Case Study in Oppositional Reading

Name

Institution

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Content is knowledge and information in communication, art, and publishing which is directed towards an audience or end-users and can be delivered in various media such as thetelevision, live events, books, internet, audio CDs among other media platforms. Content is created through multiple forms like blogging, videography, distribution of digital media, updating websites, online commentary, and social media accounts. Some organizations and people are responsible for producing content, and they include universities, colleges and think tanks, writers, governments, web users and companies.

New media devices and services are coming up year after year. New media devices are gadgets of media native to computers which distribute content. New media services are such as websites, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, mobile apps and computer animations. Production of material by end users of new media devices and services expand the opportunities for readers and audiences to contribute to the social construction of reality and social integration of individuals in various ways.

The social construction of reality is a concept in communication and sociology on the connotation or meaning placed on an event or an object which a particular community can adapt depending on their view of the event or object. (Berger and Luckman, 1966). On the other hand, social integration of individuals is a process in which people are participants of dialogue to accomplish peaceful social relations. New media has contributed to the above through social media platforms such as My Space,Facebook, Twitter, Peer to peer file sharing among others.

My Space is an example of a media product or service that is peer produced by users of new media devices and networks. The headquarters of My Space is in Beverly Hills, California. It is available in 14 worldwide languages. My space is one of the leading social networking sites in the world and was acquired in July 2005 by News Corporation for $580 million. It has approximately one billion registered users both active and inactive. My Space has an influence on music as well as on pop culture. Besides that, it has a gaming platform among others.

Justin Timberlake is an American singer, actor, record producer and a songwriter. He began his career in Europe 1996 as a lead singer in the NSYNC boy band before becoming a solo performer. He is one of the many celebrities worldwide who use My Space website not only to distribute his music and merchandise but also to spread vital information and create awareness not only to the citizens of the United States but individuals in other countries. (Timberlake, 2011).

The active audience theory suggests that media audiences receive information passively but are active when it comes to making sense of the message being passed in their social context. Family background, interests, experiences, values, culture, education, and beliefs can influence the way different individuals decode messages especially those shared in the social media platforms like My Space and the rest. Some people may not have listened maybe to Justin Timberlake's song which he shared in My Space where his fans can download and listen to it. However, while in a social gathering they may start giving views on maybe the quality of the music video while in reality they have not watched it and have no clue of the message he intends to pass across with that particular music.

My Space is an example of new media that has great potential when it comes to expanding the force of audience contributions to the social construction of reality just like any other modern media devices and services does to their end users. This is precisely explained in the previous paragraph. Live events like seminars and conferences which people attend enables them to gain knowledge actively hence when it comes to the social context they will be able to make sense of the information as they were present during the discussion unlike new media where its audience receive information passively but are so quick to make sense of the message in a social gathering. Live events are counterargument of new media when it comes to social construction of reality contributors as clearly illustrated in this same paragraph.

Professor Cass Sunstein who is the current Robert Walmsley University professor gave a lecture on “Internet Echo Chambers and Democracy” on the David Pakman Show on the 4th of April 2017. (Pakman, 2017). Prof Sustein advanced arguments during the show while attempting to demonstrate that even if social media readers and audience attempt to contribute to socialization and the social construction of reality, they do so in a way that radically isolates them from everyone else, except those members of a small community. He gave an example of how the Democrats speak only to the Democrats and the Republicans talk to the republicans and not vice versa in social media platforms despite the fact that the Internet is sophisticated.

This is a counterargument concerning the activities that users of My Space do on that platform. In the case where Justin Timberlake releases a brand new music video and shares it on My Space social media platform. Everyone around the globe who is his fan will download the music video, and he or she within social contexts will have an opinion on the video, and that particular idea may be the same one a person in another continent will have. The fact that they have the same point of view in spite, of variant residency, is a counterargument of Prof Sunstein arguments that social media users radically isolate themselves from everyone else except those members of a small community.

My Justin Timberlake example of a MySpace user who uses the platform to distribute his music among other things is not susceptible to the concerns by Prof Sunstein as his music does not radically isolate people of different values, beliefs and opinions as he suggests instead Justin Timberlake's music unites his fans no matter which part of the continent they are in the universe.

In retrospect, the content produced by end-users of new media such as Facebook, Instagram, My Space, Peer to peer file sharing and Twitter, expand opportunities for their audiences to contribute to the social construction of reality and social integration of individuals and therefore, their use should highly be encouraged when it comes to socializing as no man is an island and we need each human being.

 References

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