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SOCIAL MEDIA TRANSFORMS MASS MEDIA

TAMPA— In recent years, society has taken the mediums of mass media and revolutionized them into a cultural movement known as social media.

Consumers of all ages who have made it a national pastime to text, Tweet and share their lives on Facebook have become the most powerful force in digital media today. Collectively, they are the new mass media, one interactive consumer at a time.

Social networks function as a one-to-many communications channel conventional for mass media. Reason enough for many organizations, firms and products to take interest and now are marketed using social networks.

In that sense, what is truly new about social networks is both that they allow friends to stay in contact and also be a mass medium.

With the overwhelming increase in numbers, active members of social media have really amplified brand awareness.

When interviewing a current private business owner, Steve Cronen had nothing but positive things to say about the new revolution.

“ I know there is a lot of controversy over the social media topic, but for business owners, especially private owners, it has been an unbelievable improvement in the world of business,” Explained Cronen.

It seems a lot of business owners are able to reach out and network a lot easier now than ever before.

“Every site a person joins is one more way to network and get their names out there,” Said Cronen.

“People are really working these sites to their advantage whether it’s making a brand for themselves or what they do,” Stated Cronen.

Cronen revealed in the interview that he has become a huge fan of the new Facebook fad. The reason he finds this website to be so beneficial is because if he is looking for new employees or wants to get news out about his business, all he has to do is make a status about it.

Econsultancy’s social media statistics stated that there are almost a million local businesses with active pages on Facebook.

It seems the simplicity of these social media sites is extremely attractive to the business world. Easy to use, with just a click of the button, information can be sent out to millions of people.

As if having access to the Internet through a computer is not enough, in the past few years mobile Internet has become the new “must have” with consumers.

Noah Elkin, Analyst for eMarketer, stated that, “The combination of mobile and social and the craving for apps (among both consumers and brands) will continue unabated”

Within three years, Econsultancy’s social media statistics estimated that 43 percent of global mobile Internet users (about 608 million people) and 45 percent in the U.S. (56 million people) would be accessing their social networks from their mobile devices.

Businesses and retailers have recognized the opportunity this gives them. They are taking full advantage of being able to be constantly connected to the consumers by mobile Internet. This new medium of mass communications has and will continue to impact the increase of sales. Interactive users of these websites deem social networks as ways to access the information, products and services they want.

In a recent interview with college student, Laura Jenkas, she was quick to admit that she has fallen victim to the addiction of social networking sites. “They are just so easy to access. I can find out and effortlessly receive information on topics or products I am interested in,” confessed Jenkas.

She went on to explain, “ I am a journalism student. So I find the whole topic fascinating. I am a member to numerous websites because it gets my own writing out there.”

One of the easiest sites out there to get a quick message out to the masses is the popular SNS called “Twitter”.

In 2009, the Global Language Monitor, A Texas-based group that tracks and analyzes linguistics, counted that “Twitter” was the most-used word of the year. This by itself goes to show the impact microblogging and social networking has had on society.

Twitter enables its users to send and read messages known as “tweets”. These messages can be up to 140 characters long, displayed on the authors profile page and delivered to followers of that author.

Econsultancy estimated that at the end of 2009, 27.3 million tweets were sent per day.

Since the website started in 2006, Twitter has been a free of charge site, thus allowing little revenue to the designers of the website. The New York Times recently said that this past month Twitter has created a plan for making money from advertising. Add this to the list of how mass media is reaching out to millions of people. The program is going to be called “Promoted Tweets” and will show up when Twitter users search for keywords that the advertisers have bought to link to their ads.

This website has become a valuable marketing tool for businesses, celebrities and politicians. Notably recent, Barack Obama’s presidential campaign used Twitter, YouTube and Facebook.

With so much talk about all of the companies falling hard for these websites, one might wonder which business has the most social media-savvy employees. NetProspex ranked the top 50 companies, and Microsoft was listed as the number one company with the most social media use. Technology and software companies dominated the list. Google and Apple also held a place in the top 10 companies.

With the use of these websites becoming progressively more prevalent amongst companies and professionals, one must take caution when leaving the social media marketing up to an amateur.

A great error advertisers make on these websites is when companies come off overenthusiastic, resulting in spam-like promotional messages. Companies need to be very selective when choosing the person to fill this position. The candidate should have an understanding of the technology and the community that is using it.

Within the past decade mass communication professionals have recognized the importance of the ever-evolving and innovative industry.

With the fast-paced trend of SNS, new experience and skills are important. Being able to tweet, post a video on YouTube and keep up with all of the other website applications are important. The hardest part is being able to master these concepts and market effectively.

Social media is a marketing technique that is here to stay. It is constantly evolving and increasing its numbers. Social media has helped mass media in numerous ways such as being able to reach a global audience without costing the audience a dime.

These websites are also extremely easy to use and unlike industrial media, social media allows the ability to alter material even after it has been published.

From people like Kim Kardashian, to organizations like the American Red Cross, social media is a technique that is valuable to every person, company and product.

Choosing to be proactive about managing and archiving social media communications could really help out companies in the long run. Social media has proven to be a successful tool for streamlining communications and marketing.

“Social media is here to stay. Even the Pope is blogging,” honestly admitted Cronen.

Social media has not slowed down, but it has continued moving forward in full force. A lot of companies are evolving with it and keeping a positive outlook on the future for this new practice of mass communication.

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