

Paradigm Shift in Media Studies in the Era of Citizen Media

Associate Professor Brian Lee

Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore

Abstract

Citizen media, or individual media, has taken the communication industry around the world by storm. Citizen media is an emerging online platform that allows users to write and publish text, audio or video content. Popular examples include blogs, podcasts, vlogs, Youtube and Tiktok. It is now the era of highly individualised, one-to-one communication. This definitely pushes the growth of we-media to another level. It is beyond dispute that citizen media is going to provide content providers with a whole new opportunity and possibility. Traditional media can be defined as "old and outdated" and then rest in peace. Or, it can embrace citizen media and find a brand new meaning and become a "must-have" in the future. So is media education. It is key to repositioning media education in the era of citizen media.

It has almost reached the critical mass among young Internet users. That means it would translate into a paradigm shift in media studies. Given the way that digital culture is now entrenched into our daily lives and school curriculum, students are already digital natives and IT-savvy. We are now in that digital era where the classroom is no longer just a physical space but a virtual, 24/7 one. In addition, the communication industry has evolved so rapidly that some areas of study have or will become obsolete in the near future.

"Can media studies survive in the era of citizen media?" has become one of the hottest issues discussed by academics and practitioners nowadays.

Media educators need to address market trends when developing the curriculum. In fact, some media educators have started to revamp the teaching approaches and learning outcomes to "future-proof" their students. However, the media landscapes around the world are still changing, and skill sets needed for the industry are still evolving. On top of that, there is a lack of collective understanding of what skill sets are needed for the communication industry.

Keywords: Media Studies, Citizen media, individual media, we-media, I-media