

A Historical Analysis of the Advancement in the Means of Communication

Abstract

In this age of information overload, multiple news sources, high-speed connections, and social networking, life seems unimaginable without mass communication. With new forms of communication emerging rapidly, it is important to note the corresponding changes to formal language and slang terms. The new forms of broadcasting have created a digital revolution. Every day, in our work and in our leisure time, we come in contact with and use a variety of modern communication systems and communication media, the most common being the mobile, telephone, whatsapp, radio, television, and the Internet. Through these media we are able to communicate instantaneously with people on different continents, transact our daily business, and receive information about various developments and events of note that occur all around the world. Electronic mail and facsimile transmission have made it possible to rapidly communicate written messages across great distances. The growth in communications services over the past 70 years has been phenomenal. The invention of the transistor in 1947 by Walter Brattain, John Bardeen, and William Shockley; the integrated circuit in 1958 by Jack Kilby and Robert Noyce; and the laser by Townes and Schawlow in 1958, have made possible the development of small-size, low-power, low-weight, and high-speed electronic circuits which are used in the construction of satellite communication systems, wideband microwave radio systems, and lightwave communication systems using fiber optic cables. A satellite named Telstar I was launched in 1962 and used to relay TV signals between Europe and the United States. Commercial satellite communication services began in 1965 with the launching of the Early Bird satellite. Today we are witnessing a significant growth in the introduction and use of personal communications services, including voice, data, and video transmission. Satellite and fiber optic networks provide high-speed communication services around the world. Indeed, this is the dawn of the modern telecommunications era.

The paper serves as a mirror reflecting the history of the communication and of the various means of communication adopted by the people through the different ages.

Keywords: Perspective, Means of Communication, Petroglyphs, Pictograms, Ideograms, Telecommunication.

Introduction

Since prehistoric times, significant changes in communication technologies have evolved in tandem with shifts in political and economic systems, and by extension, systems of power. Communication can range from very subtle processes of exchange, to full conversations and mass communication. Human communication was revolutionized with the origin of speech approximately 500,000 years ago. Symbols were developed about 30,000 years ago.

The oldest known symbols created for the purpose of communication were cave paintings, a form of rock art, dating to the Upper Paleolithic age. The oldest known cave painting is located within Chauvet Cave, dated to around 30,000 BC. These paintings contained increasing amounts of information: people may have created the first calendar as far back as 15,000 years ago. The connection between drawing and writing is further shown by linguistics: in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece the concepts and words of drawing and writing were one and the same.

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Petroglyphs

The next advancement in the history of communications came with the production of petroglyphs, carvings into a rock surface. It took about 20,000 years for homo sapiens to move from the first cave paintings to the first petroglyphs, which are dated to around 10,000BC.

Pictograms

A pictogram is a symbol representing a concept, object, activity, place or event by illustration. Pictography is a form of proto-writing whereby ideas are transmitted through drawing. Pictographs were the next step in the evolution of communication: the most important difference between petroglyphs and pictograms is that petroglyphs are simply showing an event, but pictograms are telling a story about the event.

Pictograms were used by various ancient cultures all over the world since around 9000 BC, when tokens marked with simple pictures began to be used to label basic farm produce, and become increasingly popular around 6000-5000 BC.

Ideograms

Ideograms were precursors of logographic writing systems such as Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese characters. Examples of ideographical proto-writing systems, thought not to contain language-specific information, include the Vinca script and the early Indus script. In both cases there are claims of decipherment of linguistic content, without wide acceptance. Pictograms, in turn, evolved into ideograms, graphical symbols that represent an idea. Their ancestors, the pictograms, could represent only something resembling their form: therefore a pictogram of a circle could represent a sun, but not concepts like 'heat', 'light', 'day' or 'Great God of the Sun'. Ideograms, on the other hand, could convey more abstract concepts, so that for example an ideogram of two sticks can mean not only 'legs' but also a verb 'to walk'.

Writing

The oldest-known forms of writing were primarily logographic in nature, based on pictographic and ideographic elements. Most writing systems can be broadly divided into three categories: logographic, syllabic and alphabetic.

However, all three may be found in any given writing system in varying proportions, often making it difficult to categorise a system uniquely.

The invention of the first writing system is roughly contemporary in with the beginning of the Bronze Age in the late Neolithic of the late 4000 BC. The first writing system is generally believed to have been invented in pre-historic Sumer and developed by the late 3000's BC into cuneiform. Egyptian hieroglyphs, and the undeciphered Proto-Elamite writing system and Indus Valley script also date to this era, though a few scholars have questioned the Indus Valley script's status as a writing system.

The original Sumerian writing system was derived from a system of clay tokens used to represent commodities. By the end of the 4th millennium BC, this had evolved into a method of

keeping accounts, using a round-shaped stylus impressed into soft clay at different angles for recording numbers. This was gradually augmented with pictographic writing using a sharp stylus to indicate what was being counted. Round-stylus and sharp-stylus writing was gradually replaced about 2700-2000 BC by writing using a wedge-shaped stylus (hence the term cuneiform), at first only for logograms, but developed to include phonetic elements by the 2800 BC. About 2600 BC cuneiform began to represent syllables of spoken Sumerian language.

Finally, cuneiform writing became a general purpose writing system for logograms, syllables, and numbers. By the 26th century BC, this script had been adapted to another Mesopotamian language, Akkadian, and from there to others such as Hurrian, and Hittite. Scripts similar in appearance to this writing system include those for Ugaritic and Old Persian.

Alphabet

The first pure alphabets emerged around 2000 BC in Ancient Egypt, but by then alphabetic principles had already been incorporated into Egyptian hieroglyphs for a millennium.

By 2700 BC Egyptian writing had a set of some 22 hieroglyphs to represent syllables that begin with a single consonant of their language, plus a vowel to be supplied by the native speaker. These glyphs were used as pronunciation guides for logograms, to write grammatical inflections, and, later, to transcribe loan words and foreign names.

However, although seemingly alphabetic in nature, the original Egyptian uniliterals were not a system and were never used by themselves to encode Egyptian speech. In the Middle Bronze Age an apparently "alphabetic" system is thought by some to have been developed in central Egypt around 1700 BC for or by Semitic workers, but we cannot read these early writings and their exact nature remains open to interpretation.

Over the next five centuries this Semitic "alphabet" seems to have spread north. All subsequent alphabets around the world with the sole exception of Korean Hangeul have either descended from it, or been inspired by one of its descendants.

Telecommunication

The history of telecommunication – the transmission of signals over a distance for the purpose of communication - began thousands of years ago with the use of smoke signals and drums in Africa, America and parts of Asia.

Objective of The Study

Peeping into the conditions that forced man to develop certain means of communication; having an idea of the popular means of communication; analyzing and enumerating them, and producing a historical perspective of the advancement in the means of communication.

Review of Literature

Mefalopulos, Paolo (2008). Development communication engages stakeholders and policy makers, establishes conducive environments, assesses risks and opportunities and promotes

information exchanges to bring about positive social change via sustainable development.

Doron, Assa (2 April 2013). Systematic study and practice began at the University of the Philippines Los Banos in the 1970s, through the establishment of the Department of Development Communication in the College of Agriculture, which offered undergraduate and master's degrees.

OECD, CAWTAR (2014). In a quest to ensure that the overall legal and policy framework is promoting gender equality, more than just adopting laws that explicitly provide for gender equality can be done. Thus it is essential that all laws and policies reflect gender equality considerations, through a process called gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is the mechanism to ensure a gender-sensitive approach to policy making.

UNESCO Approaches to Communication Planning. Retrieved on 28 November 2015. The process approach deals directly with the communication planning process which deals to the theories within the planning process that asserts that planning is the application of theory on how and why they are used. The second is it deals with the planning process itself that provide alternative ways of organizing the planning function and process, given different purposes and planning contexts. The thrust of the argument is that there are alternatives to the widely known rational/comprehensive planning approach.

Haynes, Emily; Palermo, Claire; Reidlinger, Dianne P. (2016-09-01). "Modified Policy-Delphi study for exploring obesity prevention priorities". As a methodology, Delphi is used for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem. As mentioned, one of the advantages of this technique is the involvement of stakeholders in the analysis which is imperatively instrumental in building a consensus among people who will be/are affected by the policy/project. In the Philippines, this has also been well applied in a study conducted by Dr. Alexander Flor and Dr. Felix Librero in the Southeast Asian Needs Assessment for a Global Open Agriculture and Food University. Recently, Haynes, Palermo and Reidlinger (2016) adopted a Delphi modified technique (James Lind Alliance Approach) in their study in exploring obesity prevention in Australia.

Hypothesis

- Communication has undergone several phases since times immemorial.
- Beginning with pigeons as messengers it has rested for a temporary phase on internet which allows man to communicate to his fellowbeings much faster than earlier through several devices and social sites.
- With the passage of time, there is a shift in the means of communication.

Methodology

Designed with a view to mirrorising a historical perspective of the origin, development and advancement in the means of communication, the paper is a theoretical and analytical study based

solely on the secondary data collected randomly from the various books, journals and internet sites. Beginning with the thorough study of the available literature on the theme, the investigator proceeded on towards the collection and analysis of the data, and finally drew fruitful conclusion that in the modern age, the means of communication adopted by the people are different from the one adopted earlier. With the arrival of the twenty first century, the means of communication reveals a tremendous change. The modern man is no longer ready to wait. Within no time, he wants to be globalized. For it, he now depends on the internet which through its several devices, allows him to join the world.

Analysis

The history of communication or to say, the history of means of communication reveals that with the change in times and ages, the means of communication too changed. Petroglyphs, pictograms, ideograms, writing, alphabet etc. are some of the ways through which the man in the various ages of history used to communicate with others. In the present times, telecommunication has set aside all the other means. The modern man relies on internet for the fast communication. For it he is succumbed to some of the popular devices and sites like facebook, twitter, whatsapp etc. Now he finds himself amidst the developed means of communication, and so, he is capable of linking himself with the globally dispersed people who inhabit the various parts of the globe.

Conclusion

Societies have long had a desire to find effective ways to report environmental dangers and opportunities; circulate opinions, facts, and ideas; pass along knowledge, heritage, and lore; communicate expectations to new members; entertain in an expansive manner; and broaden commerce and trade. The primary challenge has been to find ways to communicate messages to as many people as possible.

Before writing, humans relied on oral traditions to pass on information. "It was only in the 1920s-according to the Oxford English Dictionary-that people began to speak of 'the media' and a generation later, in the 1950s, of a 'communication revolution', but a concern with the means of communication is very much older than that". Oral and written communication played a major role in ancient cultures. These oral cultures used stories to document the past and impart cultural standards, traditions, and knowledge. With the development of alphabets around the world over 5000 years ago, written language with ideogrammatic alphabets like hieroglyphics started to change how cultures communicated.

Still, written communication remained ambiguous and did not reach the masses until the Greeks and Romans resolved this by establishing a syllable alphabet representing sounds. But, without something to write on, written language was inefficient. Eventually, paper making processes were perfected in China, which spread throughout Europe via trade routes. Mass communication was not quick,

but it was far-reaching . This forever altered how cultures saved and transmitted cultural knowledge and values. Any political or social movement throughout the ages can be traced to the development and impact of the printing press and movable metal type. With his technique, Guttenberg could print more than a single page of specific text. By making written communication more available to larger numbers of people, mass printing became responsible for giving voice to the masses and making information available to common folks. McLuhan argued that Gutenberg's evolution of the printing press as a form of mass communication had profound and lasting effects on culture, perhaps the most significant invention in human history.

Currently, most of the wireline communication systems are being replaced by fiber optic cables which provide extremely high bandwidth and make possible the transmission of a wide variety of information sources, including voice, data, and video. Cellular radio has been developed to provide telephone service to people in automobiles, buses, and trains. High-speed communication networks link computers and a variety of peripheral devices literally around the world.

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