

ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE
MEDIA STUDIES

2732

CASE STUDY: Audiences and Institutions

WEDNESDAY 16 JANUARY 2008

Afternoon
Time: 1 hour

Additional materials (enclosed): Answer Booklet (8 page)

Additional materials (required):
None



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Write your name in capital letters, your Centre Number and Candidate Number in the spaces provided on the Answer Booklet.
- Read each question carefully and make sure you know what you have to do before starting your answer.
- **Answer either Section A or Section B only on your chosen topic.**
- You should answer all parts of questions 1 and 2 and **either** question 3 **or** question 4.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- The number of marks for each question is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.
- The total number of marks available for this paper is **90**.
- The quality of written communication will be taken into account in assessing your work.

This document consists of **6** printed pages and **2** blank pages.

Section A: New Media Technologies

Read the passage carefully and answer all parts of questions 1 and 2 which follow.

YouTube is currently one of the fastest-growing websites on the World Wide Web, and is ranked as the 16th most popular website on Alexa, far outpacing even MySpace's growth.

By July 2006, 100 million clips were watched on YouTube every day, with 65,000 new videos uploaded daily. The site has almost 20 million visitors each month, according to Nielsen/NetRatings.

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Although YouTube's potential market value is pure speculation, an article in the New York Post suggested on July 23, 2006 that YouTube may be worth anywhere from \$600 million to \$1 billion.

YouTube policy does not allow content to be uploaded by anyone other than the copyright holder, and the company frequently removes uploaded videos that infringe on copyrights, but a large amount of copyrighted material is uploaded nonetheless. Generally, YouTube only discovers these videos when they are reported by the YouTube community, or when the copyright holder reports them. The primary way in which YouTube identifies the content of a video is through the search items that uploaders associate with clips.

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Some users have taken to creating alternative words as search terms to be entered when uploading specific type of files. For instance some members of the Internet Wrestling Community use the term 'cheese souffle' as a search term to indicate an upload of a WWE video, apparently to attempt to get round YouTube locating illegal files and removing them.

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Some industry commentators have speculated that YouTube's running costs – specifically the bandwidth required – may be as high as \$1 million per month, thereby fuelling criticisms that the company might not be a viable business. Advertisements were launched on the site beginning in March 2006.

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In June 2006, ITV News reported that YouTube and sites like it were encouraging violence and bullying amongst teenagers, who were filming fights on their mobile phones and then uploading them. While YouTube provides a facility for reporting excessively violent videos, the news report stated that communication with the website was difficult.

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Questions 1 and 2a can be answered mainly by reference to the passage and may be answered in note form.

Question 2b requires you to relate your wider knowledge of the topic to the material in the passage.

You will be rewarded for your use of relevant media terminology and for your understanding of the concepts of Audience and Institution in all your answers.

- 1 (a) State three figures from the passage which indicate YouTube's popularity. [6]
- (b) Outline two problematic aspects with the content of material on YouTube as indicated in the passage. [8]
- (c) Explain what is meant in the passage by:
- (i) 'get round locating illegal files' (line 18) [3]
and
- (ii) 'bandwidth required' (line 20) [3]
- 2 (a) Why might YouTube not be a 'viable business' (line 21)? [5]
- (b) Using your wider knowledge outside the passage, discuss the ways in which popular websites continue to change people's media use. [20]

Answer either question 3 or question 4.

You should make detailed reference to examples from your case study material to support points made in your answer.

Your answer should be written in continuous prose.

Either

- 3 How far do new media technologies offer audiences new experiences? [45]

Or

- 4 To what extent does the introduction of new media technologies threaten existing media industries? [45]

Section B: Media Ownership

Read the passage carefully and answer all parts of questions 1 and 2 which follow.

The battle plans have been laid, and the combatants are poised to attack. After months of mystery, the big three game-console makers – Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo have each revealed their next-generation gaming machines. Whether the coming market showdown will result in any dramatic reshaping of the market remains to be seen, but most industry watchers expect the leaders to maintain their positions – at least for now.

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The latest clash has generated a lot of hype for a number of reasons, starting with the increasing popularity of game-consoles. It is no longer a case where just teenagers are interested in gaming, as a number of business professionals now play regularly.

Microsoft now dominates a number of consumer gaming markets. In the latest battle, the vendor started off on strong footing with its plans to deliver the Xbox 360 before Sony could get its Playstation 3 to market, or Nintendo could ship its Wii console, using strategies such as selling each Xbox 360 system at a loss of \$400.

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Microsoft has also focused on online gaming, making it a central point in the Xbox 360 experience. It was the first vendor to develop online gaming functions and has been using game and peripherals' sales to recoup some of the revenue lost on consoles.

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Pricing may continue to become a game of cat-and-mouse between Microsoft and Sony. As Sony starts shipping its system, Microsoft may be able to lower pricing to make its system attractive to more customers.

By trying to make it easy for older adults and youngsters to learn how to play games, Nintendo is focusing on expanding the base of game-console users.

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The end result is, at the moment, the top three companies seem destined to be in the same positions in the marketplace when they launch their fourth generation products in a couple of years.

Questions 1 and 2a can be answered mainly by reference to the passage and may be answered in note form.

Question 2b requires you to relate your wider knowledge of the topic to the material in the passage.

You will be rewarded for your use of relevant media terminology and for your understanding of the concepts of Audience and Institution in all your answers.

- 1 (a) Name the three consoles which will battle it out in the marketplace. [6]
- (b) Outline two methods used by console manufacturers to attempt to dominate the market, as noted in the passage. [8]
- (c) Explain what is meant in the passage by:
- (i) 'generated a lot of hype' (line 6) [3]
and
- (ii) 'expanding the base of game console users' (line 20) [3]
- 2 (a) What evidence is there in the passage to support the view that the three competitors will be in the same positions in a couple of years? [5]
- (b) With reference to examples from your wider knowledge of media ownership, consider the impact of competition in the media industry marketplace. [20]

Answer either question 3 or question 4.

You should make detailed reference to examples from your case study material to support points made in your answer.

Your answer should be written in continuous prose.

Either

- 3 Why might media owners want to invest in a range of media? [45]

Or

- 4 To what extent do media owners determine audience tastes? [45]

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