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## IMPACT OF DIGITAL MEDIA ON SOCIETY

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### Abstract:

Digital media refers to the media that are encoded in machine readable formats. Digital media is one which can be created, viewed, modified, communicated, preserved on digital electronics device which include software, digital videos, images, web pages, databases, digital audio and E books. Digital media is opposite to print media and other traditional or analog media. This paper is attempted to trace the impact of digital media on society in its various forms. The course of research traces the impact of digital revolution, the distinctive feature, and pros and cons of digital media on society. The paper is an attempt to point out the merits and demerits of digital media and its impact on society.

Key words: Digital media, Digital revolution, Internet, web pages, social disconnect

## Introduction:

**“The power of Digital media is that it forces necessary change”**

Digital media refers to the media that are encoded in machine-readable formats. Digital media can be created, viewed, communicated, modified and preserved on digital electronics devices such as software's, digital images, videos, web pages, websites, social media, digital data, digital audio and E books.

Digital media's significant impact on society and culture is broader and complex. Digital media combined with internet and personal computing has caused innovation in publishing, journalism, public relations, entertainment, education, commerce and politics. New challenges of digital media are revolving round to copyright, intellectual property laws and its legality. The so called “Information age” aiming at paperless society also resulted in censorship doubts, digital divide, digital Dark Age in which older media becomes outdated to the new or upgraded information system.

Digital media is digitized content that can be transmitted over the internet or computer networks. This can include text, audio, video, and graphics. This means that news from a TV network, newspaper, magazine, etc. that is presented on a Web site or blog can fall into this category. Most digital media are based on translating analog data into digital data. The Internet began to grow when text was put onto the Internet instead of stored on papers as it was previously. Soon after text was put onto computers images followed, then came audio and video onto the Internet. Digital media has come a long way in the few short years to become as we know it today and it continues to grow.

## The Birth of Digital Media

In earlier times, messages were once distributed by one particular source to their audience. The audience gathered their sources through a certain form of distribution, whether it was newspapers, magazines, radio, or television. Publishers had a great source of power over the information distributed and how it was perceived by the public. However, all that began drastically change with the rise of computers and more importantly the Internet.

## Internet and Computers in Digital Media

Calculation and programming served as the main purposes for earlier computers. However, over time computers began to play a more personal role in humans' lives. No longer were computers being associated with governments or large corporations. As technology grew, people found out that storing information on a computer was convenient and provided good structure. People expanded the functions a computer could provide to its owner. People began to use computers for communication, creative purposes, research, and entertainment.

The Internet is a vast global system that links computer networks. People began taking to the Internet for government, commercial, educational, social, etc. purposes giving rise to digital media. By being able to connect with this growing amount of information, people were able to hear from multiple sources and to make it more personal by posting their own views'. Now publishing and blogging has become so easy that millions of people are able to post onto the internet creating a large amount of websites and information. As new people join the Internet, the amount of information viewed and provided expands.

**Digital media's Impact:** The digital media's impact can be viewed from a broader perspective namely the positive perspective and the negative perspective.

The Positive perspectives include the following:

**Digital revolution:** Digital media and digital revolution are two sides of the same coin. The revolution is seen in the form of usage of modern technology. Personal computers, smartphones helps anybody to access, modify, store and share digital media. Many electronic devices from digital cameras to drones help in creating, transmitting and viewing digital media content. Combined with the World Wide Web and the Internet, digital media has transformed 21st century society in a way that is frequently compared to the cultural, economic and social impact of the printing press. The change has been so rapid and so widespread that it has launched an economic transition from an industrial economy to an information-based economy, creating a new period in human history known as the Information Age or the revolution. The transition has resulted in uncertainty about definitions where the words like digital media, new media, multimedia and similar terms have a relationship to both the engineering innovations and cultural impact of digital media.

The impact of the digital revolution can also be assessed by exploring the amount of worldwide mobile smart device users. The fact that a large proportion of the world's population own smart devices demonstrates the rapid level of growth achieved throughout the digital revolution. A

smartphone user is impacted with digital advertising every second they open their Apple or Android device. This further evidences the digital revolution and the impact of revolution.

**Innovative creation:** Digital media has also allowed individuals to be much more active in content creation. Anyone with access to computers and the Internet can participate in social media and contribute their own writing, art, videos, photography and commentary to the Internet, as well as conduct business online.

The dramatic reduction in the costs required to create and share content have led to a democratization of content creation as well as the creation of new types of content, like blogs, memes and video essays. Some of these activities have also been labelled citizen journalism. This spike in user created content is due to the development of the internet as well as the way in which users interact with media today. The release of technologies such mobile devices allow for easier and quicker access to all things media. Many media production tools that were once only available to a few are now free and easy to use.

**Web only news:** Internet helped the companies to distribute content easily. Newspapers are unable to compete with the speed that digital news releases their stories. Not only can the latest updates immediately be found online, but one can also view various articles to gain a better understanding and survey multiple points of view.

Not only has the Internet allowed consumers to contribute to the news, they are also allowing them to personalize their news experience. A customer does not have to buy a whole newspaper to read the select number of articles that interest them. Now they can go online and skip the other articles and skip the payment

**Closer world:** The rise of digital media has also allowed people to communicate with others all over the world. Digital media has increased globalization by making communication with people from other parts of the world very easy. Video games can be played over the Internet with people from all over the world.

Digital media has eliminated many cultural boundaries and will continue to do so as other less developed countries begin to become more reliant on technology. Digital media has provided instant communication between people all over the world. Different forms of digital media make this interaction easy and fun. Technology and the sharing of photographs on the Internet have found ways past language barriers. Thanks to digital media we are now entering a world that is culturally globalized.

Books began appearing on the Internet for free. Writer's now have the option of placing their books online to be purchased or read through e-books. E-books are an electronic version of a printed book. Although the device to read the print may cost a lot more than the book itself, ordering more electric texts can be cheaper. It can be a lot more convenient than buying or borrowing a book. E-books also have the ability to translate text to other languages that the book is not published in.

Digital media has changed the flow of the entertainment industry permanently. With the rise of digital media, more and more people in the entertainment industry realize the importance of the Internet. Websites are made to advertise the show. A website may contain celebrity biographies, photo galleries, blogs, etc.

**Positive empowerment:** Digital media empowers one to assess how technological change is linked to forces of globalization, political institutions, and historical developments, and how it affects democracy and social change. It also equips one with a thorough theoretical and methodological grounding in media and communication studies. Furthermore it enables one to apply up-to-date research skills to carry out research in various fields. Digital media results in productivity of reflective and well- trained graduates who can understand the multiplicity of social, cultural, political and technological complexities of digital media and who in the long run will be able to solve complex problems and can help in taking vital decisions which are rational in character.

**Modernized living style:** Digital technology has transformed modern life with gadgets such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones now commonly owned. As well as bringing benefits, digital technology has also bought many downsides. | Source

Digital technology has revolutionized almost every aspect of people's lives in recent decades. Office work, shopping, music, movies, television, photography, travel, transport, and long distance communications are just some areas that have been transformed. It's become increasingly rare to find an electronic device or large machine that doesn't incorporate digital technology in some way.

Digital technology means that devices can be smaller, lighter, faster, and more versatile. It means that huge amounts of information can be stored locally or remotely and moved from place to place almost instantaneously. Even the term "information" has expanded to include photos, audio, video, and other media, rather than just letters and numbers. The information can be much more easily manipulated too; photos, music, and movies can be edited, for instance.

The negative perspectives and the impact of digital media on society include the following:

**Safety of the digital data security:** Since, vast amount of data are collected and stored in digital technology which includes private information of individuals and Organisations, it may be difficult to keep the collected data safe. There are possibilities of the private information's reaching hard core criminals. It's become much harder to have personal privacy in the digital world and that's on

top of the dangers of your personal data being stolen or sold. Digital cameras watch and record our movements in public places. Minor indiscretions can now haunt an individual for life when they're posted on the internet. Controlling your personal information is very difficult and sometimes impossible. Moreover Digital media can be difficult to store and maintain for a long term. File formats change over time. In some instances traditional media can last longer than their digital equivalent.

**Complexity:** Understanding the devices and machines means depending on computer. Today, using any technology of digital media implies tackling all sorts of complicated settings. A minor error in technology can cost both time and expense. Moreover it results in overburden of work. Many modern workers spend their days trying to keep up with the hundreds of emails that they are sent each week, all of which require reading and some of which require replies or action. Texts from colleagues in the evenings or on the weekend can mean that people never fully escape work. Organizing the vast amount of digital data acquired in some jobs, such as minutes of meetings, training videos, photographs, and reports can involve a high complexity of work style.

**Social disconnect:** There is an increasing tendency for people to socialize and communicate via digital devices rather than through real life contact. This can easily lead to a sense of disconnect and isolation. Human beings have evolved over thousands of years to have real contact, taking that away is a bad idea. Studies have suggested that the lack of real life contact is causing depression and other forms of mental illness in many people. Even in a family, one can see communication through digital media, rather than direct communication. Society continues to become more and more depersonalized as digitized machines replace humans. People shop online, do their banking online, pay bills online, and increasingly work online. Transport is also set to become automated, which will result in taxis and delivery vehicles being driver free.

**Insecurity of Jobs:** It used to be that you had to be physically present at a workplace to do a job, but now many work tasks are performed remotely via the internet. That means a Third World worker in a low wage economy can undercut you and take your job. Increasingly, humans aren't needed at all for many tasks, as computers gradually replace them. Driving jobs, for instance, will disappear soon as vehicles become self-driven.

**Crimes:** The internet is fertile territory for negative forces to operate, thanks to its international nature, large scale, and the relative anonymity that users can enjoy. Examples of this include: terrorists using social media to promote themselves and encourage others; drug dealers using the dark web to trade; pedophiles using chat rooms and other places to exchange photos, videos and other information; and authoritarian regimes attempting to sway or distort elections in democratic countries etc.

**Digital media manipulation:** Digital media such as photographs, audio, and video are easy to edit, making the manipulation of media widespread. It's not always easy to tell what is real and what is fake anymore. Photographs can be altered using editing tools such as Photoshop. Digital audio and video can be doctored. Thus digital media manipulation can result in negative things- online bullying, work stress, emotional blackmail and other possible crimes.

**Impact of plagiarism and copyright and masked identities:** Since digital media is remarkably easy to copy and reproduce, there are more chances of plagiarism and copyright thus raising the question on copyright laws. Digital technology provides wide scope for users to hide their identities. Studies show that people are much more likely to behave anti-socially if they don't think that there will be any consequences. Bullying, trolling, stalking, threatening, and insulting behavior have all increased dramatically with the rise of the internet. People assume fake personas for the purposes of scamming and defrauding. Pedophiles use fake personas to gain access and befriend children.

**Addiction:** Social media, computer games, messaging, and dating websites can all be addictive. Games want you to play so that you will buy the next version. Websites want you to interact so that they can bring in advertising money. Users end up wasting vast amounts of time and money. Moreover most of the digital gadgets typically have a short lifespan and as technology advances at a fast pace, devices and machines quickly become unusable thus inducing people to get addicted to go for the new invented model resulting in more budget.

### **Conclusion:**

Though digital media has both positive and negative impacts on society, yet one should realize its importance in the present world. Everyone should be ready to follow this principle – “Don't use digital media to impress people, but use it to impact people in a positive way

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