

New Worlds for Communication

In the current issue (34th) of *Anagramas Rumbos y Sentidos de la Comunicación*, interaction scenarios in the specific area of communication are envisioned. However, viewing this from another context allows to understand that there are reflections that propose new ways to travel through communication throughout this issue, i.e. old media towards new consumptions. And what better than recreating a few words by McLuhan to start this new issue?

When McLuhan titled the first chapter of his most influential book, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, published for the first time in 1964, with the aphorism “the medium is the message”, he probably never imagined that he would be formulating the bases of one of the most influential communication theories in the current age or, if you like, the most provocative oxymoron that has transcended through time and space.

The technological determinism is embodied as one of McLuhan’s predictive theories, which delineates social, cultural and political life, and in general, human relations in modern societies. According to Galindo Cáceres, “McLuhan proposes that if we only understand the message as content or information, we leave aside the most important quality of the media for dissemination of information —the mass media—: The power to intervene in the development and configuration of relationships and social behaviors”

Marshall McLuhan’s arguments were aimed to visualize communicational realities. A clear example of the above was the correct argumentation of the “global village”: When McLuhan claimed that “the medium is the message”, he could make the media environments explicit in an overwhelming way. Together with his argumentation, he sustained and talked about the theory on the visibility-invisibility-media, and introduced an interesting tetrad, aimed at understanding the cultural changes brought about by media and technologies. Some of its epistemological advocacies were based on the fact that technologies and media allow themselves to be seen as extensions of our body and senses: It is possible

to distinguish between “hot” and “cool” media based on the definition of the medium and the possibilities of audience participation.

It is enough to look at reality to foresee the apocalyptic world: Netflix changed the way of perceiving cinema and television forever; Spotify, the music business; Booking, the field of tourism; WhatsApp, the messaging and landline services; Twitter, the way of doing politics and building public opinion; And along with all of them, Uber, Tesla, Waze, YouTube, Amazon and, in general, the whole phenomenon of social networks that shape our lives in every way.

While we are certain that there are relevant elements in the new communication models on the web, which allow us to point out the existence of a new form of interaction between human beings, it is also true that there are still many uncertainties regarding whether we are witnessing a new way of manipulation or the return to a mass society, rather than a public one, given the proliferation of media on the web¹.

The analysis of what happens in the networks, as well as the relationships that take place between the people who are in them, implies a multidisciplinary study that allows to understand the characteristics of these relationships. That analysis should help to discover new patterns of communication —formal and informal, traditional or future, convergent or emerging—.

In the case of organizations, whether they are public or private, large, medium or small, it is necessary to understand if the patterns of relationships or interactions that take place in the network can help to understand or explain why employees develop certain attitudes toward events held by the organizations, or toward matters related to the world of work, that do not exactly lead to the higher productivity expected by the owners of those organizations.

As our researches on this matter are not conclusive, and given that we identify ourselves with the fact that it is better to have uncertainties than certainties, we see in these new models the launching platform of a field for the consolidation of both social media and a large, collaborative, participatory, and inclusive social fabric.

By increasing their complexity and the possibilities of transmitting information in all senses, networks, and in general, information and communication technologies, force us to propose new scenarios for solving problems and for the relationships between stakeholders who venture into them. This is a new certainty in the midst of the uncertainties that, for both apocalyptic and integrated, are created by the immeasurable world of Web from its version 1.0 (data and information transfer) to 2.0 (interaction and virtual communities), and 3.0 (complete complex solutions for the user).

¹ The difference between this type of society is notorious, and it is evident in the fact that the publics are not passive or manipulable subjects. For more information on this topic, see Botero, L. (2007). *Teoría de públicos: lo público y lo privado en la perspectiva de la comunicación*. Medellín: Sello Editorial Universidad de Medellín.

Undoubtedly, what goes from traditional to web communication is no more than seeing social networks as a center of new possibilities to achieve greater social mobility and, therefore, greater redistributive justice and social equity. At least, for the utopia, it is worth trying a bet for understanding and identifying trends within human and social communicational interactions derived from virtual interaction practices.

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