



The three trends that will create an impact in the World Wide Web, on the road to 2010

On the road to 2010, we can expect a lot of defining – rather redefining trends that will impact us all. There are clearly three trends I see - **User Generated Content on Video**, the emergence of an **Internet news channel** and the emergence of the **Digital PR firm**.

Trend 1: User Generated Content on Video

The first of such trends that is already on its way is the technology of web video, which has not yet turned commercial but the barriers to its entry are falling by the day. Today online video is just gaining momentum and is a sleeping giant about to wake! While video sharing communities enabled us to share and view video content, we also saw this becoming enjoyable content that would entertain them and provide them with an enriching experience online. This then translated into users creating their own content to entertain others. **User Generated Content on video will be the redefining trend** to expect on the road to 2010. We could expect this trend to reach the heights of blogging and evolve further.

Think of an emergence of an online video channel; let's say a comedy channel. Just like you have users today who write on a particular topic that interests them, it is possible that users create videos for a particular topic. Today, there are even portals which allow users to share video and earn money based on the number of views on them; there are social networking sites that allow users to share videos etc. All this is happening and it's happening across multiple platforms - the computer, the mobile and more, thereby enabling more power to the user. For example, a user can generate his own video through his mobile phone and upload it directly to the portal of his choice – real time. Real time videos uploaded through mobile phones could redefine the way even news is reported today.

Trend 2: Emergence of an Internet News Channel

A single individual can become the prime correspondent on the fashion industry. Lets say in Mumbai, an individual is covering fashion shows etc. and uploading images/ videos online to users in India and across the globe. His comments and feedback on the new range of clothes will be instantaneous and he can even receive user feedback instantaneously and cater his news to suit the viewer – thereby making or breaking the new range. What we have now is possibly **the next trend, the emergence of an Internet news channel**. Today's user is empowered to create and distribute information to other users who choose to hear what he has to say, through a host of tools; there are portals offering video casts, podcasts, blogging facilities etc. No editors, no censors, no rules - just those defined by the user himself.

What could all this mean for the today's TV and broadcasting industry? We could possibly expect the dis-aggregation of the broadcasting business, with the big TV networks slugging it out on the online platform with new players. There could be a scenario where there is no editor or TV producer to control what is seen what is not. With the help of multiple tools (blogs, podcasts, webcasts...), a user can get information on anything he/she wants. The TV could even become a large screened computer, and technology is gradually making it that way. The user gets more power to choose what he or she wants to see as well as what should be seen. With TVs today being

able to play media directly from computers, there is the possibility that User Generated Content could be viewed at home through the Internet and open millions of channels for a viewer to see.

Trend 3: The Digital PR Company

With information now being shared freely, with users choosing what they want and what they do not want, what happens to advertising? Traditional Advertising for a long while is has thrived in the era of the TV, the newspaper and the radio. Users today watch, read or listen to advertisements that come to them through these multiple mediums. Today however, viewers are becoming immune to advertising on TV etc. Most advertisers have a concern that advertising on TV is ineffective due to the constant bombardment on ads on TV. By nature, Traditional advertising is an interruptive model, we see pop-ups, drop down banners, banners that you click through to enter a site. Much to their (advertisers') dismay, the user can now block such interruptive ads like pop-ups. Users can also choose to get their information through sites which are not so ad heavy. The Internet as a medium gives the user the choice to avoid advertising. Traditional advertising methods are under threat on the Internet due to its nature. For advertisers to reach out to the users in a world where the User decides what media he or she will view, a new breed of experts will arise- **the next trend – the emergence of the Digital PR Company**.

The emergence of the Digital PR Company could possibly be the next breed of marketers. Less obtrusive and more embracing in nature towards the Internet, Digital PR Companies would be able to target users more effectively than traditional advertisers. Be it building brand awareness to building credibility, Digital PR Companies can use a host of tools to get a company's message across. Not by taking an online TV ad and running a campaign on the net, but by identifying users that support or detract a brand and work on a positioning that targets the ideal users and convert the naysayer. Digital PR companies could work in sync with the online and offline world to ensure that high visibility opportunities are created for clients. They can develop content to suit the UGC world on online videos, blogs and podcasts and the like, and ensure that companies don't just work with the media but become the media. Digital PR companies would constantly work with Internet technologies like RSS feeds and Wikis. However, it will also require the blend of old fashion PR skills to get the initial awareness out.

In the future, the key to a successful company making a mark in the Internet era could possibly be based on how it adapts its marketing and communication strategies to the nature of the Internet. Digital PR Companies could create that success.

These are the three trends that I believe will create an impact on the World Wide Web on the road to 2010. Are they all possible? Only time will tell. However, we are already seeing the emergence of all three trends. And if they gather momentum in the next few years, they can redefine the way we all view the world.



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