaping the real estate business and this change is also affecting to the business of those media companies closely related to real estate market, such as providers of online market places and real estate information systems. The rise of internet marketplaces first started to shift the Finnish real estate industry almost 20 years ago and as of today, the traditional property listing on newspapers has made way to online listings with rich and constantly evolving new digital media content aimed to capture the eye of the prospective buyers.

One perspective to this change is the rise of more customized brokerage process. In practice this would mean selecting the most effective ways of marketing, documenting and advertising listings per the characteristics of the property and the needs of the both customer selling the property and those of the potential buyers. The new digital media content such as 3D presentations, high quality video presentations and virtual reality presentations could provide real estate agents a range of new possibilities for commercial influencing.

With these media contents and by providing more customized ways of increasing the attention value of the particular property on sale, the real estate agents could offer more customized service. By supporting this change the media companies could develop new digital business models in addition to mass real estate listings. Media companies could of course extend this service to private housing sellers.

Providing the browsing users with such rich content does not, however, come cheap and requires new investments and new skills from real estate agents, marketers and media companies. In little over 10 years, more affordable imaging technologies such as ever improving mobile phone cameras have made high quality photographs a standard in a good real estate listing. Thus, good image content does not necessarily add the same attention value it used to - almost all listings already have the same, relatively high quality image content.

The question is does the new digital media content truly act as an effective way to add attention value and target the right prospective buyers? Are the new digital contents an effective way to customize the
brokerage process and are the technologies worth the investment for both real estate agencies and media companies?

The study aims to form an understanding the usage and perceived usefulness of new digital components on real estate online marketing especially keeping in mind the customization of the real estate marketing process. The study has two sets of research material: the amount of new media used on real estate listings and set of interviews conducted on real estate agents.

Researching the announcements of Finnish online real estate marketplace I will study how the usage of new medias on the real estate listings has developed over the years. The research will compare the usage rates of the new media content in two levels, nationwide and in largest Finnish growth centers. The research aims to find where the rise of the new digital content has happened first and helps to set stage for interview process of the real estate agents on those areas.

An interview of real estate agencies and marketers will provide additional insight on use of the new medias. The professional view gathered from interviews will also deepen the understanding of the current state of digitalization of the real estate brokerage process and gather insights on the future of the industry regarding the customization of the marketing process.
Virtual Reality and Business Reality – Approaches for Content Monetization in the Media Industry

Juhani Linna, University of Tampere, Juhani.Linna@uta.fi

Author Note: More authors will be added later.

Keywords: Virtual Reality, Omnidirectional video, Media company, Monetization, Business models

Abstract

Over the recent years, Virtual Reality (VR) has become a widely recognized phenomenon in many industries, largely due to rapid advances in omnidirectional video (ODV) technology. VR simulates user’s presence in a three-dimensional environment that can replicate a real-world setting or be a fictional one. The environments are often experienced with a head-mounted display to enhance immersiveness, presence and realism, which gives new and promising approaches also to e.g. journalistic storytelling and interactive television formats. While VR in the media industry is still an immature field, several larger companies like the New York Times, Al Jazeera, the Guardian and NBC Universal have already made VR productions even for mass markets. These include both journalistic and entertainment content, the former including e.g. ODV reports on war casualties in Syria, Hajj (religious pilgrimage) in Mecca and solitary confinement in the U.S. prisons, and the latter including e.g. sport and music ODV’s. More VR experiments are expected in the near future, as the technology advances, matures and becomes more affordable. For media industry, the business models are, however, still largely underdeveloped and obscure. The production costs for high-quality content are considerable, and yet the audiences are still scarce and demand free or low-cost media experiences. Current productions are often realized through sponsor alliances and without clear monetization incentives. In order to fully take advantage of the possibilities of VR in the future, the media industry has to overcome the challenge of economic sustainability in content creation and distribution. In this research, we are examining this topical yet under-researched area with media specialists by analyzing conducted research and contemporary business examples both within the industry and across industries. As a result, we introduce a framework of VR monetization approaches for media industries and propose interlinking directions for future research.