Chapter 71
Understanding the Psychology of New Media Audiences From a Marketing Perspective

Amit Nagpal

New Delhi Institute of Management, India

ABSTRACT

Do new media/online audiences have similar psychology and behavior as offline audiences or is it different? If yes, why is the psychology and behavior of new media audience different from traditional media? Why do marketers need to understand new media user psychology to be effective? Let us look at some of the aspects of psychology of new media users and corresponding actions which marketers need to take. For example, in the case of increased tendency for social comparison, consumer behavior-social media has increased the human tendency for social comparison. It is easier to compare lifestyles on Facebook and Instagram, for example, and the users may also seek reassurance from other users. The impact of such comparison on social networking sites is likely to have primary influence of first degree network and secondary influence of second degree network. Marketing actions-advertisements and content can be created keeping in mind the human tendency for social comparison.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

- To understand glasshouse nature of new media
- To understand psychology and behavior of mew media users.
- To understand why online and offline audiences behave differently
- To understand the implications of the above for marketers

IMPACT AND VALUE

The chapter will be useful for marketers who wish to develop a deeper understanding of new media and online consumer behavior.

It will also be useful for academicians who wish to gain deeper understanding of new media and digital audiences

Honesty and transparency make you vulnerable. Be honest and transparent anyway.- Mother Teresa

WHAT IS NEW MEDIA?

In simple words, New Media includes means of mass communication using digital technologies such as the Internet (Boiarsky, 1997). New media are native to computers, computational and relying on computers for distribution. Some examples of new media are websites, mobile apps, virtual worlds, multimedia, computer games, human-computer interface, computer animation and interactive computer installations.

New Media can be broadly divided into two types:

1. Content marketing new media- e.g. blogs, social media posts/microblogs
2. Advertising new media- e.g. online advertising (banner ads), online streaming (video streaming), and social media advertising

New media has caught the fancy of consumers and increasing number of customers are searching for information and buying online (Dimmick, Chen, & Li, 2009). For the consumer, new media is easily accessible through different forms of digital media and it empowers businesses (including small and medium enterprises) with the capability to reach both B2B and B2C customers with ease.

Characteristics of New Media and User Psychology

Does the new media audience have similar psychology and behavior as traditional media audience or is it different? If yes, what do marketers need to understand about new media user psychology to be effective?

Mark Schaefer of Rutgers University shared in his blog post, "For a marketing message to go viral, it will need to exhibit the following characteristics: 1) be assimilated by a social media user 2) be retained in that user's memory; 3) be replicated by the user in a way that is observable by other users; 4) be transmitted to other users (who, in turn, assimilate, retain and further replicate the message)" (Shaefer, 2012)

These characteristics of new media compel a marketer to take specific actions under different situations. Let us look at some of these areas and analyze the corresponding actions which marketers need to take.

New Media Encourages Sharing Experiences and Altruism

Consumer Behavior

Social media users readily share information with their friends, connections and followers. (Leinonen, 2010)A combination of altruism and empathy can motivate people to share their experiences. Many

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