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How Modern Technology Changed Mass Media

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The internet has been commercially available for two decades but the speed with which it has superseded old media is astonishing. Ever since its arrival, the internet has grown exponentially, becoming a platform for music, film and television industries to market, promote and share their productions.

The pace of modern life has quickened with time. As a society we spend less time sitting down and more time moving from place to place. When we do get a chance to relax, it's most likely in front of a computer. This is true especially for students and the younger generation. Thanks to the popularity of websites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, the internet has surpassed television as the place where young people spend most of their time. So where does the television fit in [1]?

The trend of online viewing is growing with new technologies making it more convenient. With an ever increasing ability to stay connected anywhere, the internet can reach people where television cannot, and with the steady increase in web speeds, the video quality of online content is also quickly eclipsing that of cable TV. Unlike television, with the internet you have the advantage of watching what you want and when you want it.

The most fascinating insight about the comparison between television and the internet comes from John Naughton, a writer for the British newspaper 'The Observer',

and his 'push-and-pull' theory. He states that broadcast television is a 'push' medium, where a select band of producers decide what content is to be created, following which they produce it and then push it down analogue or digital channels at audiences which are assumed to consist of essentially passive recipients. The Web is the opposite of this; it is a 'pull' medium. Nothing comes to you unless you choose it and click on it to pull down to your computer, putting you in charge. In a shrewd sum up, Naughton writes, "Unlike TV, on the internet if you feel you have to settle for something, you're using it wrong."

In developed countries many people that have been hooked to cable TV their whole lives, are now saying they don't need cable for television as much as they need a high-speed broadband connection. According to reports, one million cable and satellite consumers in North America cancelled their subscription last year. A recent online survey by IBM shows a fall in the use of TV as a primary media provider. Other studies carried out in the US, UK, Germany and Australia suggest that personal internet time is rivalling TV time.

The reach and influence of mass free-to-air television broadcasting has been slowly declining for years. It used to be a fact that everybody watched the same TV shows at the same time. Since then the audience has become much more fragmented due to narrow-casting via cable and satellite services; specialized content is aimed at subscription-based audiences and distributed via digital channels. But the real blow for traditional television came with the arrival of Internet Protocol Television (IPTV), which is television on demand delivered via the internet. Online video services such as Hulu, YouTube, Netflix, Amazon Video and iTunes are increasing in popularity in many countries. On Netflix, American consumers can get anything they may want to watch in a streaming fashion for less than ten dollars a month, which is one-tenth the

price of a monthly digital cable TV subscription. In the USA, one of the fastest growing services is Hulu, which is a joint venture by NBC and Fox. Hulu offers nearly every show on NBC and Fox, along with some other channels. Episodes are released a day after they air on TV, but unlike TV there is no strict schedule to follow, no set time to block off for a specific show, and shorter commercial breaks. Current trends show an increasing number of people, especially those in their twenties and thirties, not owning television sets at all, opting instead for laptops and computer screens for online TV viewing.

One of the traditional strongholds of television over the years has been its news coverage and services. Even here the internet is making strides and catching up at a fast rate. According to a US survey conducted last year, the internet is gaining on television as Americans' main source of national and international news. Although television is still the number one source for news with a 65 per cent cut, the percentage has reduced significantly from 80 per cent in 2002. The use of the internet for news is growing among all age groups, not just in the West but in all parts of the world. The internet is proving to be a far better source of news than major news networks on television. Online, users can access websites of their local news networks, as well as view news of countries overseas and see things from their perspective, allowing a much broader view of events [2].

In conclusion we may summarize that the internet is quickly becoming the centre of our lives, and it is safe to predict it will replace television's key role in our homes.

References:

1. Mode of access: <http://dawn.com/>. – Date of access: 23.02.2017.
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