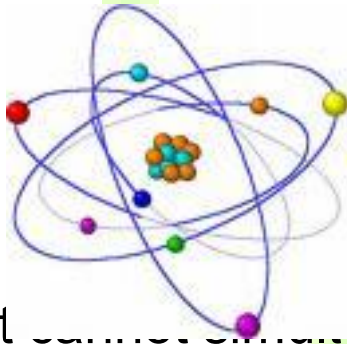


Interaction and Content

29 April 2009

An Analogy...

- Light appears to behave as both a particle and a wave...



- ...yet it ~~cannot~~ exists as both.
- This is a good analogy for behaviour surrounding current communication technologies – often the behaviour appears to be sporadic, detached, and distinct (particle-like), without structure yet it is actually connected, deliberate, and part of a flow (wave-like).

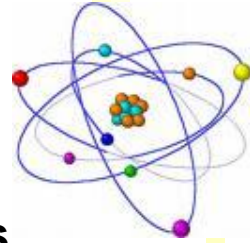
Overview

“This pervasive, real-world Internet does not function on its own, but is embedded in the real-life things that people do.” (Wellman 2001)

- People are assembling distinct packages of content* for themselves which they store on (Fixed and mobile) devices in preparation for use within certain ‘pockets’ of time.
- The convergence of devices and mobility of content is enabling this personalisation of media and consumption.
- Its use depends on the situation, the need, and interaction with others (co-present or not) – usage can therefore appear disjointed.
- However, there is a ‘continuous partial attention’ which binds these ‘content episodes’ together within lives that seek to create structure/meaning.

* Throughout this presentation we refer to ‘content’ as any given content (e.g. video, website, etc) or any application (e.g. location-based services, Facebook, email, etc)

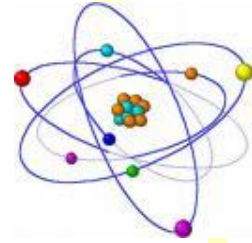
The Particle: Assembled Content



Consumers are increasingly assembling content to suit their needs.

- Personalisation of content usage rises in line with availability of tools for recording/structuring and disseminating. This allows users to create 'packets of content' which can be used within chosen 'pockets of time' – creating the appearance of particle behaviour (distinct, separate, sporadic).
 - Sites such as Twitter are based on 'short-form interaction' which can easily fit into short slots of time. It is currently claimed to be the third most popular social networking site after Facebook and MySpace (Compete.com).
 - The number of people watching TV on demand doubled over the year from 8% to 17% (Ofcom 2008).
 - Nearly a third of internet users watched video clips and webcasts online, compared to 21% in 2006. (Ofcom 2008).
 - In the 12 months to 30 September 2008, the total number of IPTV subscribers grew by 73% to 19.5 million. (Broadband Money Makers 2008)
- Mobile internet is increasingly used to fill pockets of time while on the move – short form content is particularly powerful and the ability to download rich content while on the move will continue to increase the influence of this platform. (CSMTC 2008a)

The Particle: 'Tooling up' / 1



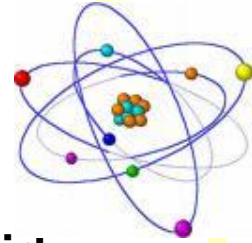
People are ensuring they have a range of content for their journey.

- People 'tool up' with content before embarking on a journey.
- 'Tooling up' has always occurred (taking a newspaper or a book) but mobile devices offer a contingency / range of content which was not previously available.
 - Individuals are downloading and side-loading content onto mobile devices to maintain this contingency. For example (CSMTC 2008b):
 - 78% of individuals have music on their mobile phone
 - 81% have videos on their portable games device

Device	Music	Games	Video	Applications	Photos
Mobile Phone	78%	17%	22%	10%	50%
Mp3 Player	92%	6%	18%	3%	16%
Laptop	60%	26%	60%	36%	60%
Portable Games Device	44%	81%	81%	31%	38%

Source: CSMTC 2008b

The Particle: 'Tooling up' / 2



Content choice depends on a number of factors, but can also be fairly 'automatic'.

- Access to a variety of applications (access is core to personalisation) is important allowing for the unpredictability of what may occur or what may be needed whilst on the move:

"If it's a short trip I'm quite happy just having my phone to play with, go on the internet, maybe listen to some music, listen to the radio, send text messages, call people. But if it's a long journey then I might want to take the DS with me as well so I've got something else to do." (Female, 20s – CSMTTC 2008a)

- Choice of content is influenced by a variety of factors:
 - Fulk et al (1990) argue that the perceived richness of content is heavily influenced by social interaction (for instance, what peers are viewing and discussing).
 - Equally, Sloman (2002) says that content is chosen *'sometimes mindlessly and automatically, sometimes via a reflective and well-planned approach'*.

The Wave: Pockets of Authorship / 1



Identity construction creates the bind between content episodes.

"For Goffman, the construction of our identity evolves through a series of 'performances'." (Satchell & Foth 2008)

"...there are four social uses of personal photographs: creating and maintaining relationships; constructing personal and group memory; self representation; and self expression." (Van House 2006)

- Individuals use events as artefacts of communication.
- Through the storage and sharing of content, individuals communicate their experiences with others.
- This in turn informs the construct of an individual's identity.

"Facebook isn't meant to be a replacement for facetime: it's meant to facilitate interactions when facetime isn't possible or to facilitate the planning of facetime." (Lampe et al 2007)

The Wave: Pockets of Authorship / 2



Self-authoring involves the creation of 'mini-stories' from different content types.

- Mobile users are increasingly creating and sharing distinct packets of information (mini-stories about themselves) while they are on the move:
 - Emerging practices of mo-blogging and geotagging are becoming more prominent allowing individuals to add location information to their micro-stories shared with others.

“Facebook on mobiles is brilliant...I can see where everyone is, whether that’s through an event or their status...like ‘oh so-and-so is getting ready for the party’ or something like that.” (Female, 23 – CSMTTC 2008a)
- It is crucial to remember the importance of ‘broadcast’ content. Other than personal photos and text, most content used for ‘self-authoring’ is not created by the individual themselves but is provided by a third party. This particular content ‘creation’ is actually a reshaping of existing / given (openly available) content.

The Wave: The Power of Image



Users are becoming ever more adept at manipulating image as communication.

- The use of image is becomingly an increasingly powerful way of communicating, sharing messages, and constructing identity:
“Image is (now) replacing the word as the predominant means of mental transport...Evidence has been available in our children’s facility with remote controls and joysticks, and their lack of facility with language” (Stephens 1998).
- It is evident online that users have taken very easily to using and manipulating images to communicate with others - creating manipulated photographs and videos, designing web-pages for themselves, creating ‘mash-ups’ (tools and images layered onto each other).
- ‘Hyperglyphs’ are also increasingly common, combining different kinds of content (informational, entertaining, etc) in one image. This ‘hybridised communication’ is increasingly becoming part of the digital vernacular.

The Wave: Home as Hub / 1



The home acts as the 'hub' for most content behaviour...

- There is an increased ownership of household co-owned laptops which are generally used and kept in public areas of the home e.g. living room and especially the kitchen. They are used for quick internet updates, emails and displaying photos (CSMTC 2008c).

Household and family base

Access point

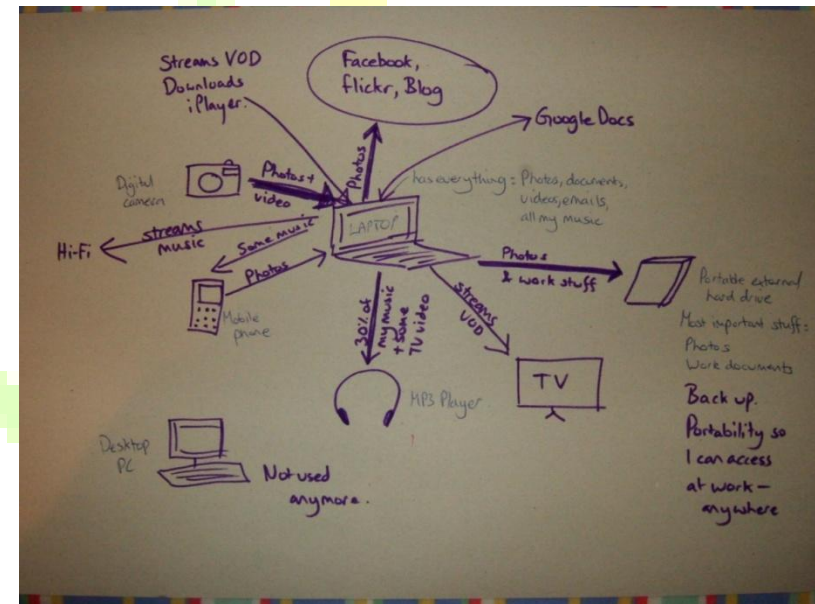
Docking station of the home



Flitting

Status and identity

Preparedness for content



Summary

- The seemingly disjointed use of content within different situations and on different devices may appear to indicate a lack of structure in its use.
- This is not the case, this behaviour is occurring within the structure of maintaining social networks and establishing social identity.
- New (mobile) technology has allowed these processes (which have always existed) to take place anytime, anywhere – whenever there is a spare moment to log in and connect:

"The ability to communicate has been extended further by the use of the mobile phone, which not only enables co-ordination free from the constraints of physical proximity, but also of spatial immobility; that is, the need to stay at specific places."
(Campbell 2005)

- Other new technologies and tools are allowing many new ways of acquiring, reshaping, and sharing content for self-expression.
- As a result, there is a massive increase in the level of choice which people have to find strategies to cope with.

Challenges / 1



Filtering and Navigation

- We face an increasing bombardment of content.
 - *"It's not information overload. It's filter failure."* (Clay Shirky at a 2008 Web 2.0 Expo)
- People are developing their own filtering strategies while using applications which help collect and navigate the content they need and want (RSS feeds, personalised homepages, etc).

User versus Professional

- Many have hailed the rise of the user on the internet. However, there is also a current backlash seeking expert 'filtering' of information and a requirement for the source to be an authority.
- *"People are beginning to recognise that the world is too dangerous a place for faulty information,"* says Charlotte Beal, from research firm Iconoculture. She adds that choice fatigue and fear of bad advice are creating a *"perfect storm of demand for expert information."*

Challenges / 2

The Balance of Assembly and Broadcast

- People value 'stumbling across' content while viewing broadcast content and they also enjoy the 'collective experience' of watching, for instance, a popular programme on Saturday night 'with the rest of the nation'. So, although content assembly is increasingly popular, this does not mean the death of broadcast – the role of broadcast may morph but it will not be outmoded.
- Broadcast content is equally needed to provide material for people to link to and reshape in order to tell their own stories (very little content is genuinely user 'created').

Storage

- Clearly the need for personal (and mobile) storage will increase with the desire to carry around packets of content.

Conclusions

- The future will be typified by pull content, by newly created content, and by being creative with existing content.
- Mass communication (via social networking sites etc) will be closely coupled with individual communication.
- Users will create, repackage, and share 'packets' of content in order to maintain relationships and establish identity.
- Content use appears to be structureless but it actually takes places within a rational framework of behaviour and situation.
- Physically, the home provides a hub for content activity, it could be described as a docking station or a point of update.
- These new technologies and capabilities allow the enhancement / augmentation of the intelligence of the individual.

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