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Mass media plays an extremely important role in connecting the world and people around us. Mass media is an incredible type of communication as it gives us the capability and ability to reach wide audiences, relay influential messages, and disseminate information and news. The way we interact with mass media is ever changing through rapid technological changes and our shifting consumer behavior. Old media has been disrupted and replaced by new media. Old media includes cable, television, radio, newspaper and magazine industries while new media includes Internet and social media. Both forms of media share the same roles: to inform, to educate, to influence opinion and to entertain. However, new media is challenging the way in which audiences are introduced to these features, especially due to the concentration of ownership and conglomeration, globalization, audience fragmentation, and hypercommercialism. Fueling all this change is media convergence- the erosion of traditional distinctions among media. (Baran, 31) Media convergence is even more than that though. Media convergence is also the catalyst that alters the relationship between existing technologies, markets, industries and audiences.

The first major change between traditional media and new media is within the concentration of ownership and conglomeration. Throughout the years due to mergers, acquisitions, and business deals a very small number of media corporations with dominant power in society have prevailed. Today the six companies include Comcast, News Corp., Disney, Viacom, Time Warner and CBS. 90% of the media content consumed by Americans are owned by these companies. (Bart, 2014) With only six companies being the sources for Americans information, education, influence and entertainment it is fair to assume that the media being disseminated to us is not always diverse or independent in the new media age. For example, in

The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence, Henry Jenkins exemplifies the concentration of ownership with the company Viacom. He writes, “Fueling this technological convergence is a shift in patterns of media ownership. Whereas old Hollywood focussed on cinema, the new media conglomerates have controlling interests across the entire entertainment industry. Viacom, for example, produces films, television, popular music, computer games, websites, toys, amusement park rides, books, newspapers, magazines, and comics.” (Jenkins, 34) This is the epitome of media concentration of ownership. All these forms of media, communication, and entertainment all fall under the umbrella of Viacom. Having only a select few companies circulate information, opinion or entertainment threatens new media as it affects the democratic process, silences independents voices, replaces journalism and opinion and limits consumers from making up their own mind.

Conglomeration also has also been a significant factor from changing old media into new media. The problem with conglomeration in new media is that it causes degradation in media content. Media giants such as the six mentioned companies above complain about old media being too cyclical, too mundane, or too cynical. These media giants are pushing for new media content as they race for media consolidation- pushing old media like movies, magazines, books and music in the dirt. An example of this would be when The Project’s 2006 report stated that radio, news magazines, cable and network news experienced cutbacks and the only media sector that experienced growth was the Internet due to companies investing more money “as a platform for original content rather than an extension for their old operations.” (Pew Research Center, State of The News Media) This conglomeration and concentration of ownership in some ways are also quite beneficial and much needed in the media world. Many communications professionals say that companies must maximize their number of outlets in order to reach as many of their fragmented audiences as possible. The reason some professionals argue that there are media conglomerates is because if they do not maximize their outlets, acquisitions or mergers then they could financially unstable and insecure-making it easier for other advertisers and competition to have influence over them. Conglomeration and owner consolidation are the driving forces that have made new media reign supreme.

Next, the disruption of old media by new media continues as we talk about globalization. For America, this means that media companies are expected to tailor content to the widest possible global audience by ignoring storylines and character development. By doing this, media professionals believe they are bonding people globally. The most successful television programs as an example, are no longer made for national consumption but rather international distribution. The general consensus can agree that car chases, explosions, and drama are excitable and get views. “Content is affected by the desire to increase the marketability of international television program distribution. Programs that contain violent material are considered to “travel well” according to Gerbner (Jhally, 1994). In contrast, comedy programs which may be quite successful in the United States do not necessarily do well in other countries. Comedy is culturally defined, and what is deemed funny by one cultural group may, in fact, be offensive to another.” (Kaul V, 2) Defenders of globalization realize it is a necessity in the new media age. This is the way that we can reach fragmented, widespread audiences in emerging democracies. The goal is the more people who tune in, the better. Globalization is necessary for the economic survival of media business and enterprises.

The disruption of old media by new media is apparent when it comes to the increase in audience fragmentation. Segments are becoming more narrowly defined and is no longer considered a mass audience as it was in the past. Before television and Internet took the media world by storm, old media like radio and magazines were national media. These industries brought news and entertainment to a mass audience. These mediums offered text, images, and movement. However, newspapers, radio, and magazines had to begin targeting smaller audiences that focused on specific characteristics or qualities of readers and listeners. By doing so, their content became more attractive to specific consumers and advertisers alike.

Audience fragmentation is coined with terms like target markets and genres. A target market is when there is a specific group or audience a market is advertising their product to and genres were created simply to differentiate between the fragments created by these phenomena.

Audience fragmentation has not only changed the radio and magazine industry. It also changed the television market. Before cable television was created people only had ABC, CBS, and NBC. Now we have countless streaming options, broadcasting networks, internet and satellite to choose from. Even the way we view and consume media has been fragmented. New media has, in turn, developed ways to attract advertisers and specific groups of people to stay financially secure. Examples of this include the creation of specific networks geared towards different interests and lifestyles such as MTV, HGTV or Nickelodeon.

Digital technologies allow us to target specific audiences lastly through geography and demographics. Internet search engines remember our online history and advertise products on our social media based on our recent searches. Cable companies now have the ability to send very specific commercials to specific neighborhoods and individual homes based on viewing preferences or location. Zone casting allows radio stations to deliver different content to specific neighborhoods. Magazines release specialized issues of magazines to different homes and locations. For example, Theory Snowboard and Skate Shop sends particular issues of their magazines that focus primarily on snowboarding to colder climate areas, whereas they send the issues that primarily sell skateboarding products to warmer climates.

The opposition of audience fragmentation stems from the idea that we will just increasingly be separated into different taste publics. Some people believe that there will be a dwindling of our collective cultural experience if we keep putting people into groups with nothing more in common that one interest. The disruption of old media by new media is clear: our storytelling function in society is being drained. Audience fragmentation makes it easier for individuals to preselect stories, news, and entertainment without hearing other opinions from diverse sources. On the other hand, this could also be a benefit in the new media world especially through social networks like Twitter and Facebook. On these particular sites, you can preselect content that is relevant to you while still having the ability to discuss and discover other interests on the globalized web. Twitter utilizes this in their mission statement claiming, "To give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers."

Finally, hypercommercialism has disrupted old media in the new media age. Hypercommercialism is the rise in the number of commercial minutes in a typical broadcast or cable show. Hypercommercialism is the outcome of selling more advertising on new media and combining content and commercials to sell products to an audience. The new media it is most prevalent in the television, movie and internet industries. At this point in time, about 25% of a prime-time network television hour is devoted to commercial announcement breaks. This, among other statistics, proves the United States to be the largest advertising market in the world. In 2016, more than 190 billion U.S. dollars we spent on advertising in the United States. Predictions for the 2017 year for the ad market in the U.S to reach 207 billion dollars. (Statista, 2017)

Television has been the biggest advertising medium in the United States in the last few years while TV advertising revenue was forecast to grow from 73 billion U.S. dollars in 2016 to around 75 billion U.S. dollars in 2017 and 82 billion by 2020. (Statista, 2017)

Americans TV viewing habits have changed over the last years, with the TV ad market and hypercommercialism naturally adapting to the climate. Advertisers continue to invest in television despite a loss in commercial views. They do this because they have begun using different strategies to reach wider audiences with better integration between TV ads and other platforms. Online TV advertising is another strategy implemented into the constantly changing market; the medium accounted for an estimated four percent of TV advertising revenue in the U.S. in 2015 and was forecast to reach 4.9 percent in 2017. (Statista, 2017)

Digital advertising spending has seen an skyrocketing growth in the last few years and is expected to become the biggest ad medium in the U.S. in 2017. Digital advertising spending is forecast to increase from nearly 60 billion U.S. dollars in 2015 to around 83 billion U.S. dollars in 2017.

Hypercommercialism has disrupted old mediums, such as radio, magazine, outdoor and newspaper, as they have seen their market share decrease in the last few years. Advertisers have been turning to other types of new media to enforce product placement, endorsements, and other advertising techniques. The four types of old media only account for 25% of all advertising spending in the U.S. dropping as advertisers turn to other types of media. Together, these four mediums are forecast to account for 25 percent of all advertising spending in the U.S. in 2016, a significant decrease from the 2010 figure of 40%. (Statista, 2017)

Advertising and hypercommercialism have its pros and cons, but one thing cannot be denied: it is the reality of today's media world. You have to have it to survive in the economic state of new media.

There are so many phenomena that affect the disruption of old media. All the theories mentioned before and the idea of media convergence have ultimately created the new media we see today. Convergence of old media into new media is crucial as the entertainment and media industry continues to expand. The erosion of distinctions amongst media convergence is the one thing that media ownership consolidation, conglomeration, globalization, audience fragmentation, and hypercommercialism all have in common.

With that being said the main source of blurred lines in between old media and new media comes from synergy. Synergy is the driving force behind new media, recent mergers and acquisitions in the telecommunications industry. Synergy is the use of media conglomerates creating as many channels of delivery as possible for similar content. This idea ensures that the traditional lines between media disappear. Popular examples of synergy are in our daily use of media such as vlogging, blogging, webisodes, interactive video games, streaming services, and online newspapers and magazines. These examples all take old media services and replaces them with new media services by pairing the content with digitization, easier accessibility, transmission and speedy sharing options. The goal of convergence and synergy overall is to let consumers get the greatest use out of their content- whether that means they are relying on the service to provide information, education, influence their opinion or to entertain them. By having multiple media services within the same company, it creates a diverse business that blends old, existing broadcast, film and print media with new Internet and digitization technologies.

In conclusion, media convergence has had a large impact on the way institutions produce media. Newspapers, television, and radio, all forms of old media, have evolved and changed over the years to better suit their audiences. As new media became popular the old media services were disrupted but not halted. Instead, they kept evolving and changing as new media took the world by storm. Nowadays, the power is in the hands of the six main companies that produce the most of our mainstream media. We live in a market-driven media world owned and controlled by big media corporations, and it is up to us to continue evolving. It is up to us to continue to create new media, to bring back old media and dominate the world through communication.

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