

Sample Blog Post with Comments

This document provides an excellent example of a Theme Specialist's Blog post, along with a comment from another student. The Specialist's response to the comment is also included.

(Initial Post)

Communication and the Internet - a Brave New World

For me, the subject of communication today is a little like the history of map-making, with one big difference. In cartography, unknown areas of the globe were marked with "Here there be Dragons". As we grew bolder and technological advances allowed us to explore further and map more accurately, we replaced the monsters with ever increasing details and familiarity with those areas.

Unlike cartography, communication advances in the age of digital communication has returned us to the "Here there be Dragons" label for areas of mass communication that we thought were completely explored and understood.

Interactivity and media convergence are the keys to the appearance of new frontiers. No longer is the consumer a passive user of broadcast media or mass communication – traditionally from the source outward to the peripheral users with no real opportunity for timely or effective feedback. Look where we are today – not only can we now **'holler back'** but we can now communicate with each other around the periphery, without having to go through the source of the original content.

Communication across the internet is now gloriously out of control and is changing media production and dissemination forever. Think of Survivor – think of the communication ability that the internet has given to the 'knowledge communities' that have grown up around such series. The almost instantaneous ability for people to share thoughts, discuss theories, and report findings, equals a whole new world of problem solving ability.

Likewise, the enhanced communication and production capabilities of the online fans have led to clashes between the traditional media corporations and the new online culture. This is the epicenter of the unknown – the old rules do not apply and the media giants must adapt or die. Choices to embrace the new communication opportunities will be weighed against loss of control of content (and \$\$\$\$\$\$).

Thanks to our increased ability to communicate thanks to computers and the internet, we live in interesting times. There are those that say that the quantum leap in communication ability with its low barriers to entry and inexpensive technology may well return us to a time when "folk culture" is once again dominant – back before it was swallowed up by the mass communication corporations.

Did the sender of the first email – ever wonder what the future was going to hold? Did they foresee such communication tools as Skype, Adobe Connect, IM's? Where will it all end?

Although I take credit for inventing the "here there be dragons" analogy, I have borrowed heavily from these three excellent books for the underpinnings of the blog:

Convergence Culture by Henry Jenkins (ISBN-13: 978-0-8147-4281-5)

Converging Media by Pavlik & McIntosh (978-0-19-537910-5)

Communicating For Results by Cheryl Hamilton (978-1-4390-3643-3)

(Comment from Student named Christa)

What would we do if something happened and we didn't have the internet? People would go crazy! The internet is advancing faster than some people can keep up. Without all of this technology I sometimes wonder where we as Americans would be. I highly doubt the first sender of an email knew what technology would grow to be today; however, I don't think we know what it will grow to be in the future. Technology still surprises me, even with cell phones. It amazes me with some of the things that come out on the new phones.

(Response from Theme Specialist, named Jane)

Absolutely true, Christa. The phones today are unbelievable. Wne I was sick in hospital in 1989- 90, my husband rented me a "portable phone" - so I could still talk to my little girl. It cost a fortune and was the size of two shoeboxes stuck together!!!!!!!!!!!! weighed a ton! How things have changed.

I agree with you that we don't know where it is all going - that is why I put the "here there be dragons" back on the edges of the communication map!

The internet changing faster than people can keep up is the subject of a discussion about the "digital divide" - the have's and the have not's of the communication world.

Thanks for your comments.

jane