Beyond TV: A Story of Disruption

CFP Book project update

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• Future of video book project launched in 2010
  • Charlie Fine, Natalie Klym, Dave Clark, Andy Lippman
• Coordinates different branches of MIT/CFP research
  • Value Chain Dynamics WG: video case study driving the book project; WG meetings focus on specific book topics: unified services, QoE, future of content
  • Privacy and Security WG: identity management for social TV
  • Interconnection WG: implications of video on architecture, management, interconnection; new sources and types of video beyond entertainment and interpersonal communications
  • Information Ecology (Media Lab): social TV, future of TV experience
  • Research Lab in Electronics (RLE): QoE
  • Comparative Media Studies: definitions of television
Today’s talk is about our approach to our topic
- “The future of TV” is vast, complex, fast-paced, and popular
- Many scholars are tackling different pieces of the puzzle
- Here’s a small sample from my bookshelf & Kindle homepage
  - *Convergence Culture* by Henry Jenkins: storytelling in the digital age/relationships among new and old media
  - *Remix* by Lawrence Lessig: the changing nature of creativity in the digital age and the copyright implications
  - *Cognitive Surplus* by Clay Shirky: how participatory culture is changing what we do with our leisure time—time that up until the last few years has been primarily filled with passive television watching
  - *The Wealth of Networks* by Yokai Benkler: the economics of peer production
  - *The Master Switch* by Tim Wu: the relationship between industry structure and freedom of speech
  - Social values re TV and new media: *The Shallows, Extra Lives, Everything Bad Is Good for You*…
  - *History of copyright*, books on telecomm policy, technical books, e.g., *OCAP Architecture*, etc.
Our challenge: What can CFP contribute to the discussion?
  - What’s our unique value add?
  - How can we have lasting relevance?

Connect the dots: take a multidisciplinary, holistic approach and provide an understanding of the dynamics of change
  - The premise of the CFP

Create an analytical framework: TV/media as a sociotechnical system
Our approach is rooted in social theories of technology

- Technology operates in a “complex social field”
- How and why do technologies emerge, and why do they take the forms they do? How are they selected and used by society?
- Assumes technology is a product of society
- Raymond Williams (1921-1988): technology as social practice; focus on selection and use vs cause and effect; “we have the power to disturb, disrupt and distract the cold logic of technology”

These tend to react against technological determinism

- Technology acts upon society
- Ignores social and cultural circumstances of technology
- Assumes technology is an independent sphere that drives society
- Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980): the medium is the message; it has intrinsic properties

But maybe the two can be friends…
- We apply this approach to both television and media more broadly
  - Books, magazines, music, etc., all subject to similar dynamics
  - Are increasingly intertwined
- These are the storytelling industries
  - A special category of communications
  - Organize information into ideas and narratives, create meaning
  - Specific and important social implications: cultural expression, democracy
An analytical framework: media as a social system

THE CONTEXT

THE SERVICE

(e.g., YouTube, cable TV, Netflix, Rhapsody, books, e-books, etc.)
An analytical framework: media as a social system

*The Service*

User Experience
Value chain
Technology
Origins of the 3-layer service model: VCDWG’s “control point constellation”
An analytical framework: media as a social system

The Context

- Sociology
  - Cultural values
  - Codes, conventions
  - Etc.
- Economics
  - Impact of recession
  - Gift economy (peer production)
  - Etc.
- Politics
  - Laws
  - Policies
  - Etc.

- Disclaimer: We’re still working on these categories…
An analytical framework: media as a social system

- All elements combined comprise the overall circumstances of production, distribution, and consumption of tv/media
- Disruption implies a change in the system as a whole
We group the major—disruptive—shifts in television history along several lines of development (or trajectories) in the delivery infrastructure.

Each delivery platform is the basis of a particular television system (with variations by region).

- Pre-industrialization (late 1800s – 1920s)*
- Over the air broadcast (1930s – present)
- Cable & satellite (1940s – present)
- Internet (wired/wireless, private/public) (2000s – present)

These systems co-exist and interact with each other, and with other media systems.

They are not static, or stable; incremental innovation occurring within and across systems.

* No services implemented yet, focus on origins of multiple televisual technologies and conceptualizations
The framework serves to

- Identify and simplify a complex set of dynamics
- Chart an evolutionary path of “discontinuous change,” emphasizing the tussles between incumbents and entrants during the transitions between old and new industries
- Encourage a media-specific approach to disruption
- Provide the basis of a research matrix (our research buckets)
“...to all the executives in this industry that are trying to run businesses that are part of this ecosystem, it is exhausting — exhausting — keeping up with everything that is changing rapidly.”  

Melinda Witmer, EVP, Time Warner Cable

We hope to leave you enlightened, and a little less exhausted...