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NEW MEDIA: TARGET AUDIENCE

We have already discussed in the earlier lessons that new media mostly addresses a young audience. We call this audience the youth. The youth is more computer-savvy or in other words, they are more comfortable in handling gadgets like computers.

Today, when we look at urban households across the country, we do find that people in the age group of 12 – 25 years are hooked on to computers or mobile phones. Interestingly, these people are more connected to each other through the internet. But what concerns parents, teachers and psychologists is the fact that interpersonal relations is getting affected amongst the youth. For this they blame the changing technology.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- list the main consumers of new media;
- appreciate the creativity factor of new media used to attract the youth;
- explain how interpersonal relations are getting affected;
- identify business options in the area of new media.

23.1 THE YOUTH AUDIENCE

Why does new media address the youth? It's simply because the youth spends more time with computers. Also, with growing competition, the youth needs to keep themselves informed all the while. That's why access to information is very important.

However, there is one problem that we see here. If you are exposed to too much of information, it often leaves you thoroughly confused. This is called *information overload*. Most of our young people today suffer from what is, known as



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information fatigue. Since, they have too much of information, they find it difficult to use it. This causes a state of depression, which is called information fatigue.

To prevent this, those using information must develop themselves in areas in which they feel comfortable. Moreover, whenever they are faced with a lot of information, they must prioritize on the basis of their areas of interest. This means classifying information into categories like ‘most important’, ‘important’, ‘not so important’ and ‘not required’.

Another problem is that collecting information does not necessarily lead to logical and analytical powers. Many teachers complain that young readers today have a lot of information but they often fail to use it to discuss something.. That’s because raw information without any analysis does not add to your knowledge unless you know how to use it when it’s required.



Fig. 23.1: Working in a computer lab

23.2 THE CREATIVITY FACTOR

One of the most fundamental ways in which new media tries to attract the youth is through story telling or a narrative writing style. Since we all like stories, this style is regarded as the most powerful form of communication. The narrative style is not new in the media world. Print journalists use this style whenever they want to draw the attention of readers.

If you study the history of journalism, you will realize that it’s not something new. The narrative style was first adopted in the USA in the late sixties. This trend was known as new journalism, pioneered by Tom Wolfe. But, this trend could not continue for long. With the advent of new media, this trend is coming back.



To make the content more interesting, each story is broken into sections. It is difficult to read something at one go, but when it's broken up into interesting segments, it's easier to read and follow. That's why stories done for new media are broken up into several stories which together with multimedia form a package.

Each story is highlighted on the home page or the opening page of any website with an attractive visual and a good introductory paragraph. The main story is kept very short and crisp. Other interesting stories are written in a narrative form. These are preferably human interest stories.

To attract the youth, new media writers always like to do things differently, something similar to what Edward de Bono, the father of creativity, calls 'lateral thinking.' Try reading some of his books. You might find them interesting.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 23.1

1. Match the following :

i) Exposure to too much information	Edward De Bono
ii) Difficulty in using information	Tom Wolfe
iii) New journalism	information overload
iv) Father of creativity	information fatigue

23.3 NEW MEDIA AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Let's go back to Mrs Madhavan again. Mrs Madhavan and several other parents have a serious complaint against new media. Mr Madhavan, Aditya's father, is often heard saying that his children hardly go out to play. As a child, Mr. Madhavan proudly recalls that they were out on the streets playing in the evenings. It is because of that they were socially active even today. He is upset about the fact that children today only like to sit in front of the computer or watch television. They do talk to their friends, but without meeting them. Yes, they simply chat with them through the computer. The children are not learning to talk to people. This way they will never feel confident.

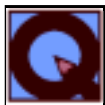
Don't you think this is true? Talking and listening to people is a part of a person's interpersonal skills. Whenever we deal with people we need to develop these skills. Human beings live in a society. That means we cannot stay all by ourselves. So we need to talk, listen and share. Unless we do that, we may be very good as individuals, but when it comes to staying or working together, we are a big failure.

A very interesting film like 'Mitra, My Friend' depicts a similar case. It shows how two people chat on the internet, never realising who they are. Finally, when they meet up, they realise that they are husband and wife.



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So what do we do about this ? The best way is to probably maintain a healthy balance. Let's not run away from computers. But at the same time, let's not spend all our evenings sitting in front of a machine and cutting ourselves away from people. In many schools today, teachers advise parents to regulate television watching by their children. In a similar manner, something can be done for the internet as well.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 23.2**

1. State whether the following sentences are true or false.
 1. We develop interpersonal skills when we deal with people.
 2. New media has affected the interactive pattern of children.
 3. We can talk to our friends through the computer.
 4. Good interpersonal skills help in developing a person's personality.
 5. Children today are generally found to be socially active..

**Activity 23.1**

1. *Collect some biographical details of Edward de Bono from the internet.. Try to write a small report on his contribution to the development of creativity.*
2. *Talk to your classmates or friends and find out their opinion on the use of new media.*
3. *Study some news websites. Select articles that have been written in the narrative style and paste them in a scrapbook.*

23.4 NEW MEDIA AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

With new media came a new idea. There were many who realized that it could be used to start a new business. You all know that to start a business you need a lot of money. But a new media venture was different. It may be expensive to start publishing a newspaper or a magazine. But to start a new media venture is not expensive.

In business, you must know that along with big industries, we also have small and medium enterprises known in short as SMEs. New media ventures can be safely categorized as SMEs. To start a business in this area you don't require huge infrastructure. But you need a lot of creativity, i.e the ability to do things differently.

Several such ventures began in India some years ago. There were young people who set up an office in a small room and started their operations. They created

niche websites related to travel, housing, etc.

Now, what are niche websites?

Niche websites are ones that contain very specialized content like travel, health, sports etc.

Soon some of them became big companies. Once they grew, they hired more people and expanded their infrastructure.

If you study the business side of new media which we'll discuss in detail in the next lesson, you will realize that all it takes to build up an enterprise is the enthusiasm and energy. That's because new media is not only affordable, but it is also accessible. Those who ventured into e-learning got freelancers to develop content for them.. The only cost was in designing a website and buying space to post the content..

Similarly, those who ventured into tourism, property or retail, got a designer and a programmer to start a website. Their business was based on networking that they managed to do through the internet only..

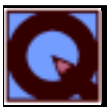
The most important aspect was to build a revenue model or to be able to generate income. One of the ways to do that was advertising. In addition to this, these young people looked for other means of earning money like content selling. Revenue also came through subscriptions and by providing specialized services. For instance, a new media venture in tourism offers good holiday packages for its customers.

Today, there are several online shopping sites that facilitate the buying and selling process for their customers. People can book railway and air tickets through the internet. You can also buy a lot of stuff through the internet. For instance, you can order dinner or you can buy books through the internet. You can also sell your old car through the internet. Those who run these services will charge you for what they are doing. But it has picked up because people don't have much time. Most people, especially in the cities, are too busy to go out and buy things. Such people are highly benefitted by services offered through the internet.



Activity 23.2

1. Visit the websites of Indian Railways or Air India and make a list of the schemes/ facilities being offered to passengers.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 23.3

1. Write the full form of SME.
2. Make a list of any three items on which niche websites are found?
 - i)



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- ii)
 - iii)
3. Visit some of the online shopping sites. Make a list of sites that you have visited as well as products that interested you.

**23.5 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

→ The youth audience

- Information overload
- information fatigue

New media

- creativity factor
- narrative style

New media and interpersonal relations

New media and business opportunities

- new media ventures
- small and medium enterprises
- niche websites
- revenue model
- online shopping sites

**23.6 TERMINAL EXERCISES**

1. What are inter-personal skills? Why do you think interpersonal skills are getting affected?
2. Is new media a big industry or is it an SME? Give reasons to support your answer.
3. Write short notes on the following:
 - i) niche websites
 - ii) online shopping sites



23.7 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 23.1** 1. i) Information Overload
ii) Information fatigue
iii) Tom Wolfe
iv) Narrative
v) Edward de Bono

- 23.2** 1. Talking and listening are part of our interpersonal skills.
Whenever we deal with people we need to develop these skills.
2. Organizations insist on good interpersonal skills because teams are made on that basis.
3. True. We can we talk to our friends through the computer.
4. Yes, because it builds up a person's confidence.
5. We build good human relations through good communication skills.

- 23.3** 1. Small and Medium Enterprise
2. i) travel
ii) health
iii) tourism
3. The answer would vary from learner to learner.



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