

Conceptual Tools for the Analysis of Web Culture

Web culture can hardly be reduced to a single definition nor is there typical material which web culture uses or relies upon. Web culture could be understood as a set of practices which rely on forms of online / web communication. A decisive moment for web culture came about with the emergence of what came to be known as Web 2.0, a term that became popular around 2002. It describes the phenomenon that internet platforms encouraged users not simply to consume on the internet but to participate in the production or re-assembly of cultural artifacts.

Convergence

“the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who would go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they wanted.” (Jenkins 2006 2)

Example: A movie is made for the cinema, spawns spin-offs in the form of novels, computer games etc. and is complemented by a website which offers additional information on characters, further information on the story.

Questions for Analysis:

In what medium is the object of analysis reused?

What are each medium’s characteristics, possibilities and restrictions? (Please, also refer to the handout: *Working with Key Concepts in Cultural Studies: Media*)

Transmedia Storytelling

“Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get *dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels* for the purpose of creating *a unified and coordinated entertainment experience*. Ideally, each medium makes its own *unique contribution* to the unfolding of the story.” (Jenkins 2011)

Example: A character of a TV series reappears in a computer game which introduces the player into episodes of the character’s life not addressed in the TV series. Such complementary storylines allowed by transmedia storytelling will alter the viewing experience of the TV series fundamentally.

Questions for Analysis:

What elements of the original cultural artifact (e.g. TV series) are reused in other media?

How are they developed and how do they complement the original product?

What effects do the medium’s characteristics have in this process?

Participatory Culture

The production of content on the Web by non-commercial actors such as fans, independent artists, filmmakers,... . The term is used in opposition to a mere receptive and consumptive use of the internet’s offerings. Participatory web environments range from relatively unguided, free activities relying on non-commercialized platforms such as forums, newsgroups etc. to the commercialization and commodification of participation. We use the term Web 2.0 to describe the tendency of commercial platforms like *youtube.com* to encourage users to produce web culture, within prescribed frameworks.

Questions for Analysis:

Who is producing the content under analysis?

What are the conditions for participating in the production and publication of web culture?

Source

Jenkins, Henry. "Transmedia 202: Further Reflections." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan: The Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins* 1 Aug. 2011. Web. 30 Jun. 2012.

Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York, London: New York UP, 2006. Print.