

Social Interaction and Mobile Video Paper: The Making of “The Room”

Mobile video is something that has become increasingly popular over the years, in direct relationship with the popularity of the devices that make it possible for us to view mobile video. The evolution of cell phones and their capabilities have changed the way that people communicate, interact with their space, and interact with the knowledge that they receive. Not only is mobile video possible through the very concept of taking a video from your phone, but the integration of social media into our daily lives is one of the ways that “mobile video” and “social interaction” correspond the most. Most popular social media apps such as *Snapchat* or *TikTok* have features officially part of their app that make it easy to edit and upload video, while also enforcing a certain standard about what these videos should look like.

There are a lot of things about mobile video that contribute to it’s mobility that you wouldn’t really consider upon first glance. The aspect ratio, the interactivity, and even the way the subject in a video is addressing you all comment on how the user will perceive the video, and the most “mobile” videos have met certain criteria that relates to what people are used to. This includes but is not limited to vertical video, captions, music, etc. One of the most unique things about mobile video today is the fact that they tend to feed off of each other’s popularity and the popularity of things in pop culture, such as trends and popular songs and dances. Using this, there are a lot of ways that social interaction can be promoted through mobile video. People have become very accustomed to doing this in the comments section of the media that consume, but there are other ways in which a viewer might feel as though they are being personally

addressed or are involved in a particular situation depending on how the video is framed.

“The Room” is a concept that I came up with because I wanted to promote social interactivity within the video itself, in a way that the viewer felt as though they were contributing to a narrative and achieving certain goals without actually doing anything. It is essentially a video game that takes place in my bedroom, and the main character--the viewer--has to click through in order to find 3 essential items before leaving the room: headphones, keys, and a mask. I used my knowledge of simple video games to include some extra features and side quests, such as learning what certain items are in the room, playing music, and more. I made it all with my phone by walking around my room, and using my one hand within frame to motion in a video-game-character type of way that is considered nostalgic and accurate to a real video game. I used a few different apps, including *Procreate* to create the titles, *Union* to turn these titles in .PNG files, and *Adobe Rush* in order to put all of the elements together and to create transitions. All of the music and sound effects heard throughout the video are my own, and I used my baritone ukulele, soprano ukulele, kalimba, and a crumpled up piece of paper to achieve these effects.

I had a very clear vision for this video, in that I wanted the viewer to be able to physically interact with it. That is where the concept of “tapping” comes into play, as it doesn’t actually do anything, but the video progresses everytime the viewer taps anyway to give the illusion that they are actually playing a game. At one point, I included a unique haptic to “tap rapidly” to play the ukulele that is viewed to increase the viewer’s presence. There are many mobile elements to it: it is vertical and the same aspect ratio

as the modern phone so the user would not have to break the immersion by turning the phone sideways; it created the illusion that they are looking into someone's real room. There are also times where the character gets to move around and look around to include some more details about the space. One important thing is that the motion of tapping your screen is not natural in any other context besides using a smartphone/tablet, therefore this video only really functions if it is being viewed in a mobile format. This project demonstrates the potential of social interaction within mobile media because it gives the same kind of reward system to the viewer as you would get in real life if you actually were looking for those things. It also places the viewer in the headspace of a character that is physically standing up, walking around the room, and talking to them every time they interact with it.

This project relates to the course material in more than one way, because it comments on more than one aspect of mobile and social media. In a study done by Bahiyah Omar and Wang Dequan, a huge finding that came out of it was the reason why people chose to use the app *TikTok*: to interact socially with other people whether or not they were just using the app, or actually posting to the app. (Omar & Dequan, 2019) The inherent meaning of "social" media implies that people will flock to it for the gratification of social interaction, regardless of whether or not the videos themselves comment on mobility. The existence of these postings is a commentary on mobility. Next, Rich Ling makes an excellent point about the integration of mobile phones into our daily lives and how our inherent need for sociability just makes it more and more apparent in society. "We increasingly use mobile social networking sites to interact with several other friends/family members simultaneously in a small chat group. Indeed,

research has shown that this is the preponderance of interaction.” (Ling, 2014) The more personalized technology becomes, the more mobile video will become essential to maintaining society’s expectations on the ease of social communication. Lastly, Katharina Rein and Tommaso Venturini take it a step further by addressing one of the most “mobile” and “social” types of videos known to date: live streaming. This is especially social because it allows the people in the live stream to interact with an audience in real time, through comments and other features depending on the application. This revealed a certain degree of bias that can come from the company in charge, as now “platforms can establish direct partnerships with leading content producers, with the hope that their example will establish a model for other users to follow.” (Rein & Venturini, 2018) This is a pitfall of social media that directly affects our ability to be social through media, because it removes its genuineness and forces a middle man between two people just attempting to have a human relationship while being in two places at once.

Mobile video is far from reaching its full potential. Almost like cinema, since its inception it has gone through many changes and exists in many different forms. But there are many things about it that have stayed the same in regards to its delivery, where it can be accessed, and how people generally feel about it. The cycle of instant gratification and the increasing addictive quality of social media will have people craving mobile video for years to come. Something about technology has shattered existing boundaries between humans, and normalized an increasingly interconnected world, and with that comes its most essential forms of communication: one of them being--without a shadow of a doubt--video.

Bibliography

Omar, B. & Dequan, W. (2020). *Watch, Share or Create: The Influence of Personality Traits and User Motivation on TikTok Mobile Video Usage*. International Association of Online Engineering. Retrieved October 17, 2021 from <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/216454/>

Ling, B. (2014) *The Routledge Companion to Mobile Media: Theorizing Mobile Communication in the Intimate Sphere*. Routledge. Retrieved October 17, 2021 from <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203434833-13/theorizing-mobile-communication-intimate-sphere-rich-ling>

Rein, K. & Venturini, T. (2018) *Ploughing digital landscapes: How Facebook influences the evolution of live video streaming*. Sage Journals. Retrieved October 17, 2021 from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1461444817748954>