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21st Century Cyber Sensations
- The changing face of UK Media -

From the growth in the gaming industry, to the establishment of creative media hubs around the UK, to the demand for instant bite-sized media packages and the arrival of services which reimburse people for the online content they provide, media consumption has changed radically in the 21st century.

UK internet usage has taken off with more people going online than ever before, and engaging in a whole variety of activities which go far beyond checking emails and booking a holiday. Whether it's finding friends, tracing ancestry, dating, or searching for medical advice, advances in technology are enriching our lives and the majority of it is cyber-side.

Laptops, mobiles and PDA's make media consumption easier and demand is greater than ever before. News in the UK, looks set to be going "instant", with news headlines being transmitted through micro blogging sites, like Twitter.com. Internet dramas, mobile movies and instant blogging are all providing exciting channels for consumers, as well as interesting platforms for innovators to experiment and play with.

Growth trends and audience demographics have presented a number of surprises, too. In the gaming world, the fastest growing group of online gamers is over 35 and female, whilst the over 55, so called "silver surfers", and children are seen to have huge potential.

Media centres are booming around the UK, with media projects and clusters emerging and promoting digital excellence from Swindon to Scotland. Knowledge sharing has been made even easier, and is going from strength to strength, with cross discipline work being developed and shared in cyber-space, with contributors based all over the UK.

There's also a market for consumers providing up to the minute phone images, digital photos and video footage and providing breaking news from disaster sites. A significant part of the reporting from international events, are taken by amateurs and syndicated around the world. This demand for and supply of user generated material is currently seen as a "content revolution".

What's driving these changes?

1. Broadband use has dramatically increased with 85% of internet users now on a high-speed connection compared to just 19% four years ago
2. Computer interfaces are becoming more interactive and more interesting to work with
3. Computer users are no longer seen as anti social computer geeks
4. Younger generations have grown up with technology and are natural computer users
5. Traditional TV is going through a revolution with 4oD and SKY +
6. One in three internet users read an online newspaper or news service and the UK population is reading more than it did 30 years ago
7. Mind and intelligence games have expanded their appeal to new demographics
8. Games' companies are now recruiting from different industries such as TV, using their consumer focussed expertise
9. Content providers and advertising clients are experimenting with an "online fusion" giving greater scope for creative ideas

Supporting Facts:

- 67% of Britain's 16-25 year olds say they would be lost without their computer, compared to 46% who feel the same way about their TV (The Tech Tribe Report 2006)
- The 55+ group are surfing online 54% more than they did in 2005 (Hitwise Intelligence, Heather Hopkins 2007)
- 54% increase put silver surfers at cusp of being largest group online (Hitwise Intelligence 2007)
- The volume of downloads from mobile personal content delivery sites such as SeeMeTV is expected to rise from less than 200M in 2007 to more than 9bn in 2012 (Juniper research – Mobile User Generated Content- 2007-2012)

Comment:

- "We've started to realise that it's in the gaps between disciplines that innovation may arise," says Derek Hales, Director of The Digital Research Unit, a part academic and part- commercial collective of technologies, artists and media in Huddersfield.
- The Huddersfield Media Centre, of which the Digital Research Unit is an offshoot, was part of the Government's creative town initiative back in 1995, which look at regeneration and retaining graduates in the area.
- "Each year we have a 'We Love Technology Conference' and draw in leading names at the cutting edge of media and technology and it is a must in any expert's calendar."

Case Study:

- David Bausola created “Where are the Jones’s?”, on behalf of Ford Europe. He is driven by experimentation and trying to work out the problem of engaging with an audience online. For him, it’s about how you can work with people’s live rather than disrupting them – “it’s the complete opposite of TV advertising breaks.”
- Bausola chronicles the tale of Dawn Jones, a test tube baby who has just acquired a list of her sperm donor’s other offspring and has embarked on a mission around Europe to track down each and every one of them.
- A new slice of the story is written, filmed and uploaded every day, which often leaves fans struggling to keep up with the Jones’. The hook is that viewers are invited to interact with the drama and contribute to the storylines.

Source:

These findings were taken from the Living Britain Report, created by The Future Laboratory in association with Zurich Financial Services. This report is a snapshot of Britain today, looking at evolving trends and influences. It determines and celebrates how Britain is flourishing in certain sectors, including business, culture, media, community and travel.

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Notes to Editors

Available for interview:

- Martin Raymond, Director of The Future Laboratory and Editor of the report is available for interviews.
- Dylan Jones, Editor of GQ
- Lowri Turner, presenter and author

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