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10 December 2021

MSP 4541

Revisiting 'Leave a Like': A Final Discussion About Mobile Video

Because most people these days live on their mobile devices for hours a day

(thanks for that insight ScreenTime!), mobile video is almost second nature to those that

consume any kind of mobile content. While this may outwardly seem like a

phenomenon associated with youth, such as with the advent of TikTok, it is in fact a

phenomenon actually associated with the expansion of society and therefore an integral

part of human communication. Communication in the modern world is dictated by the

mobility of messages and therefore mobile video fills a specific societal need. In the

article, "Theorizing Mobile Communication In The Intimate Sphere" by Rich Ling, the

need for mobility of a message can be attributed to "the transition from the largely local

society of the pre-automobile era to one where most of our daily errands were car-

based introduced the need for coordination across broad geographical areas," (Ling,

2014, p. 32). Moving from the immediacy of the "village" to the distance of global

society has made it necessary to adapt what constitutes appropriate communication.

This is especially relevant to the world we live in today, in a post-pandemic society,

because for almost an entire year, we were entirely reliant on the mobility of messages,

videos, communication, and the like in order to maintain some semblance of normalcy,

work, and personal connection. While this was in progress for quite some time before

2020, the inability to go out and be around our local communities has made mobility a

cemented part of our lives.

But what makes a video mobile? Oftentimes, it is informal in nature, somewhat short, and easily shareable. Other video content can be cumbersome to watch on a mobile device because certain details can be missed when a video is made to be watched on a large screen, or one might simply get tired of holding their phone in a certain position for the full length of a television show or movie! While we may discuss the latest episode of You or the most recent Marvel blockbuster on social media, it is far more difficult to directly share these with others. By sharing mobile videos, and commenting on them on the platforms that allow it, a conversation about a piece of content can be more direct, more social, and can include the millions of people around the globe, rather than just those in your immediate vicinity. In Aymar Jean Christian's article, "Not TV, Not the Web", the author takes us back to a time before the world of mobile video was "open" for everyone when they state that, "[F]or video producers and distributors, mobile was already hardwired to not be amendable to independent creation: the operating systems and software were created by companies and standards were already in place, the network was managed by an oligopoly, and there was limited bandwidth," (Christian, p. 98, 2012). The advent of social media sites and social video sites, like TikTok, YouTube, and Vimeo helped get "us" as everyday people to the point where we are freely able to engage in mobile video, which was once barred for those except traditional media sources. Today, that means that mobile video includes a category of content that it never did before, a democratized source of independent content meant to be shared and commented upon freely.

In the article, "Creating With Mobile Media", the author Marsha Berry, references a mobile media artist scholar by the name of Dean Keep. "[Keep] suggests that camera

phones can be thought of as portable visual diaries where narratives of everyday life may be collected and shared 'promoting a 'liquid aesthetic' whereby changes in technology, as well as our relationship with personal computing, may be understood as key drivers which shape image-making practices' [...] [additionally] he proposes that the absence of established conventions 'promotes a culture of creative experimentation and presents new ways to view our world' (Berry, 2017, p.135). The beauty of creating with a phone is that audiences are usually up for anything. It is not unexpected that you may see a cinema-quality video with artistic framing, or you may stumble upon a video shot entirely from a point of view or even a selfie shot. The versatility of this medium, as Keep says, is integral to the creative possibilities and therefore allows both creator and audience to key into what truly interests them in terms of both visuals and content.

The video I made is about the topic of friendship in the age of social media, and how it often feels fake or superficial. The aim of the video, presented as a short film, is to get the audience thinking about what they consider "good enough" of a friendship or relationship. Is it good enough to just like someone's post in support? Or should one try to reach out in other ways, and expect that in return? Although the journal article we read for class, "Watch, Share or Create", by authors Bahiyah Omar and Wang Dequan, was directly in reference to TikTok usage, the article has interesting information about social media usage, which is both a topic of my video and the greater usage of it after posting. "Seidman [...] found that people characterized as courteous, flexible, good-natured, cooperative and tolerant (i.e: agreeableness personality) have the tendency to express one's real self on social media while those characterized as organized, efficient, and systematic (i.e: conscientiousness personality) are more likely to use

social media to link and retain social connections," (Omar, Bahiyah & Dequan, Wang, 2020, p. 124). This is of particular interest in this project because, while all the personality traits are positive, and the outcome of social media usage by such people seems outwardly positive, I am skeptical of how rich the relationships of such users actually become. The video was made entirely on my cell phone and edited through Adobe Rush, with a little ChromaKey/green screen help from the mobile iMovie app. I sourced music from a fellow YouTube creator who offered their product for free (with credit), and otherwise recorded my own voiceover through Adobe Rush and included a few assets, such as title screens, that are provided by the app.

The entirety of my project is directly about social interaction in the age of mobile social media. In one of the main shots of the video, you can see me scrolling through social media apps such as Snapchat, Facebook, and Instagram, and I hesitate to "mobilize" my message of loneliness. I made the video the way I did because this is my biggest worry when it comes to an online world. Too often you hear of people, young and old, complain of loneliness, depression, and worse yet- that they have no friends. The video I created is meant to be a direct commentary about this while remaining firmly in the "mobile" world I am so weary of in my message. It is meant to show that mobility is unavoidable and will continue to shift and change with time, but it is a necessary evil, therefore, we must dissect not only why we do what we do, but how we can reevaluate what is important to ourselves and our society so that we can create healthy habits going forward.

The creation of the project, as stated above, was entirely mobile and I did not utilize my computer or any other device except for the writing of this paper. Additionally,

I posted my video to my YouTube channel. On my channel, audiences can like or dislike my video and leave comments below in order to give praise or criticism or even start a conversation. YouTube's easy "share" feature also allows users to send it through text or post my video to their social media and therefore have the ability to have greater conversations with their friends and family. The video was completed in an entirely mobile manner and has the potential to be sent around the world in mere moments. Because the subject matter within the video is intended to get people thinking, it extends very naturally into a conversation and therefore into social interaction. For the final version of my project, I kept most of the idea the same, changing only the quality of the shots, distinguishing the voiceover from the background music, and making the piece more visually appealing by adding dynamic shots. The ability to make small changes that lead to a big improvement is one of the main reasons I chose mobile video to revise for my final project, since the original, after seeing the new one, feels like a succinct rough draft, and the final feels like a well-polished final piece.

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