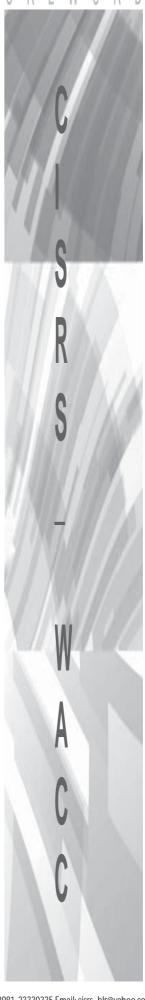# New Media Literacy Trainer's Manual

Prepared by

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Dear Friends

CISRS is an ecumenical organization deeply committed to the social witness of the Church in India. Through research and publication on contemporary issues and concerns, the CISRS has succeeded in providing new visions and perspectives to the Church in its search to make a meaningful presence in India.

As part of our quest to facilitate studies on the contemporary society and its ethical imperatives we have initiated the project titled 'Ethics of New Communication Technologies from People's Perspectives' with support of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) .

The Project envisages three workshops, two on Ethical issues, one on New Media Literacy, and a year long Action Research intended to study the role of new technologies in the empowerment of the marginalized people.

We are very happy to bring out a Trainer's Manual on New Media Literacy on the occasion of the forthcoming New Media Literacy Trainer's Workshop in association with the Church of North India during 5,6,7 December 2007 at the Centre for Human Potential Development (CHPD),Church of North India, Nagpur. I appreciate Mr. Santhosh George, our CISRS Research Associate for bringing out this manual on New Media Literacy.

I express my gratitude to Sri. Sudipta Singh, Director, Programmes, Church of North India for joining hands with us for the project and the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) for extending valuable support to our activities.

I hope that that this Manual will enable Church youth to critically understand the New Information and Communication Technologies and to use it for the empowerment of people and betterment of society.

Closing with warm regards

Rev. Dr. Godwin Shiri

Director, CISRS

15 November,2007

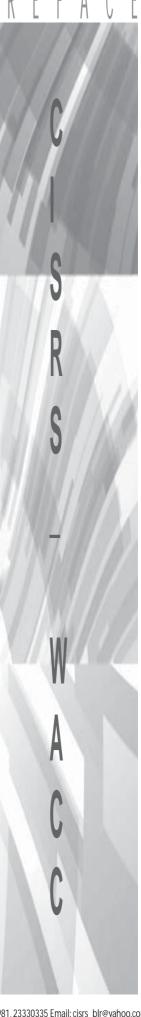Bangalore

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Media has great influence in human's life. It has the power to make or break any person in the world. The youth who constitute most of our world population are the ones who are immediately get glued to New Media for fun, frolic and at times absolutely for nothing. They are the ones who are easily impacted by New Media and its dominating culture. But if wisely used New Media can usher in a new era of transformation, authentic peace and justice.

So, the church should consider it as a timely challenge to educate her youth in the right direction so that they have control over the New Media instead of being controlled by it. Therefore, a systematic training of trainers is essential. Training, as a process, has been very useful in brining about desired transformation since time immemorial. Besides, it also serves as an instrument to sharpen the inner potential of the trainees. As often said, all through our lives, we learn, relearn, unlearn and thereby keep on learning unceasingly because every learning has a slant value of insinuation in itself.

Therefore, the Church of North India and the Christian Institute for Study of Religion and Society have taken this initiative of training the trainers on New Media from 5th to 7th December 2007 at the CNI Centre for Human Potential Development, Nagpur where for the first time this Manual will be used. So, I cannot but appreciate the contributions Mr. Santhosh George, Research Associate, CISRS, Bangalore in shaping the Manual as it is.

I sincerely hope that this resourceful Manual will be a means of building awareness on New Media wherever and whenever it is used.

Sudipta Singh

Director, Programmes

Church of North India

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Dear friends

We are living in an information society and the advent of the New Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have evolved a trans-border inter-connectedness in all spheres of life.

According to National Readership Survey 2006, Internet usage in India grew from a low base of 7.2 million to 9.4 million, with the number of users who logged in every week growing by 30.5 per cent over the year. The number of individuals who accessed the Internet over the last three months was 12.6 million, a 16.7 per cent increase over last year. (The Hindu, August 30, 2006)

ICTs have produced a knowledge space that is disconnected from the local situated knowledge and experience and it provided the users the means to generate, seek and share information selectively and to interact with individuals and groups on a scale that was impractical with traditional media. It has unleashed immense potential to network together and to build new communities of resistance and hope.

Adolescents and youth constitute the largest single constituency of New Media. Whether we agree it or not, the New Media has a great influence on their values and worldview. But most often, parents and teachers miserably fail to gauge or interpret the nature and extent of the youth's media experience. It is in this context that we are bringing out a Trainer's Manual on New Media Literacy to facilitate the process of demythologizing the ICTs and to equip youth to become its critical and creative readers and users. We believe that these resources can create a large impact since such contextually relevant resources are scarcely available in India

This Trainer's Manual will be first introduced in the upcoming New Media Literacy Trainer's Training Workshop at the Centre for Human Potential Development (CHPD), Church of North India, Nagpur during 5,6,7 December 2007.

This Manual comprises of 10 sessions focusing on the following aspects of the New Media. They are Technology (1), Characteristics (2), Formats (3), Language (4), Agencies (5), Audience(6), Representation(7,8) and Making of our own website (9). Each session contains objectives, class procedures, questions, inputs as well as conclusions.

We would like to thank the Mr. Sudipta Singh, Director, Programmes, Church for North India for the collaboration in the workshop and Mr. Philip Lee, Programme Manager, World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) for extending financial support to the project. I also extend my thanks to Sri. Suresh KS and Saju K of Mediact (Media Education for the Awareness and Cultural Transformation, Kerala) for their support in developing the manual. We would also in-

debted to Rev. Dr. JH Anand, Chairperson, Asia Region WACC and Rev. Dr. Sham P Thomas, Chairperson, Department of Communication, United Theological College, Bangalore for their constant encouragement.

We hope that the Trainer's Manual will facilitate a process towards discernment of the New Media; its nature, role, function and potential in order to critically and creatively approach them as users, creators as well as communicators.

Awaiting your feedback and suggestions

Yours sincerely

Santhosh George,

Research Associate, CISRS

20th November 2007, Kerala

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New Media:
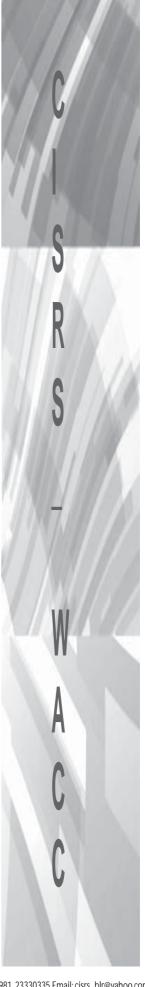# Potentials and Challenges

Santhosh George

New Media refers to a group of relatively recent media based on the New Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Most frequently the label would be understood to include the Internet and World Wide Web and other forms of multimedia popular from the 1990s onwards. As the name denotes, these forms differ drastically from the old forms of media.

▸ New Media combine Print media, Audio Media as well as Visual Media converging all formats to the Digital one.

▸ It transcends the passivity of the old media by becoming interactive, enabling the sender and receiver to have dynamic and instantaneous interaction.

▸ It enables us to exchange vast quantity of information in any form across the globe in a very short time and at a very low cost.

Computer Technology coupled with Telecommunications Technology gives rise to the Information and Communication Technologies. According to National Readership Survey 2006, Internet usage in India grew from a low base of 7.2 million to 9.4 million, with the number of users who logged in every week growing by 30.5 per cent over the year. The number of individuals who accessed the Internet over the last three months was 12.6 million, a 16.7 per cent increase over last year. (The Hindu, August 30, 2006)

New Media as the newly emerging Public Sphere

The concept of public sphere as expressed by Habermas (1989) implies to a spatial concept, the social sites or arenas where meanings are articulated, distributed, and negotiated by the public. With the emergence of media in the modern world, the nature of public sphere has widened its scope to such an extent that events and acts are made public even to those who are far away from the places of their occurrence. The new media has tremendously widened and intensified the range of the public sphere. It has the potential to network people at various levels, interact, and exchange diverse information and thereby enabling them to make meaningful decisions within civic contexts.

New Media for Development

Unlike the previous technological advancements, the ICTs reached the first world as well as the third world almost at the same time opening up the possibility of using its potential for 'development'. The convergence of new technologies such as nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology is transforming global society. ICTs as well as the New Media are now seen as the magic solution to the multiple problems of economic development, healthcare and education as well as strengthening civil society, promoting democracy, and making governments more open and accountable

Digital Divide

But there are fundamental inequalities regarding access to new media technologies and the opportunities for participation. People are mainly divided as those with or without access to ICTs. Beyond the question of accessibility, specificities such as speed, location, quality and support also do matter. This is termed as digital divide.

It is not a clear single gap that divides a society into two groups. Disadvantages can take such forms as lower-performance computers and high priced connections such as narrowband or dialup connections. Another key dimension of the digital divide is at the global level reinforcing the existing economic divisions in the world and widening the gap among the information rich and the information poor nations.

Women within developing countries are in the deepest part of this divide, further removed from the information age than men whose poverty they share. This gap is a major source of gender inequality and one of the major obstacles to mainstreaming a gender perspective in development.

The Indian context and Ethical challenges

India has ushered into an era of Globalisation, Liberalisation and Privatisation in 1990s and since then Indian Markets have opened up for foreign capital and at the same time Indian 'Skies' have opened up to Global Media and Communication revolution. It was a rapid change from mixed economy to market economy. It was also a change from an era of Public Service broadcasting to an era of Commercial market driven broadcasting, which has far reaching consequences for the Communication and Media scenario of India. The advent of the New Communication Technologies has accelerated the process of Globalisation through its immense capacity for global networking and information exchange. On the one hand it widened the gap between the information rich and the information poor. On the other hand its characteristics such as interactivity, convergence and access to information have opened up new possibilities of addressing various issues of socio-economic empowerment.

Today information has become a distinct form of power in its own right. It has moved to the centre of the stage, dominating the uses of all other forms of power and changing how other forms of power come into being and are exercised. (The Meta-Technologies of Information, ed. by Sandra Braman. Mahwah and London: Lawrence Erlbaum.)

We need to raise pertinent questions. Who will own these technologies? Who will control them? Who will be ethically responsible for their application and use? In particular, what will be the long-term impact of such technologies of information on society? Will we be able to motivate enough ethical reasoning to counterbalance scientific opportunism, commercial greed, and the consolidation of political power?

How can we address the digital divide especially gender and ethnic digital divide in the Indian context? What are the potentials and challenges in using its potential for addressing the multiple problems of socio-economic development, strengthening of civil society, and promoting democracy and devolution of power?

What will be the impact of the new Technologies on human self-understanding? What kind of tools and expertise needed to critically and creatively approach them? How can we deconstruct the language and worldviews embedded in them?
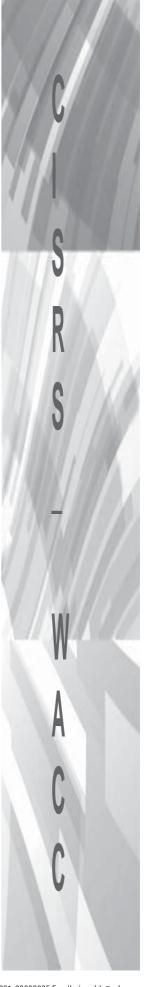
New Tasks Ahead: New Media Literacies

In the emerging new media environment, media literacy is arguably more important than ever. It must meet the dual challenges of teaching media literacy in a multicultural society and sensitizing people to the inequities and injustices of a society based on gender, race, and class inequalities and discrimination.

Media literacy must help people to use media intelligently, to discriminate and evaluate media content, to critically dissect media forms, and to investigate media effects and uses. Critical media literacy builds on these approaches, analyzing media culture as products of social production and struggle, and teaching people to be critical of media representations and discourses. (Confronting the Challenges of participatory culture, Henry Jenkins, Director of Media Studies Programme, M.I.T.)

It must also stress the importance of learning to use the media as modes of self-expression and social activism. Learning to produce different forms of media texts teaches codes, formal features, and the role of technology in constructing media artifacts. In becoming literate in semiological and ideological codes of media culture, people not only can read and critique dominant modes of cultural hegemony, but they can produce oppositional forms of culture, subverting the dominant codes and ideologies and providing alternatives.

New Media Literacy Trainers Manual and CDROM

CISRS under the project 'Ethics of New Communication Technologies from People's Perspective' have brought out this Trainer's Manual and Resource CD-ROM in order to promote New Media Literary among Church Youth. The Manual deals with new media characteristics, languages, technologies, ownership patterns, audiences and representation of social identities and issues. It is aimed to facilitate the youth to engage in an exploratory process to understand new media and make critical and creative engagement with it.

Curriculum on New Media Literacy

1 ▸ Understanding New Media Technology
Internet
World Wide Web

2 ▸ Understanding New Media Characteristics
Interactivity, Non linearity, Convergence

3 ▸ New Media Formats
Websites, blogs, wikis, email etc

4 ▸ Understanding New Media Language
Types of interfaces
Text based Language
Audiovisual language

5 ▸ Understanding New Media Agency (Industry)
Ownership and control
Commercial interest

6 ▸ Understanding New Media Audiences
Audience as creators
Audience as distributors
Audience as Communicators

7 ▸ Understanding representation of
Third World in New Media
Analysis of News sites

8 ▸ Understanding representation of
Gender in New Media
Analysis of a Computer games

9 ▸ Making of our own website

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Understanding the New Media Technology

Objective: To enable the participants to understand how new media technology works, to understand how the hyper links works and to learn how electronic messages are delivered over the internet.

Activity I

 Assign each participant a partner and ask each one to write a message on a piece of paper to his/her partner. Take the message, cut the message into four pieces put each piece into different envelops and write their partner's name on each envelope.

Take the envelopes and insert different stuffs such as stickers, pictures, spring etc. in them and seal them.

Distribute four envelops randomly to each participant and ask them to deliver them to the addressee. Request them not to open the envelop until it reaches the addressee. They must send the envelopes by handing each one, one at a time to the nearest person along the web who then hands it to another person until all four envelopes reach the addressee. Once every one has four envelopes let the participants open the envelopes and reconstruct the message.

Reflection: Discuss the process and bring out the concept of dynamic rerouting. Computer sends a message over the internet breaking the message into different parts, each part into separate envelopes and sends the envelopes out over different routes to their destinations. The computer receives the message then put the message back together so that the person at the other end can read it.

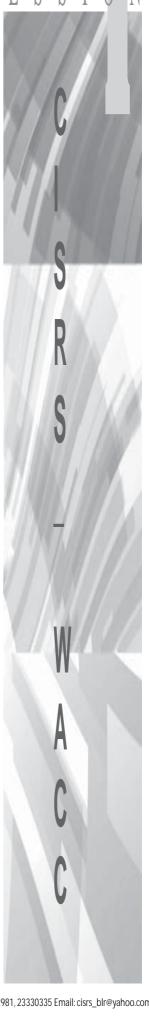Reflect also the surprise gifts which come to you as part of the message.

Activity III

Ask the students to create contact between their neighboring chairs using coloured string and reflect upon the network of computers. Make a pictorial representation of the internet and World Wide Web on the board with the participation of the students.

Show a multimedia presentation regarding the technological function of the Internet and World Wide Web.

Reflection: The facilitator must enable the participants to understand the technology behind the Internet and the World Wide Web and their distinctiveness.
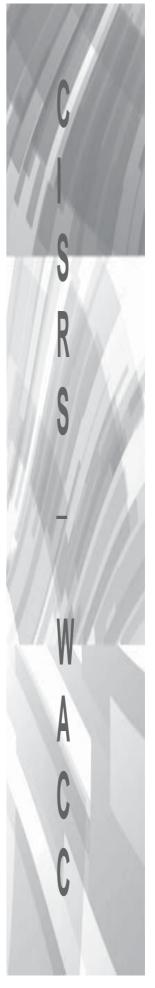
Input: Many people use the terms internet and world wide web interchangeably, but in fact, the two terms at not synonymous. They are two separate but related things.

The Internet: It is a massive network of networks, a networking infrastructure. It connects millions of computers together globally, forming a network in which any computer can communicate with any other computer as long as they are both connected to the Internet.

The World Wide Web: The web is a way of accessing information over the medium of internet. It is an information sharing model that is built on the top of the Internet. The web uses the HTTP protocol, only one of the languages spoken over the Internet to transmit data. The web also uses browsers, such as Internet Explorer or Netscape to access web documents that are linked to each other via hyperlinks. Web documents also contain graphics, sounds, texts and video. There are an estimated 92 million websites online and 1.114 billion people use internet according to the Internet world status report 2007. The web is just one of the ways that information can be disseminated over the internet. The internet is also used for the email. Thus the web is just a portion of the internet through a large portion of it. The two terms are not synonymous and should not be confused.

Conclusion: The facilitator should enable the participants to understand how the new media technology functions. They should also differentiate between Internet and World Wide Web

Understanding New Media and its Characteristics

Objective: To understand what is New Media and understand its characteristics.

Procedure:

▸ Divide the participants into four groups. Provide Newspaper, Book, Encyclopedia, Magazine and Journal. Ask them to select one media product. Ask them to read the product they have selected as a group and describe the experience while interacting with the media product. Ask the same group to browse the Internet and interact with their favorite websites. Let them discuss about it in the group. Ask them to compare the two types of media. Let them describe the experience while interacting with Internet and compare the advantages and disadvantages.

Questions

(1)   Identify the differences between old media and New Media

(2)   Identify the advantages of New Media compared to the old media

(3)   Identify the unique features of New Media

The facilitator must enable the participants to describe the new media experience and how it differs for that of the old media.

Input

The term New Media refers to many different types of electronic communications that are made possible through computer technology. They are relatively recent media based on the information and communication Technologies (ICTs). They could include the Internet, World Wide Web and other forms of multimedia popular from 1990s onwards. As the name denotes, their form differ drastically from the old media forms.

What is new about new media?

▸ New formats

▸ New relationship between users and media technologies.

▸ Shift in personal and social experience of time, space and place.

▸ New conceptions of biological body's relation to technological media

▸ New pattern of organisation and production

▸ New ways of distribution and consumption and diffusion of media production in every day life

Characteristics of New Media

1. Digitality : Process of storage, input and output in the form of non continuous number

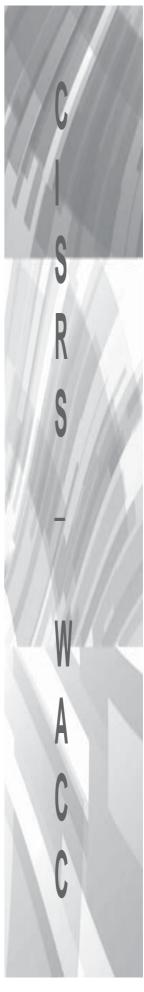An alphabet represented by a number, a text represented by a number

2. Interactivity: Ability to directly intervene in and change the images and texts they access.

3. Hypertextuality - Greek word meaning 'above, beyond and outside' - provide a network of links to other text that are above, beyond and outside itself - Textual, visual or audio data that has links to other data.

4. Nonlinearity: Linear medium progresses without any navigation control for the viewer such as a cinema presentation. Non-linear media offers user interactivity to control progress as used with a computer game.

5. Convergence: Blurring of boundaries, between print media, audio media, visual media is termed convergence. All older media forms are converging into a digital domain.

6.Networking: Possibility of forming new communities beyond spatial location transcending geographical, social, Political boundaries and division.

7.Virtuality: Immersive, interactive experience provided by new forms of image and simulation technology.

New Media Experience

‣ More powerful sense of user engagement with media text.

‣ More independent relation to sources of knowledge.

‣ Individualised media use.

‣ Greater user choice.

Conclusion:

The participants must be enabled to reflect upon the New Media experience, identify the specific characteristics that contribute to the newness of New Media and define them.

Understanding various forms of New Media

Objective: To understand and familiarise various forms of New Media such as Websites, blogs, Wikis, chat, email, etc.

Procedure: Divide the participants into four groups. Ask them to browse the internet and do a comparison between various New Media forms listed below in their group and report their findings.

Website Blogs   Online Newspapers   Wikipedia   Email

Questions

(1) What are the differences between these formats and what are their advantages and unique features?

(2) Match the New Media forms with the corresponding Old Media Forms

Ask them to compare various new media forms and bring out their uniqueness. Let them match New Media forms with the corresponding old media forms.

Input:

(1) **Website:** It is a collection of web pages, images, videos or other digital assets that are hosted on one or several web servers usually accessible via the internet.A webpage is a document typically written in HTML, that is almost always accessible via HTTP, a protocol that transfers information from the web server to display in the user's web browser. All the publicly accessible web sites are seen collectively as constituting the 'World Wide Web'.

(2)**E-mail:** It is short form of electronic mail. It is the system for sending messages between computers connected in the Internet.

(3)**Blog:** The word Blog in the short form of 'weblog' and refers to an online journal created and published by individuals and groups. Bloggers post articles and information online. As of on September 2007 more than 106 million Blogs are tracked.

(4) **Wikipedia:**Wikipedia's name is a combination of words Wiki (a type of collaborative website) and encyclopedia. It is an online free encyclopedia. Wikipedia's articles have been written collaboratively by volunteers around the world and most of them can be edited by anyone with access to internet. Steadily raising in popularity since its reception it currently ranks among the top ten most visited websites world wide.

(5) **Chat groups:** They are websites that allow users to communicate real time easily accessible web interfaces. They do not require registration. This trait allows them to offer instantaneous access for users.

Conclusion: The facilitator should enable the participants to familiarize with the various new media forms and their uniqueness.

New Media Language

Objective: To understand the language of New Media and to distinguish between various interfaces and their characteristics. To understand audiovisual language and text based language.

Activity 1

Interfaces

(1) Divide the participants into four groups and ask the participants to visit the following websites in groups

Ohmynews (news website)   Flicker.com (photosharing website)

Google.com (Search engine)   Wikimapia (Online Map)

As the students to work on one of the websites in the list and answer the following questions.

(1) What are the different types of interfaces?

(2) Identify the various elements of interfaces which enable the user to interact. Explain with examples.

(3) Why do the designer choose different types of interfaces?

Ask the groups to answer the above questions and report their findings.

Input: The interface is that which comes in between the human and the machine. There are different types of interfaces. Simple interfaces are text based ones while enriched interfaces carry graphics. They can also be categorized as symbolic, iconic and indexical interfaces. There are different elements such as buttons, icons, symbols, mouse pointer, animation etc.,   seen in various interfaces.

Hypertext: Hypertext is a web of possibilities and reading experience. It is the language of exploration and discovery. It provides a network of links to other texts.

Activity:2

Audio Visual Language :The computer based media also uses the language of audio, video and animations. Show the audience a video clip and ask them to identify various components of Audiovisual language based on the questions given below.

(1) What did you see and hear?

(2) Identify the components, which constitute the audiovisual sequence?

(3) What are the methods of transition used?

(4) How meaning is constructed in audiovisual language?

Input:

Different shots combined together form an audiovisual sequence. Combination of sequences forms the audiovisual narrative. Manual as well as computer generated transitional methods or Editing Techniques are used for this purpose. The process of editing combines various components such as sound, dialogue, music as well as different types of shots to construct the meaning of the audiovisual narrative.

Activity (3)
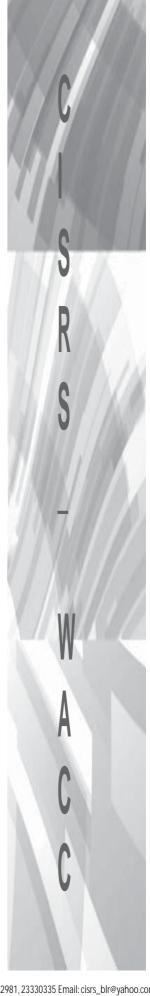
Text based Language

Divide the participants into four groups and ask them to compare the front page of a Newspaper and the Webpage of an online Newspaper and answer the following questions.

1. What are the influences of the web newspaper on a Print newspaper

2. What are unique features which are available in an online Newspaper?

3. Identify the various components of the web newspaper and print newspaper and compare them.

Input: The online Newspapers have a great deal of influence on traditional Newspapers. The front page of the Print newspaper resembles a webpage. News digests resembles hyperlinks of a Web newspaper. We can therefore identify the structure of a web newspaper

Elements of Web Newspaper

▸ Page Title: All Webpages have titles describing their content

▸ Graphics: These can range from banner headings, logos, pictures, navigation manus and other elements designed to give the page an identity. Each page of a site will have a sense of unity.

▸ Banner Advertisements: Most common from of advertising on Web pages are banner ads which are typically found at the top of the page.

▸ Headline text: Each different part of a page normally have a catchy headline in the same way that newspapers have.

▸ Body text: Body text is used to communicate the bulk of any written information. New media are delivered through computer screen, which unlike newspapers, is of low resolutions. Thus large size fronds are used.

▸ Navigation system: Page navigation system is used in two ways. The first is an illustrative form. It usually concerts of a picture with hotspot areas called image map or series of buttons each of which take the user to different to locations within the site.

▸ The Second type in text based navigation system. These are used when navigational links need to be changed often. News sites that have daily changing links are examples of these.

▸ URL Address/ Author information : Any webpage have contact information on it. This can include its URL (inform resource locator) address and the creator's identity and email address that people who require more information or who wish to contributes information can make contact. The date of last updation is also given.

Uniqueness of a Web newspaper

▸ Most wanted News items are segregated

▸ We can email News story to friends

▸ We can rate news items

▸ There are opinion polls

▸ Similar news stories are put together

▸ News archive facility available

▸ Different news stories of same journalist are put together

▸ Search facility available

▸ Animations and video footage of news items are available e.g. Lamonde, French newspaper.

Conclusion

The facilitator must enable the participants to identify various types of interfaces, their characteristics as well as the language of audiovisuals and text based formats.

Understanding the New Media Agencies

Objective: To understand the various agencies who own the new media and its implication for the society.

Procedure: Divide the participants into four groups and assign them to answer the following questions and report the findings in the plenary.

Questions:

1) Identify the advertisements you come across while browsing the internet

2) How are they different from the advertisements we come across in the mass media?

3) Identify the products, services, brands and companies involved.

4) What are the softwares you are familiar with? Which are the companies who produce them?

5) What are the social implication of media ownership? (More specifically on the youth)
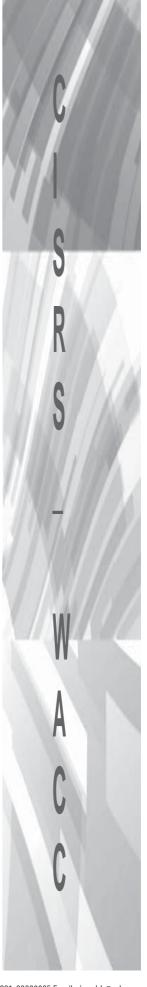
Input: The global new media market has come to be dominated by eight transnational corporations, or TNCs, that rule US media: Disney, Time Warner, News Corporation, Viacom and NBC Universal, Yahoo, Microsoft and Google.

The global media landscape is dominated by massive corporations that, through a history of mergers and acquisitions, have concentrated their control over what we see, hear and read. In many cases these giant companies are vertically intergrated, controlling everything from initial production to final distribution. They create a powerful lobby which in turn encourages the growth of market capitalism.

Conclusion: The facilitator must enable the participants to identify the new media brands, companies, their strategies and their impact on wider society.

Company	Subsidiaries	Market value (billions)
Walt Disney	A &E, Lifetime, Radio Disney, US Weekly, Discover, Hyperion, Beuna Vista Music	$ 72.8
Time Warner	Cinemax, CNN, Court TV, HBO, Turner Classic Movies, People, Fortune, Sports Illustrated, DC Comics, Mapquest	$ 90.7
Viacom	Comedy Central, Showtime, VH1, Westwood One, UPN, Simon and Schuster	$ 53.9
NBC Universal (owned by General Electric)	Bravo, CNBC, History Channel, MSNBC, Universal Pictures	$ 390.6
News Corporation (owned by Rupert Murdoch)	Fox News, FX, National Geographic Channel, Fox TV, Fox Searchlight, New York Post, Harper Collins	$ 56.7
Yahoo	Flickr, Jumpcut, Online Anywhere, Geocities, Broadcast.com, Launch Media, , eGroups, Musicmatch	$ 40.1
Microsoft	Lionhead Studios, Bungie Studios, Web TV, Netgames USA, Peach networks, Mongo music, Messagecast, Onfolio, Massive	$ 306.8
Google	Deja.com, Keyhole, YouTube, Blogger, Picasa, Dodgeball	$ 154.6

CISRS – WACC

Understanding
New Media Audiences

Objective:

To understand the audience of New Media and it's potential to empower the audience as creators, distributors and communicators.

Procedure: Divide the participants into four groups. Ask each group to take up one of the assignments given below.

1) Create an article on a socially relevant topic and post it in Wikipedia or Indymedia.

2) Create a news story on a local event and post it in a local online newspaper

3) Draft a petition on a socially relevant issue and put it in petition online site, gather signatures and submit it to authorities.

4) Write a mail to the Editor of an online newspaper regarding the coverage of a local issue, which is controversial, and express your difference of opinion.

5) Identify an important piece of information, which is relevant and vital to a specific group of people. Create a piece on it and send it to them through a massive email.

Input: It is commonly accepted that the New Media has created a democratic public sphere through various forms such as blogs, wikis, news groups, online communities etc. and modified our political and cultural environment altogether. On the one hand, multi and transnational companies are generating masses of cybercitizens for techno capitalism. At the same time, scattered individuals and structures are getting together and forming new communities of ideas in cyberspace.

As a result two apparently antithetical effluences - globalization resulting in cultural homogenisation and the emergence of geographically distributed but ideologically cohesive identities - are the most determinant social forces at work in cyber space. This redistribution of community identity poses new questions as to what constitutes viable and lasting social links, and how disembodied discourse through networks can sustain embodied forms of social interaction.(Culture and New Media Technologies by Sally Jose Norman)

 Conclusion: The facilitator should help the students to understand the potential of New Media to make meaningful interventions in society as creators, distributors and communicators

Understanding New Media Representation of the Third World

Objective:

To understand how New Media represents social identities and social issues and to see how far the information available is free from bias. More specifically the session is intended to examine how the people of third world and third world perspectives are represented by New media.

Activity:

Divide the participants into four groups. Ask them to do a comparative analysis between a corporate news site and an alternative news site. Let them select each one from the two lists given below, conduct the analysis and report the findings.

Ohmynews	CNN
Indymedia	BBC
Indiatogether	googlenews
Realnews	Associated Press
Countercurrents	Reuters

Questions

1. How do the issue of 'climate change' represented in the two sites and what are the similarities and differences.

2. In who's perspective do the news stories are constructed?

3. Is the information and analysis given are authentic and free from bias? Are there any information withheld?

4. Does the information and opinion given promote informed debate among people and facilitate the process of democratic decision-making?

5. Examine the sources of information, authors and check when was it updated.

Input

News in a construction. It is not given but a construction of reality. There are many aspects such as ownership, political bias, professional practices etc., which determine the construction of News. The news sites of corporates such as CNN, BBC, googlenews etc., have their corporate and commercial interests. They tend to interpret issues and events from the perspective of the developed world.

The alternative news sites try to uphold and assert third world perspective which is more people centric. They resist corporate interest and assert people's rights.

Thus representation of the same issue becomes contradictory in different news sites.

Conclusion:

The facilitator should enable the participants to understand the concept of representation and to discern how representation of the same issue in various news sites differs and why it is so. The participants should also understand the importance of multiple points of views which facilitate informed debate among people towards more democratic decision making.

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Representation of Masculinity in Computer Games

Objective: To understand how the gender identity is constructed in computer games. To contrast between famine and masculine identifies and to bring out the construction of masculinity in computer games.

Activity: Ask the participants to select one game each from the two lists given below:

Roadrash	Justin & Sarah
Mortal combat	Fshion_craze

After playing the games, ask the participants to discuss the following questions in their group and report the findings.

Questions

1 Describe your experience while playing Roadrash or mortal combat

2 How was the second game category different from the first one?

3 How do the representation of men and women differ in two games? Give examples

4 What are the similarities and differences between to the computer games you have examined?

5 What are the characteristics of masculinities represented by computer games. Do you agree or disagree with them ? Explain why

Input: Gender is a social construct which attribute specific characteristics to male and female. A gender stereotype is a mistaken idea based on generalization or incomplete or wrong information regarding the identity of male or female.

The characteristics attributed to masculinity include 'tough' 'in control' 'strong' etc., and those attributed to femininity include 'passive', 'beautiful', 'delicate', 'submissive' etc., In the constructed media sphere these characteristics never cross over. Men are always masculine and women are always feminine.

Conclusion:

The facilitator must enable the participants to understand the relationship between representations, identities and community. They must be encouraged to make new ways of representing the world through the potential of New Media.

Making our own Website

Objective: To learn how to create our own website using the software frontpage. To express yourself and your vision for a new church and society through putting up the website.

Procedure: Divide the participants into four groups and ask them to identify their thematic focus from the list given below

Anti plastic campaign.	Rights of girl children
Dalit rights	Media awareness
Farmer suicide	Climate change
Communal harmony	

Let the group work out various sub themes and generate resources such as photos, articles, cartoons etc and create their own website. The facilitator should then introduce the software and demonstrate how it can be used to create a website.

Input:

▸ Be authentic and accurate. Give evidence to support conclusions. Give bibliography and reference lists that reflect quality sources.

▸ Be objective not biased. Your purpose is to inform not to persuade. Provide enough data to support facts.

▸ Give information which is current and update. Ensure that people can rely on the information provided to take decisions.

▸ Webpage design should engage the reader, enable easy navigation and allow interactivity. The page should be well organised. It should provide information quickly and easily. Graphics used must be clear, relevant and helpful, not distracting.

Conclusion: The websites created by the four groups can be evaluated and appreciated.