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Влияние креативной Интернет-среды на творческое развитие молодежи

Лобанова Наталья Валентиновна

Магистрант,

Университет Сиднея,

Австралия, НЮУ, Сидней, Сити-роуд, Вентворс Билдинг, д. 3;

e-mail: natalia.ext@gmail.com

Аннотация

Статья рассматривает влияние интернет-сайтов, контент творческой направленности которых производится самими пользователями, на творческое и социальное развитие молодежи. Статья демонстрирует, как креативные интернет-среды не только создают условия для творческой самореализации индивидуума, но также предоставляют инструменты для художественного образования и распространения творческих работ.

Ключевые слова

Интернет, творческое развитие, генерация контента, самообразование, информационные технологии, молодежь.

Introduction

This article uses the term 'creativity' in the meaning proposed by David Gauntlett:

Everyday creativity refers to a process which brings together at least one active human mind, and the material

or digital world, in the activity of making something which is novel in that context, and is a process which evokes a feeling of joy¹.

1 Gaunett, D., Jenkins, H. (2010), "Studying Creativity in the Age of Web 2.0: An Interview with David Gauntlett", available at: www.henryjenkins.org/2011/08/studying_creativity_in_the_age.html

The word 'art' in the context of the article applies to every act of creative self-expression shared online, as the idea of art itself has been redefined and broadened by participants and audience of the Web 2.0 platforms. Today, the audience 2.0 rejects the notion of art as a sacred practice available only to those few who has dedicated their entire life to it². In the world of virtually infinite creative opportunities, art and media production is not necessarily a career choice. More likely, it has become a form of literacy, not unlike writing.

Modern online audience gladly embraces the amateur culture, and does not discriminate its artistic qualities against the conventional art and media produced by professionals. After having encountered the infinity of expressive forms online, they feel their right and desire to choose art and media beyond the limits dictated by mass media. Besides, they refuse to consume art only in special places (eg. museums or cinemas) or in certain time (eg. being bound to TV schedule)³. The fact that the media shared by enthusiasts is often free to consume

and usually is a labour of passion rather than commercial calculation makes its attraction even higher.

This new look at the vernacular creativity means that the times when the art used to be produced by few to be silently consumed by many are gone. With boundaries between professionals and amateurs blurred, and media production becoming not even a hobby, but a lifestyle, or even a way of 'hanging out' with friends⁴, now many produce the content which is to be consumed by few⁵. The diversity of creative productions is as important for the audience as for the creators. Consumers, free from the reign of mass media, can carefully choose from the millions of possibilities what media to consume next, according to their unique tastes. This highly personalised consumption ensures that all creative content placed online sooner or later will find its appreciators⁶.

Culture: How and Why Young People Create", *Tepper and Ivey*, pp.171–198.

2 Newman, B. (2011), "SpringBoardMedia: Participatory Culture: Trend 4 of 7 for the Future of the Arts", available at: www.springboardmedia.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/participatory-culture-trend-4-of-7-for.html

3 Jenkins, H., Bertozzi, V., (2007), "Artistic Expression in the Age of Participatory

4 Ito, M. et al. (2010). *Hanging Out, Messing Around and Geeking Out: Kids Learning and Living in New Media*, MIT Press, p. 262.

5 Newman, B. (2011), "SpringBoardMedia: Participatory Culture: Trend 4 of 7 for the Future of the Arts", available at: www.springboardmedia.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/participatory-culture-trend-4-of-7-for.html

6 Manovich, L. (2009), "The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life: From

This new form of interaction between creative people and the audience makes web a perfect exhibition place for amateur artists. Publishing opportunities of the Internet overcome old limits to creative self-expression and recognition of a talent, such as lack of supporters in the nearest circle, financial obstacles, being too young or too old for a media career, etc. Sharing an artwork on a carefully chosen site where people with similar interests may discover it guarantees visibility and, often, friendly comments. Thus, majority of authors feel appreciated, because there is always someone who provides a positive feedback. Recognition and validation inspire them and encourage to produce more.

Virtual art school

Tapping into the participatory culture, young artists receive not only encouragement and the conceptual freedom to create, but also a practical help of their peers. Sometimes an envisioned creative project is too big and too complex for one person to implement, or the author may lack a few technical skills or resources required for the task. In this

case a number of people can share the project. They would bring their unique skills and specialties to the table of creative collaboration, contributing towards a greater artwork, while building social ties as they work together. For example, a group of geographically dispersed teenagers can meet online and distribute their roles in a video production: a screenwriter, a director, an actor, an editor. Then they can invite another member of their creative network to write a song for the video, or to share an existing one. Thus, in the participatory communities all the skills are valued and appreciated, and the 'gaps' in the creative education of one are not by any means a flaw, but the opportunity to contribute for another.

In many online creative online communities the door for newcomers is wide open. Old and experienced participants assist the novices in crossing the line between a passive consumer to an active producer of art and media. For example, they help the beginners to overcome their fear of creative self-expression and get started by setting simple, but enjoyable tasks. For example, on YouTube, famous vloggers can ask a question and invite video responses. On DeviantArt, it is a common practice to organise contests on the best creative use of a certain resource. For beginners who

Mass Consumption to Mass Cultural Production?" *Critical Inquiry*, No. 35(2), pp.319-331.

are yet to develop their creative skills, the communities provide powerful learning opportunities and offer informal mentorship. New generation of digital artists learn they craft through entertaining observation and socialising, in recreational settings, with their friends or favourite Internet personas in the role of their teachers. Therefore they engage with a learning component deeper and with more enthusiasm than in formal art institutions. What is even more important for creative development of an individual, there is no strict curriculum in the online 'art school'. Abundance of tools, styles, visions, techniques, mediums and potential mentors allow a creative learner to build their own learning path through the possibilities of digital media, and pick only the practices that reflect their personality. It makes the media they will produce in future 'primarily inspired by private interests'⁷, more experimental, diverse and personalised, and therefore infinite in its creative expressions.

Collaborations

Some forms of online artistic collaboration are stretched in time and can

⁷ Deuze, M. (2006), "Participation, Remediation, Bricolage: Considering Principal Components of a Digital Culture", *The information society*, No. 22(2), pp. 63-75.

exist without initial agreement of the parts. Most of the amateur media authors offer their work under the Creative Commons licence. In some cases they allow and even encourage to modify or creatively reuse their works. This trend is particularly noticeable in the online artist community DeviantArt.com. When the members submit their creations under the 'Resources' section of the website, they offer them as a raw material for future artworks. One person can create a unique Photoshop brush, other will submit a complex vector graphics, third will design a font, and another member will share the picture of the sky. Then someone else will use these resources to create a collage. If he allows modifying this work, collage can serve as a background of a gift card. And then a photo of the gift card can be taken and shared as a creative resource again. The work is never finished. As most media in the participatory culture, the 'deviations', or creative sharings on the DeviantArt, are built on pre-existing cultural expressions and designed to be remixed and retold⁸.

⁸ Jenkins, H., Bertozzi, V., (2007), "Artistic Expression in the Age of Participatory Culture: How and Why Young People Create", *Tepper and Ivey*, pp.171-198; Manovich, L. (2009), "The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life: From Mass Consumption to Mass Cultural

In creative participatory culture any piece of media can be revised, modified and given a new meaning to. Even the items of commercial popular culture, such as TV shows or fictional characters, are treated as a resource and raw material. Traditional audience is supposed to consume the product of mass media as a finalised, complete object. A TV show or a book, like a picture in a museum, should be seen and admired, but cannot ever be touched or modified. The audience of participatory culture, however, wants to interact with art and influence it instead of being locked in the 'one-way street of art consumption'⁹, for why would they 'sit and watch when they can roll up their sleeves and do something?'¹⁰

New folk culture

Modern fans of mass media reject both 'the idea of a definitive version'

Production?', *Critical Inquiry*, No. 35(2), pp.319-331.

9 Newman, B. (2011), "SpringBoardMedia: Participatory Culture: Trend 4 of 7 for the Future of the Arts", available at: www.springboardmedia.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/participatory-culture-trend-4-of-7-for.html

10 Jenkins, H., Bertozzi, V., (2007), "Artistic Expression in the Age of Participatory Culture: How and Why Young People Create", *Tepper and Ivey*, pp.171-198.

and the role of a passive consumer who has no say¹¹. They want to reconstruct the media in the original way in order to get new insights and reveal new meanings¹². They leave themselves the right to actively interact with the media, creatively rework it and 'make their own'¹³. Using a number of creative techniques, from video montage to collaging to fan fiction writing, they recreate and modify the original stories and pass them further, for others to evaluate, get inspired and 'reflexively assemble [their] own particular versions or [...] reality'¹⁴. For creative fans, an object of mass media is only a fragment ready to be manipulated, not the entire picture. Self-made

11 Jenkins, H. (2003), "Quentin Tarantino's Star Wars: Digital cinema, media convergence, and participatory culture", *Rethinking media change: The aesthetics of transition*, pp.281-312.

12 Deuze, M. (2006), "Participation, Remediation, Bricolage: Considering Principal Components of a Digital Culture", *The information society*, No. 22(2), pp.63-75.

13 Manovich, L. (2009), "The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life: From Mass Consumption to Mass Cultural Production?", *Critical Inquiry*, No. 35(2), pp.319-331.

14 Deuze, M. (2006), "Participation, Remediation, Bricolage: Considering Principal Components of a Digital Culture", *The information society*, No. 22(2), pp.63-75.

photo and a screen capture of a favourite movie are equal in their role of a resource for a digital amateur artist. Harry Potter, Sherlock Holmes and self-imagined characters sometimes peacefully coexist in the universe imagined by a fiction writer.

Jenkins sees this practice of freely reusing and redefining commercial media as a trend towards returning from mass media production (i.e. one-side consumption) to the folk art. In the folk culture, which was participatory and collaborative by its nature, the 'media' (such as ornaments, songs, myths, stories) was owned by people in general, or by everyone and no-one. Since there was no concept of the 'original' content and no 'keepers' of its originality (such as copyright owners today), nothing could restrict the free interpretation of existing cultural expressions. After a century of the privatized popular culture, new storytellers of today try to recreate that old atmosphere of co-constructing culture and owning it, instead of just passively consuming the cultural forms forced from above by transmedia corporations¹⁵.

15 Jenkins, H. (2003), "Quentin Tarantino's Star Wars: Digital cinema, media convergence, and participatory culture", *Rethinking media change: The aesthetics of transition*, pp.281–312.

Creativity as social currency

Co-creation of new 'folk art' around popular culture, subcultures and creative forms online, together with the practices of content creation, sharing and appreciation, bind people emotionally¹⁶. Therefore, content-sharing platforms often serve not only as virtual spaces for public self-expression, but also as social networks, where people connect and build relationships. Participants often see their preferred creative collaborative site as 'their' place and express the sense of ownership. Together with involvement of members, which is key to participatory culture, this feeling of belonging cultivates a practice of cultural citizenship¹⁷. Membership in such communities expands beyond national boundaries and connects people globally¹⁸.

16 Jenkins, H., Bertozzi, V., (2007), "Artistic Expression in the Age of Participatory Culture: How and Why Young People Create", *Tepper and Ivey*, pp.171–198; Larabie, C. (2011), "Participatory Culture and the Hidden Costs of Sharing", *The McMaster Journal of Communication*, No. 7(1), p. 4.

17 Uricchio, W. (2004), "Cultural citizenship in the age of P2P networks", *European culture and the media*, pp.139-163.

18 Jenkins, H., Bertozzi, V., (2007), "Artistic Expression in the Age of Participatory Culture: How and Why Young People Create", *Tepper and Ivey*, pp.171–198.

Considering that the content serves as social glue, cultural citizens of creative collaborative communities are expected and encouraged to contribute creatively. Passive participation (such as just watching or commenting) may be not enough to gain high 'social status' within those networks. To enact the cultural citizenship within the creative online culture, it is crucial to actively participate in the life of community and share the 'digital goods' with peers¹⁹. Those who dedicates enough time and recourses to develop an artwork valued by others, invents new style or creates works of outstanding quality, are in the centre of attention in their creative network. They gain respect and influence the tastes of others. Ability to generate content, therefore, becomes a social capital on collaborative platforms. By creating and sharing new expressive works, participants increase their engagement and connection with their networks²⁰. This view of creativity as a new currency provides additional motivation for new media consumers to start producing their own content and actively interact with the works of other. If the traditional media required only passive participation, here the

19 Uricchio, W. (2004), "Cultural citizenship in the age of P2P networks", *European culture and the media*, pp.139-163.

20 Gauntlett, D. (2011), *Making is connecting*, Polity Press, United Kingdom, p. 2.

trend is reversed: a consumer is only valued when he acts as a co-creator. Either in a form of a long and productive feedback or in a form of a creative response, he is expected to engage with an artwork.

Conclusion

To sum up, an average computer user now has access to more means of cultural production than established art masters in pre-digital age. In addition to it, Web 2.0 provides a perfect outlet for art distribution, which guarantees that the individual creative talent will be recognised and appreciated by similar-minded media consumers. Alternative, experimental, non-conventional and thematic art will most likely find its niche, because online audience prefers highly personalised media consumption to 'one-size-fits-all' mass media. These developments, together with the opportunities of informal learning online, overcome most of the previously known limits to a creative expression of an individual. There is no reason not to be creative anymore. This explosion of creativity changes the way how the 'people formerly known as the audience'²¹

21 Rosen, J., (2006), "The People Formerly Known as the Audience", available at: www.huffingtonpost.com/jay-rosen/the-people-formerly-known_1_b_24113.html

interact with media artefacts on a daily basis: they creatively rethink and rebuild what they consume and produce media

to document their experiences, helping to write the 'folktales' of the 21 century.

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Online creative culture and its impact on creative development of young people

Lobanova Natalya Valentinovna

Postgraduate student,
The University of Sydney,
Level 3, Wentworth Building, City Rd, NSW, Sydney, Australia;
e-mail: natalia.ext@gmail.com

Abstract

With proliferation of digital technology, the means of art and media production, previously affordable only to professionals or corporations, became accessible to amateurs. Cheap cameras, multimedia devices like an iPhone, powerful open-source multimedia software, online art lessons and shared creative resources gave everyone a chance to be an artist, moviemaker, photographer, director, actor, and so on. The web allows the new creatives to publish their works on content-sharing platforms and gain visibility and recognition. This shift in technology and art circulation practices creates the atmosphere of the participatory culture, which not only enables, but also strongly encourages every participant to be creative on daily basis and produce their own media rather than just consume media of others. Teenagers and young adults are the most active creators of online content. Their presence on the creative web sites is very beneficial: not only they build meaningful social connections as they create and share media, but also they develop their artistic taste and mastery by being a part of collaborative participatory culture.

Keywords

Youth, vernacular creativity, creative development, Internet, participatory cultures, new folk culture, informal mentorship.