

# The Evolution of the Arts & Sciences of Attention

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# Attention?

- *attention* (noun) - the act or state of attending especially through applying the mind to an object of sense or thought (wwwwebster.com)
- in commerce - the act of focusing people's *attention* on a specific message regarding a company, product, person or idea, e.g public relations, advertising, marketing

# Attention is Changing

- what it means to have someone's *attention* has changed
- *attention*, other than that acquired in person, depends on media
- both the reach and characteristics of media have changed from 15-20 years ago (actually from 1-2 years ago)
  - ↓ the Internet and new media forms have greatly enlarged the reach of media
  - ↓ media has evolved to function in a new, very rapidly changing environment

# OK - We All Know

- that business is moving to the Internet as fast as possible
- that Internet valuations, of even companies with infinite p/e ratios, are off the charts
- that old-line companies such as IBM, L.L. Bean & even Merrill Lynch are now Internet powerhouses

# BUT - Do We Also Know,...

- that the Internet is changing not just business, but our personal lives, in ways that we don't yet recognize,
- that a deeper relationship/dependency with media is being forged,
- that we become what we behold in ways that Marshall McLuhan didn't (& couldn't) imagine,
- but do we know what this new media & the culture that develops around it will be like?
- & do we know how the new media will change what we do personally & professionally, how it will change the stories we tell & to whom?

# HyperMedia Culture?

→ **Do you know a 16-year old?**

↓ **Megan (my virtual niece) simultaneously:**

↑ **iChat with 4 friends**

↑ **on phone separately with one of these**

↑ **separate con call with 3 other friends**

↑ **talking to me**

↑ **listening to CD**

↓ **How will Megan expect to interact &/or communicate when she gets her first job?**

↓ **Are you ready to communicate with her today? In five years?**

# New Media Characteristics

**Before**

- linear
- continuous
- nonrepeating

- obvious
- proceeding by deduction

**Us?**

**Now ⇒ Future**

- nonlinear
- discontinuous
- repetitive

- intuitive
- proceeding by analogy

**Who?**

# Media is,...

- all around us, available whether we engage it or not, today we choose to immerse ourselves, tomorrow we may not have a choice
- provides its own context which may not be our local or personal context
- truth value is contextual not absolute

# Communication will be,...

- Interpersonal - structured by our media, i.e. nonlinear, etc
- B2C mediated by agents (many non-human)
- B2B - carried out by agents
  
- What kind of *attention*:
  - ↓ do agents, even human ones, have?
  - ↓ do people have for nonlinear, discontinuous, intuitive media (Hint: not the same kind they have now,...everyone has some level of “ADD”)

# Attention vs. Influence

→ *Attention* is:

↓ harder and harder to get and maintain

↓ not as effective because of changes in media and how media is perceived

→ Quest for *attention* must evolve to quest for *influence*

↓ focus on *influence* means that media confusion can be subverted

↓ *influence* requires results, so results become the message, not the media (as is the case with *attention*)

# Influence?

- ***influence*** - 1) the act or power of producing an effect without apparent exertion of force or direct exercise of command, 2) the power or capacity of causing an effect in an indirect or intangible way ([www.webster.com](http://www.webster.com))
- ***attention*** was about affecting the media and providing column/inches or network/minutes
- ***influence*** is about planning for and producing specific results, often in ways that are not directly evident

OK - What are we saying here?

→ changes in how media is presented & perceived have changed what *attention* is so that

↓ getting peoples' *attention* is no longer effective, in fact it may not be possible

→ focus must now be on producing *influence*, which is derived from trust, credibility and production of results

→ results are now the message

# How to Produce *Influence*

- ***Influence***, in this context, is built on production of successful results, which requires:
  - ↓ work at the strategy level (business, product, communication ...)
  - ↓ focus on result-based deliverables, i.e. those things which will produce identifiable results, build on most recent results (even if they're not yours), understand that results are facts not predictions
  - ↓ results are most often defined in terms of desired changes in
    - ↑ status/structure/position
    - ↑ behavior
    - ↑ ...
- desired changes must be identified and strategies developed for producing them

# Elements of Influence

- *Influence*, must involve establishment of trust & credibility
- credibility & trust are based on consistency, openness, reciprocity, authority & understandability
- *Influence* is fragile. C. Everett Koop had immense *influence* as Surgeon General but squandered much of it in association with the DrKoop.com website
- *Influence* requires that real results be evident as an unquestioned (i.e. immediately evident) result of the advice, messages, stories offered
  - ↓ people must be able to see a direct connection between results (e.g. increase in stock price, increase in market share, positive changes in opinion, etc.) and actions taken

# The Role of Communications

- **communications strategy is one (!)**  
element of a strategy for producing  
desired change (& therefore *influence*)
- **media must be used in the way it is  
evolving: episodic, nonlinear, repetitious,  
intuitive, analogous; in order to be  
effective**
- **most effective communications are  
about results**

remember -  
entropy  
requires no  
maintenance