Now media: How to value the useful rather than the new

By Professor Tara Brabazon

Asynchronous media. Synchronous media. Broadband. Wireless. Social media. Social networking. Geosocial networking. Disintermediation. Reintermediation.

Such terms collide, duel, overlap, interrogate and erase each other. But ideologies cluster and clump around these words and phrase. The new is better. The new is faster. The new is progress. Yet somewhere on the path between the iPad, iPad 2, the new iPad, the newer iPad, the iPad mini and the iPhone 5 (that mysteriously – or perhaps not – moved from the standard 30 pin to a lightning connector), it became clear that obsolescence and redundancy was increasing in speed. Indeed, media platforms were redundant at the point of their release. The impact of such a realization for teachers and librarians is vast. Not only is there the expense of hardware and software upgrades but also the often invisible cost of professional development and time to understand the new products.

The impact of such changes on the quality of teaching and learning is highly debateable. Yet when change becomes a proxy for progress, teachers and librarians must take a moment and think about the media that enable our learning outcomes, rather than the profits reported to the shareholders of large corporations. The aim of this article is to enact such a project, to offer strategies and mechanisms to select appropriate media to convey relevant information to a targeted and precise audience.

New media is more than a phrase to describe digital innovation. It is a social weapon to decentre, marginalize, agitate, undermine and upset. It is meant to make us feel unsettled, like we have missed something. But all old media were once new. I have little use for phrases such as 'new media' or its more ageist adversary, 'old media.' Instead, I am interested in Now Media. This phrase describes platforms which are useful, which can integrate into daily life and improve our experiences of cities, culture and education. A great example of Now Media is QR Codes. Short for Quick Response codes, they were created in 1994 by Denso, a subsidiary company of Toyota. They are able to hold more data than a conventional barcode and can be read by smartphones, enabling users to scan a QR code and – in a real time and a real place – find online information that resonates with their physical context. They can be used on business cards, public art, magazines, menus, food packaging and wine bottles. At the point of their invention in 1994, there were few uses for them. They were not 'new media,' but invisible media. Yet smart phones widened their potential and uses. As old media, they have extraordinary applicability in our present lives. They are 'Now Media' and provide an example and model to follow.

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Change we need?

One of the best disguised escapes from anxiety is the escape into information (Mackay, p. 226). There are many ways to restrict the availability of information, money, time, movement and forms of self-expression. These limitations can involve legal regulation and barriers, including social censure, credit ratings, surveillance, timetables, fences and the fear of unpopularity. But the myth of abundance – the myth of choice – dominates narratives of both liberal democracy and capitalism. Chris Harman, in Zombie Capitalism: Global Crisis and the Relevance of Marx, (2009), argued that such narratives do not provide the ability to explain radical events such as the credit crunch or credit crash. Shopping becomes a proxy for thinking. Searching substitutes for reading. While 'we' are looking down at our smart phone rather than up at the world, freedom to blog becomes an acceptable substitute for freedom to learn.

Transforming these freedoms is beneficial. Instead of the freedom to access information, there is the right to learn information literacy. There have been some remarkable critiques in the last decade of information excess, user generated content, web 2.0 and the read write web. Many have been staunch, shrill and opinionated. Others have been concerned or worried about the cultural movements for which the read write web is the channel, conduit or platform. One of the earliest and shrillest reviews was from Andrew Keen. His Cult of the Amateur (2007) affirmed the rights of artists, journalists, writers and academics to protect their intellectual property. He was critical of the loss of expertise from a blog-infused culture. He was not 'against' the internet or the web, but desired quality control in digital environments.

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My critique is different from Keen's arguments. It is not the end of civilization if 'the audience' becomes 'the author'. Keen did not like bloggers or people taking pictures with their mobile phones. This proliferation of content is not a concern. But it must be attended by

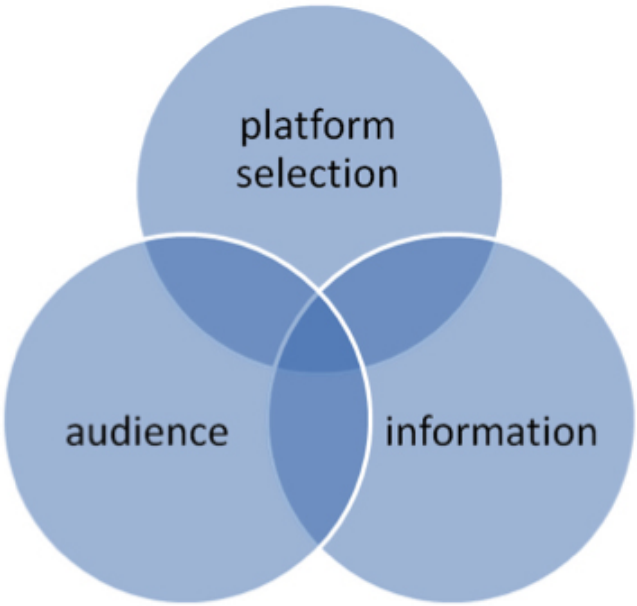
a necessity to improve our information literacy – improve our interpretative capacity – to sort and sift this material. An explosion of blogs, updates, comments, photographs and footage is not a concern. The more serious question is whether – through this explosion of low quality data – the capacity to judge, interpret and evaluate is being worn down by the scale and scope of basic material. Put another way, if students read a large amount of low quality material, is their capacity reduced to read and write at a higher level?

There are many strategies to block the sending or receiving of low quality information. T. Koltay, introduced a range of mechanisms to manage a proliferation of content creators and creation (2011, pp. 2-7). Koltay realised that, 'Despite differences and similarities among information literacy, media literacy and digital literacy, all of them have to differentiate between amateur and professional contents produced in new media' (2011, p. 2). For example, the selection of delivery systems – media platform – is one mode of information management. When a platform is selected, producers are making a series of decisions about who they will not reach and the type of information they will not convey. It is not efficient to choose Twitter to convey complex ideas. However as a pointer to richer information sources, it is excellent. If librarians want to provide information that can be scanned at speed, sonic media is a mistake. Scanning print on paper or screens is a faster way to glean information. For abstract ideas requiring slow and careful engagement, then sound-based platforms are ideal. Marshall McLuhan argued that 'any technology creates a new environment. It creates a total numbness in our senses' (1967, p. 145). However, by withdrawing some sensory experiences – perhaps through reclaiming the use of old media or old technology – then numbness reduces. Consciousness and choice return.

> Platform selection is the key moment in the survival and effectiveness of information. Nicholas Carr stated that 'the medium does matter. It matters greatly.The experience of reading words on a networked computer, whether it's a PC, an iPhone, or a Kindle, is very different from the experience of reading those same words in a book. As a technology, a book focuses our attention, isolates us from the myriad distractions that fill our lives. A networked computer does precisely the opposite. It is designed to scatter our attention. It doesn't shield us from environmental distractions; it adds to them' (Carr in Brockman, 2011, p. 2).

. . . choosing a medium is the first stage in information management.

When a platform is chosen, so is an audience. Configuring a careful relationship between content and context, medium and audience, requires selection and reflection. It is important, particularly now, not to reify McLuhan's brilliant yet flawed maxim that the medium is the message. Instead, a more subtle re-evaluation is required, recognising that choosing a medium is the first stage in information management. In an era of proliferating platforms, which platform is the best carrier for this data and – more importantly – which of our senses are best activated to engage with this information is a key decision in terms of preservation, confidentiality and transparency. The medium is the first step in creating the message. When selecting a platform, decisions are made about who will not receive the data and what type of information will not be conveyed. Jack Koumi stated that 'each medium has its distinctive presentational attributes, its own strengths and its weaknesses. These distinctions must be fully exploited by choosing different treatments of the topic for different media' (Koumi, 2006, p. 1230). Therefore, strategic decisions about information, media and audience must be made.



The difficulty with the read write web is that it is based on fragmentation and individuality. Choices about audience, information and media platform selection are automated and – frequently – auto-filled. We choose to talk with people like

ourselves. They are our 'friends' on Facebook. We 'follow' them on Twitter. Similarly, communities become increasingly specialised in content as they geographically disperse. Nicholas Carr, in *The Big Switch*, (2008) argues that we are all drawn to people like ourselves. Fans of Dr Who talk with other fans of Dr Who (2008, p. 165). Star Trek fans chat to Star Trek fans. Of greater concern, citizens with extreme ideas bond closely with those also holding similar radical views.

In some disciplinary fields, this behaviour is explained through subcultural theory (Hebdige, 1989: 1979). A Goth wears black clothes and whitened makeup, but this appearance is naturalised when communing with other Goths. But beyond this naturalisation of community behaviour, Carr confirms that when extreme views are shared by a community those views become more extreme. Through the deterritorialised connectivity of the Web, an individual who holds highly marginal views in Galway, Ballarat or Dunedin can find a geographically dispersed community sharing their beliefs. Before the internet, there were citizens with extreme views. But they were isolated, managed and controlled by legal and social restrictions. Now deterritorialised communities with extreme views can find each other and create a bond. This normalises behaviour, language and ideologies. When extreme ideas are shared, they become more extreme. Whenever a phrase is used like 'everyone does this,' a technique of neutralisation (Sykes and Matza, 1957, pp. 664-670) has been activated. 'Everyone' does not smoke marihuana, watch pornography or illegally download music. Such a technique of neutralisation is a mode of justification that has been enhanced and extended in the online environment. Further, these views can become more pervasive, persuasive and far more extreme. This tendency can be seen in Pro (anorexia) Ana (http://community.livejournal.com/proanorexia) and cutter ('Self-injury webring', http://t.webring.com/hub?ring=selfinjury) communities. It is also the reason why odd or extreme ideas have become tolerated and often encouraged through the 'comment culture' on blogs. Certain levels of personal abuse and disrespect, often from anonymous writers, are now accepted as part of online life.

Jimmy Wales and Tim O'Reilly proposed guidelines for bloggers in 2007 and confronted a remarkable backlash (Web gurus want blog etiquette despite backlash, 2007; Pilkington, 2007, p. 17). Intriguingly, when the PEW Internet and American Life project conducted a survey, young women aged 12-13 and black teenagers reported a greater experience of 'unkindness' through social media than other groups (Lenhart et. al., 2011).

Students seek out environments in which they are comfortable and are literate: they understand the language, signs and codes. It is difficult to change personal worldviews, to even consider that the ideas offered by our family, friends, teachers, religious leaders and politicians may be wrong and not in our best interests. Google has serviced this desire. On December 4, 2009 the corporation stated on its blog that Google would use 57 signals to offers assumptions about the type of sites that would suit the user. From December 2009 searching was personalised. This post-fordist strategy may seem welcome. However, this personal profile 'targets' information and enables a narrow range of goods and services to be accessed. As Eli Pariser realised:

> The basic code at the heart of the new internet is pretty simple. The new generation of internet filters looks at the things you seem to like – the actual things you've done, or the things people like you like – and tries to extrapolate. They are prediction engines, constantly creating and refining a theory of who you are and what you'll do and want next. Together, these engines create a unique universe of information for each of us – what I've come to call a filter bubble – which fundamentally alters the way we encounter ideas and information (Pariser, 2011, p. 20-21).

This strategy may facilitate powerful and targeted marketing. For librarians and teachers, it is profoundly serious. Students and scholars are continually directed to information that is 'at their level' and unchallenging. It is safe data that cannot lead to threatening knowledge.

In his follow up book to *The Big Switch*, titled *The Shallows: How the Internet is Changing the Way We Think, Read and Remember*, Carr tracked his online behaviour and the consequences of searching, clicking and commenting. He noted a reduction in concentration and time management:

> What the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation . . . The more they use the Web, the more they have to fight to stay focused on long pieces of writing (Carr, 2010, p. 6-7).

My critique of Carr is that he conflated automated decision making about web usage with a transformation in his brain processes. He chose to click and link his way around the online environment. This was not his brain changing. This new environment required making a choice between surfing and reading. He chose surfing.

> Sometime in 2007, a serpent of doubt slithered into my info-paradise. I began to notice that the Net was exerting a much stronger and broader influence over me than my old stand-alone PC ever had. It wasn't just that I was spending so much time staring into a computer screen It wasn't just that so many of my habits and routines were changing as I became more accustomed to and dependent on the sites and services of the Net. The very way my brain worked seemed to be changing (Carr, 2010, p. 16).

He is suggesting that this is natural or inevitable. Carr can make distinct choices, deploy different platforms and activate different literacies. More intricate relationships can be configured between communication systems, information systems and memory systems (White & Evans, 2005, p. 3). Older models of media, literacy and learning are not destroyed. They are

overlaid. Therefore, it is necessary to scratch below the simple and the superficial to reveal more complex ways of learning, reading and writing.

Searching or researching

Searching for information is a quest for meaning and understanding (Markless, 2009). Much of the history of education is based on the selection of ideas, scholarship and media to create a curriculum for students that extends and tests them, rather than leaving them satiated, satisfied and complacent (Mason & Rennie, 2008, p. 43).

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Media platform selection is the crucial moment in learning. A powerful and important consequence of online learning is that many more citizens have a chance to participate in education and yet very few of these scholars could have undertaken classes in a conventional university environment. But there are social and economic costs when physically separating teacher and learner, library and learning. Media proxies can build relationships and manage the loss of face to face teaching and learning (Fresen & Hendrikz, 2009). To ensure that these proxies are successful requires planning, deep understanding of available educational options and opportunities, curricula expertise and a powerful feedback mechanism to ensure the careful alignment between learner, curriculum and community. Media choices and literacies should be determined by the environment of the student, not the staff.

Media transformations have been woven through the history of schools and universities, widening participation in higher education. The paradox with such a media-led model for building social justice in education is that the very groups that were excluded from higher education are often the groups without the disposable income for the hardware and software to overcome this injustice. Therefore, the best teaching and learning strategies are able to carry forward elements of old media into new education. Such a strategy not only ensures that a larger number of potential students holds the literacies to commence study and be welcomed into the online environment, but that the best media are chosen for a learning moment, rather than simply assuming that the newest media will be appropriate.

The great gift of social media like Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter and FourSquare to education is that it is social, forming networks of communication and connection between students and staff. Distance education – in its paper-led mode where collections of readings and study guides were sent to student by conventional mail – was individualised learning, with occasional weekends or summer schools where scholars would travel to a venue for intensive lecture and seminar sessions. Through social media, distance education is enhanced, allowing students to create much more natural relationships throughout the academic year. Students are friends on Facebook and meet in asynchronous and synchronous virtual learning environments. Such platforms and portals may not enhance the attainment of learning outcomes, but they do enable learning to be a part of living.

Digital justice must be a priority. One of the great problems emerging from the phrase the 'digital divide' is that it is a passive description, encouraging complacency. It signifies – unintentionally – an inevitability to inequality, whether discussing the disparity between nations, regions, urban and rural environments, races, classes, genders or age. It encourages descriptions of difference, rather than initiating the actions to listen, understand and intervene. The digital divide was tethered to phrases like the information society and the information revolution. Mobile media and mobile telephony agitate such categories. Emlyn Hagen's study, *The Digital Divide in Africa: Cross-Sectional Time Series Analysis of the African Digital Divide Factors* (2007). In this short book, it is noted that:

> half of the world's population has never made or received a phone call and (perhaps the same) half of the world's population lives on less than $2 a day. If this is not just a statistical coincidence, is there causality between the lack of Telecommunication and poverty? (p. ii).

However this study confirms that there are some statistical coincidences in such a statement with mobile telephony being the agent of change. However the slow transformation in the period from the early 1990s through to the early 2000s, the period of movement between web 1.0 and web 2.0, has had an impact in Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Although forming 11% of the world's population, this group only held 0.9% of the global telephone lines in the early 1990s. By 2002, it had lifted to 1.5%, (p. 5). However the digital divide is based on the assumption that access to technology is a proxy for learning how to use it.

The challenge for policy makers, teachers and librarians during this next moment in internet history is no longer focused on tracking early adopters but universal access intertwined with universal programs for information literacy. Finland has taken the first step. On July 1, 2010, Finland became the first nation in the world to transform broadband access into a right of citizenship. The reason for such a decision is that broadband is no longer only an enabler of entertainment and leisure, but the basis of social justice and equality. The aspiration to provide the entire population with a 100 megabit per second connection by 2015 meant that telecommunications companies had to ensure all residents have access to broadband connections with a legally enforceable minimum speed. Suvi Linden, Finland's responsible communication minister, confirmed to the BBC that, "We consider the role of the internet in Finns' everyday life. Internet services are no longer just for entertainment." (Finland makes Broadband a Legal Right, 2010) It is neither special nor an option extra. It is

a public service (Carr, 2008, pp 2-17). Computers are simply terminals. Their usefulness is determined not only by the network into which it is connected, but the information literacy of the user.

Most significantly, Tlabela, Roodt and Paterson created an integrated modelling for information management, stating that:

> many of the information-management skills that are particularly necessary in a digital environment can be learned using books and other sources of printed matter (Tlabela, Roodt and Paterson, 2008, p. 124).

This is a crucial and far-reaching realisation. Attention to vocabulary, the parameters of disciplinary knowledge, and understanding the impact of refereeing are skills learnt in printed and analogue environments that can be transferred online. This argument is verified by Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis's discussion of the movement through on and offline texts:

> The idea that books are linear and the Internet is multilateral is based on the assumption that readers of books necessarily read in a linear way. In fact, the devices of contents, indexing and referencing were designed precisely for alternative lateral readings – hypertextual readings, if you like. And the idea that the book is a text with a neat beginning and a neat end – unlike the Internet, which is an endless, seamless web of cross-linkages – is to judge the book by its covers. A book does not begin and end at its covers, despite the deceptive appearances of its physical manifestation. It sits in a precise place in the world of other books, literally when shelved in a library, located in multiple ways by sophisticated subject cataloguing systems, and intertextual positioned by the apparatuses of attribution (referencing) and subject definition (contents and indexes) (Cope & Kalantzis in Cole and Pullen, 2010, p. 89).

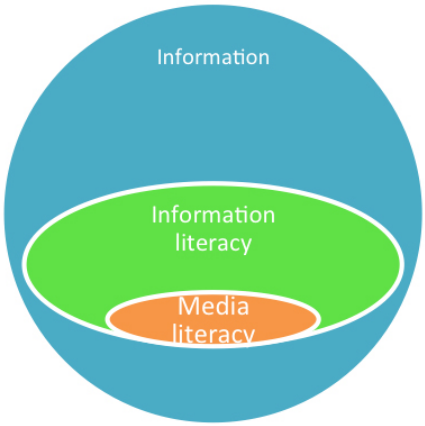
There is money to be made in celebrating and selling new media. However the speed of obsolescence in media platforms has formulated a culture of waste. For example, Apple created an artificial wedge between the smartphone and the laptop, opening a market. The process worked so well that the purchasers of a product like the iPad then create a series of articles, (Brabazon,'iPad and the Academy', 2010) books, (Biersdorfer, 2010) blogs, ('Just another iPad' blog) podcasts ('The iPad possibilities') and vodcasts (Daily App shows) where consumers try to discover retrospective reasons why they bought it.

Old media is not obsolescent, but provides scaffolding into the current media environment. Put another way:

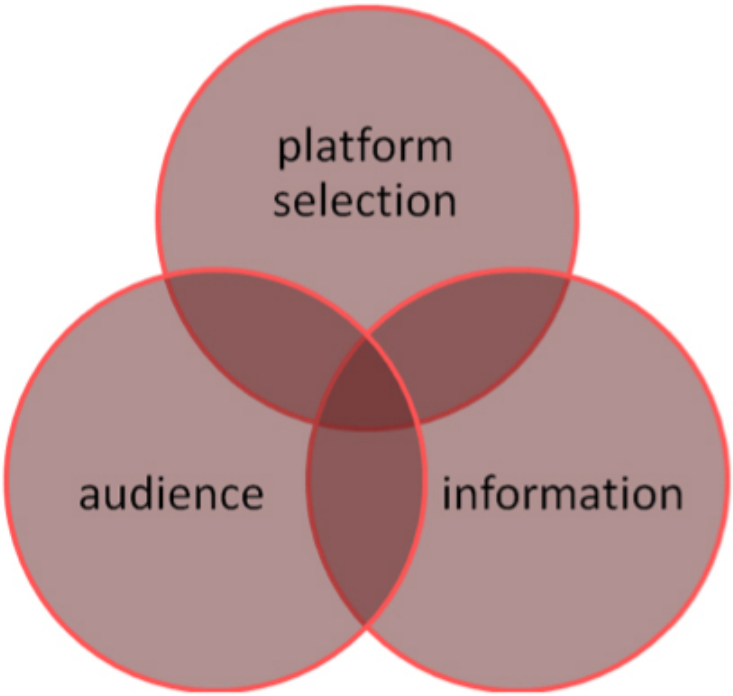
> Old Media + New Media = Now Media.

There are profound benefits involved in spending more time in planning and developing information literacy and less money on software and hardware. This change in thinking and funding will create efficiency, consciousness and a greater chance of addressing inequality.

Digital justice requires reflection, intervention, commitment and respect, asking how already existing media can be used to activate information literacy and media literacy. Overlapping fields and literatures are required for the management of 'new media'. A key distinction between information and media literacy is the emphasis on platform selection, the relationship between form and content, signifier and signified. Information literacy is propelled by not only the search for data, but by ensuring a scaffold is in place for evaluation and assessment.



Digital justice necessitates understanding exactly who is – and could be – using media and information to improve their learning and lives Therefore, a Venn diagram aligns media, audience and information.



To build digital justice necessitates clarity about the type of information to be expressed and how it can be shaped for the targeted audience. Only when specifying the information and audience can the most appropriate platform be selected. Such a process activates the sociology of the web. There is a match between the audience for a particular platform, in terms of age, region and gender, and the target for the information. One study from Pingdom.com aggregated Google Ad Planner data to reveal the mean age of social networking users.

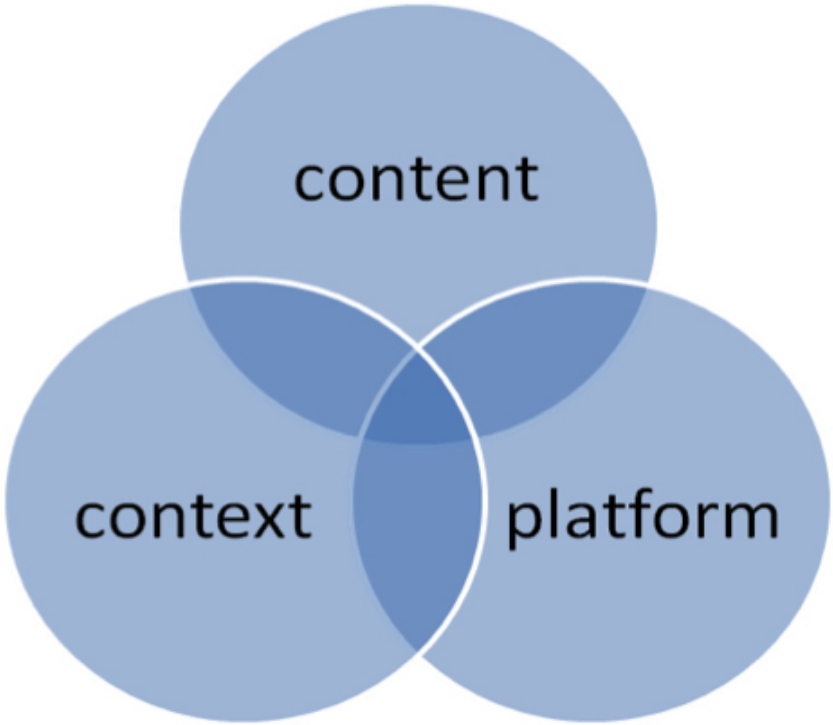
Estimated average age of users on social networking sites

Name of site	Average age of users
Classmates.com	44.9
LinkedIn	44.3
Delicious	41.3
Slashdot	40.4
Twitter	39.1
Digg	38.5
Stumbled Upon	38.5
Facebook	38.4
FriendFeed	38.4
Ning	37.8
Reddit	37.4
LastFM	35.8
LiveJournal	35.2
Tagged	34.4
Hi5	33.5
Friendster	33.4
Xanga	32.3
MySpace	31.8
Bebo	28.4

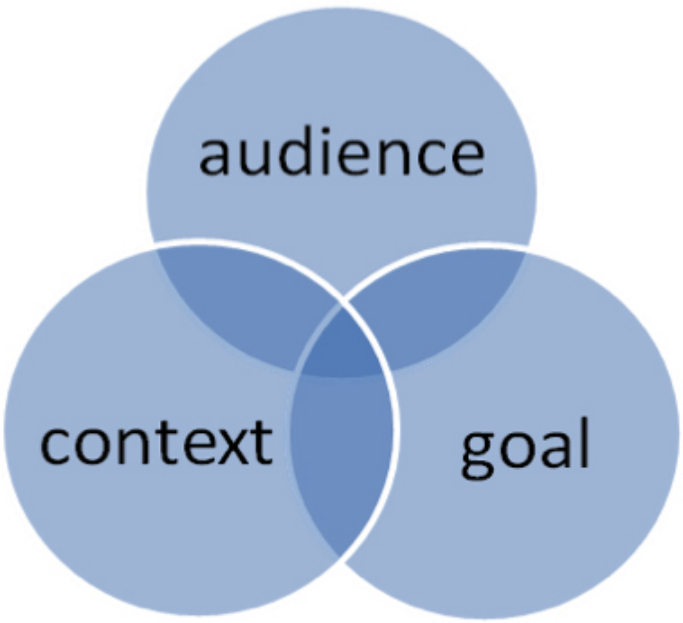
Source: Pingdom.com, http://royal.pingdom.com/2010/02/16/study-ages-of-social-network-users/, February 16, 2010

The average age of Second Life users is 32 (Walsh, 2007). The assumption that 'the young people' are populating social networking sites is incorrect. Therefore the reason for schools and universities buying an island on Second Life for the purposes of teaching and learning must be questioned, ('Second Life Universities and Private Islands') unless attracting older students is the goal.

The imperative is not to celebrate user generated content, but to understand a user's generated context.



Put another way, policy makers, librarians and teachers – at our best – consciously configure a careful relationship between audience, context and goal. This goal can be selling a product or developing a learning outcome. However, the greater the clarity in determining the detailed outcome and goal, audience and context, the more effective the results.



If such relationships become the first step in developing learning, consumption, production and citizenship, then waste is reduced. If public and private investment continues to be in a platform, rather than the literacy required in its use, then

confusion will continue between tools and applications, information and knowledge. All technological decisions are tempered by the issue of relevance. As Nancy MacKay realised, "patiently waiting for a technology to mature does not make you a Luddite. It makes you technologically responsible" (2007). The best focus is on what can be used or produced, rather than the new or 'the next big thing'. Our focus should be now media, not new media. Recognising the difference requires:

(1) acknowledging the costs of expansive user generated content and media obsolescence, and

(2) applying strategies for information literacy. Together, these two moments of consciousness and intervention enable strategies for digital justice.

Pippa Norris noted at the start of the 2000s, before the proliferation of the read write web, that gains in productivity through the leaps in information technology increased the inequality between affluent nations and those still developing infrastructure, skills and literacies (Norris, 2001, p. 5). The most obvious examples of this productivity gap in the last ten years are not only the penetration of internet and broadband, (Internet World Statistics, 2010) but also the plug in and play hardware and Word Press, Drupal and simple content management systems to enable website building for those with little knowledge of html coding (Berger, 2008). But for those excluded from web 1.0, the costs of being marginalised from the read write web are even greater. The reason for this layered injustice is not only that new devices being created, (Jaron Lanier recommended care and caution in the selection of both new platforms and new ideas (Lanier, 2010, p. 3)) but these new devices are accompanied by a program of destruction of analogue books, journals, sounds and visions.

John Berry confirmed that there is never an easy transition between the old to new. There is a necessity to create a continuous learning environment. However, his question remained how to manage such a transition through an environment of budget cuts (2002, p. 40-42). There is a sleight of hand – a social amnesia – that ensures those heavily connected in the online environment simply forget about those without the technology, desire or capacity to venture into this participatory culture. This is not a question of access. This is not a question of broadband black-spots, but literacy black-spots. Clay Shirky's book title is a metonymy of this problem: *Here Comes Every-Body: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. The issue is: who is part of Shirky's 'every-body?' (Shirky, 2008) Starting the book with the 'movement' that emerged to return a stolen mobile phone that had been lost in the back of a New York City cab, (Shirky, 2008, p. 1-10) the argument focuses on the 'sharing' rather than the doing. Absent in his critique of 'traditional managerial oversight' (Shirky, 2008, p. 39) is traditional colonial relationships. While focusing on how information flows through hierarchies, the presence of colonialism as a powerful and present injustice remains invisible in his analysis. New York is not the world. It is not a model for new media adoption.

I remain inspired by librarians, teachers and students who . . . select the difficult, challenging and complex.

I remain inspired by librarians, teachers and students who – on a daily basis – do not choose the easy, automated and default option, but select the difficult, challenging and complex. They select for the now, not the new. In finding research to assist and scaffold the next generation of the academy through their teaching and learning beyond the cheerleading of Clay Shirky, Malcolm Gladwell and Chris Anderson, I returned to one of the most inspirational researchers it has been my privilege to read. His words, views and writing are the foundation for my thoughts on identity, race, nation and the media.

Eric Michaels is known for many research projects, but is best acknowledged for his studies of the Warlpiri community in central Australia (Michaels, 1994). In the 1980s, he investigated the role and function of television in Yuendumu, at the edge of the Tanami Desert. Michaels did not enact a conventional anthropological case study. Bringing forward the Canadian tradition of communications through Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan, he created a fresh and bright strategy for thinking about difference and justice. He attacked readers for lazy and compliant thinking, demanding that they revise assumptions about race, modernity and information. At its most basic, Michaels' scholarship questioned whether 'we' have a right to know. Decades before controversies about Facebook's privacy settings, he warned that there is no right to photograph. There is no right to record. There is no right to broadcast. Instead, the Warlpiri, and the rest of us, have the entitlement to hide our images, voices, views and ideas. He validated information restriction, arguing that profound lessons must be learned not only from first peoples, but also from the first information economy. The point of post colonialism is not to impose modes of information on others, but to listen, learn and create more just ways of thinking about knowledge, information and the economy.

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In the long term, the outstanding analysis from Pippa Norris that digitised infrastructure and architecture increases inequalities between the empowered and the disempowered may be incorrect (Norris, 2001). There is a temporary spurt of productivity that emerges from significant software and hardware innovations. But actually, there is a huge amount of waste and failures in hardware and software development. This is the iPad effect. This pattern repeats the history of the industrial revolution (Sklair, 2002, p. 12). Britain, as the first industrial nation (Mathia, 1969), fuelled an empire, spread a language and became an engine for economic development. But the second industrial revolution in the 1880s and 1890s saw France, Germany and many other nations catch up to Britain's ascendancy

(Henderson, 1961). These nations were able to select the processes that had been tested and proven to be successful. The first industrial nation had conducted research and development that subsequent manufacturers could apply.

Similarly, developing nations can use developed nations as a laboratory, to test the useful and discard disappointing technologies before implementation. The benefits of early adoption are reducing (Gimenez, 2006, pp. 345-350). We are reaching an age, not of new media, but now media. Not of new technology, but useful technology. Not of access but literacy. Eric Michaels realised this pattern. The Walpiri waited until the urban white population tested out television, video and video cameras. They waited until the start-up price for equipment reduced and the quality of domestic hardware improved. Then they commenced their media productions and television station without the burden of waste.

New media become old media (or the compromising and less ageist description, mature media) very quickly. Skills with software and hardware are easy to attain. Understanding how to use these skills in context and evaluate their results is a more complex process. However once more, as if transposing ageism from people and to technology, new is better. Old is a problem. It is important to remember the equation introduced in this article: New Media + Old Media = Now Media. An alternative slogan could be New Media + Old Media = Appropriate Media. After a credit crunch, crash and recession, through surveillance of our teaching standards and student literacy and numeracy, we may finally be entering the moment where content is valued over form, and knowledge is welcomed over information.

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