Concept of Information & Globalisation of Communication in Digital Age

By

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ABSTRACT

Information concepts and organizational environments such as, Placid-randomized, Placid-cluster, Disturbed-reactive and Turbulent environments, which affect the information dissemination, are crucial in the present high-tech world of digital age. The communication culture in the digital age seems to have a different connotation as compared to earlier times, when it was direct and face to face with a very little chance for miscommunication. Therefore, globalization of communication, which is heavily dependent on innovative information technology, should be implemented with an ethical framework involving quick and proper communication of facts to masses. This may be helpful in prevention of war and promotion of peace/ respect for culture, tradition and values/ promotion of human rights and dignity.

KEYWORDS: Communication, Globalisation, Human Rights

0. INTRODUCTION

Information is socio-economic product of generated thoughts, which can be the basis for managers, librarians and planers to make proper decisions for development. Intelligently refined information is not only the processes of communicating the message, but it is knowledge and may also form database. In the recent times progressive information technology has completely changed the meaning of communication and processes of its dissemination. The digital technology has made it super fast where within seconds worldwide communication can be established using computer technology as media. Unlike the old days when it was possible to achieve information only through limited sources, today, relevant information is available on Internet.

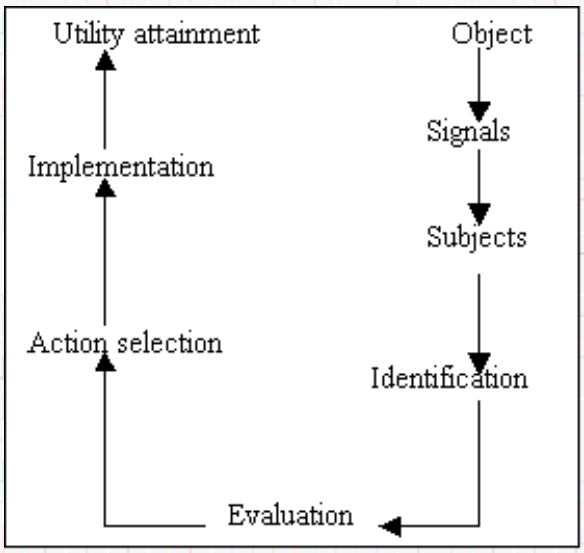
The digital revolution combined with the setting up of open, interconnection, interactive networks has fostered a number pf radical changes, the most important of which have resulted in the dematerialization of products, growing concentration in culture sectors and the globalization of communication networks. The overall trend, associated with the free circulation of products around the world, raises a number of questions of a statutory, culture and political nature. Over and above, the issues raised by the progress in technological convergence and industrial conflicts, there remain a number of problems, concerning the issue of copy right and neighboring rights in the future information society, with respect to the national cultures and their diversity in the general trend towards globalization and finally the new information and communication technology in economic, social and cultural development.

All these areas are both significant and strategic in the quest for enhanced democracy in the information society. Digital technology marks a true revolution, which goes far beyond purely technical upheavals. On the one hand, it will lead to the integration of information transmission networks and on the other, it will simultaneously enhance a new relationship with the media and the way in which we consume the information they convey (1).

1. INFORMATION CONCEPTS IN DIGITAL SOCIETY

The information, which has been stored electronically and retrieved immediately through machine, is the **information technology**. The information technology has ever since been used worldwide to access and retrieve million of pages of information. The revolutionary changes and developments in information technology have mainly two impacts. First, the more and more information is readily available in the machine-readable form. Secondly, the computers are used increasingly for provision of information and the librarians and equivalent professionals have familiarized themselves with the latest technological developments in this field. Due to some mechanical and electronically evolutions, a revolution in information technology has led to the changes in the nature of library operations and in the role of library in society. The active utilization of science and technology needs effective dissemination of information and to have effective dissemination the computer is required to be used to store the large amount of data to collate, analyze and process it in order to extract meaningful information.

Information is the recognition of patterns in the flow of matter and energy reaching an individual or organization. All flows of matter and energy have the capability of carrying patterned signals. Each person then develops a set of recognized patterns, and everyone recognizes the same patterns or necessarily interprets a given pattern in the same way. The flow of information can be understood by the under given information cycle, which is very similar to the human communication model as shown in the following figure (Figure 1).



For human communication to take place, a person must express the information patterns in a symbolic form that other people know and understand. True communication occurs only when two or more people share a symbol-referent system. The sender, wishing to communicate with the receiver, has an idea or feeling that she or he encodes by selecting the appropriate symbols representing the desired meaning. This process creates the massage. After encoding, the sender selects the means of delivering the message. The receiver decodes the message and a meaning is assigned to it. When the process is completed, a communication has taken place (2).

2. ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

F.Emery and E.L.Trist identified four basic types of organizational environments: placid-randomized, placid-cluster, disturbed-reactive, and turbulent. Although not directly concerned with information, Emery and Trist's descriptions of these environments do indicate how the environment would affect information work.

2.1 Placid-randomized environment

A placid-randomized environment is one in which the organization assumes that both the goals and the dangers are basically unchanging. Organizational goals are long-term and seldom need adjustment.

2.2 Placid-clustered environment

In this environment the goals are primarily long-term, but the organization quickly adjusts the goals if there is a significant change in the external factors. In such an environment, the organization assumes that dangers, and to some extent opportunities, will arise in cluster.

2.3 Disturbed-reactive environment

These are environments in which active competitors to the organization exist. In this environment, having prompt accurate information about what the competitors are doing is very important. Although the organization has long-term goals, it revises its goals in the light of information received about the competitors' activities.

2.4 Turbulent environment

The level of competition necessitates competition for survival. As a result of knowing what others are doing or planning to do, an organization may make a radical change in the basic purposes. On a slightly less extreme level, an information center or library serving a research and development team experiences occasional abrupt shifts in collecting emphasis, partly due to the knowledge gained from the information collected about competitors' work and progress.

Library and information centers normally acquire and store more information for long periods of time than the organization will use

and/or disseminate to the external environment. The percentage allocated to long-term retention varies among organizations. Organizations operating in a placid-randomized environment normally have a large percentage of retained but unused or disseminated information (2).

3. COMMUNICATION

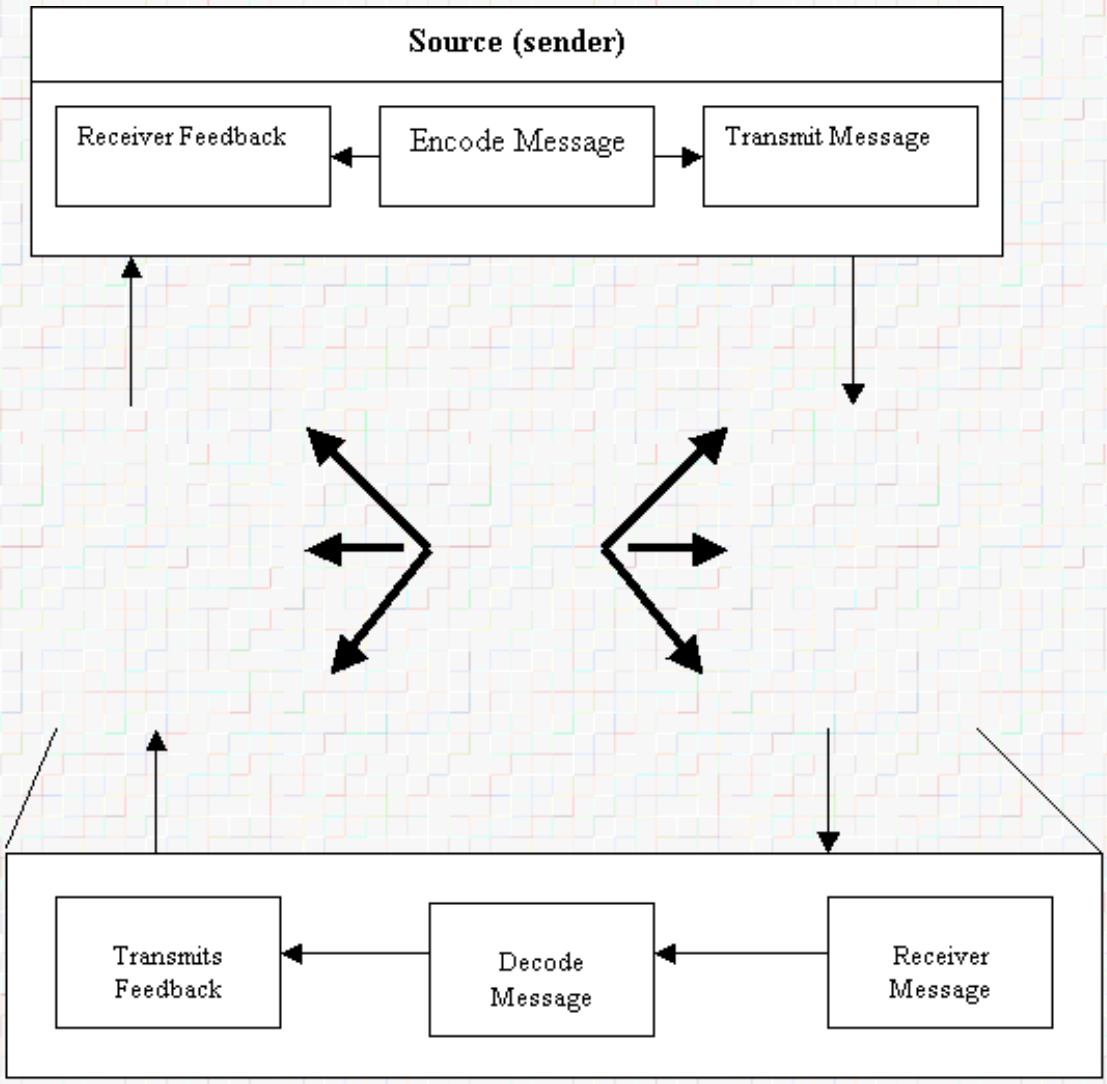
3.1 Definitions of communication

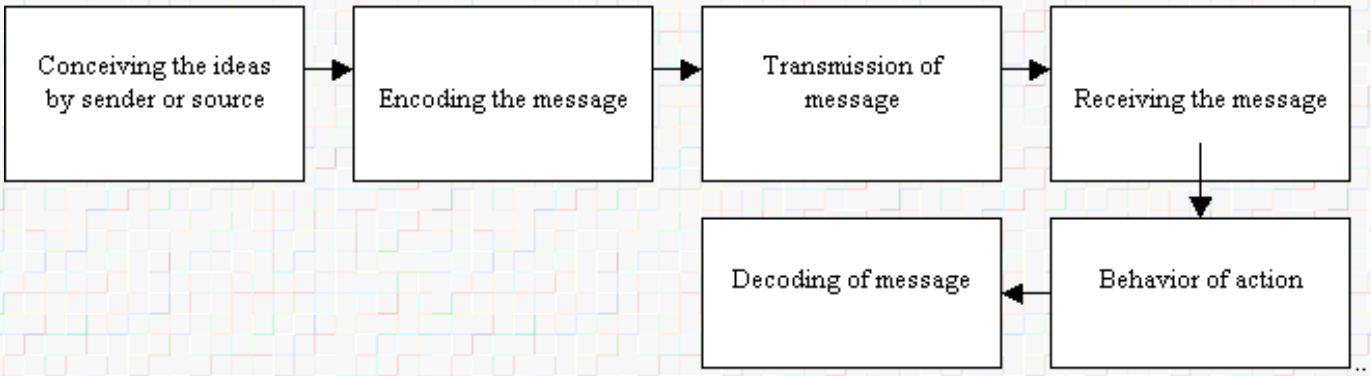
According to L.J.Kazmier: "Communication refers to the sharing of ideas, facts, opinions, information & understanding. It is the transfer or transmission of some information and understanding from one person to another".

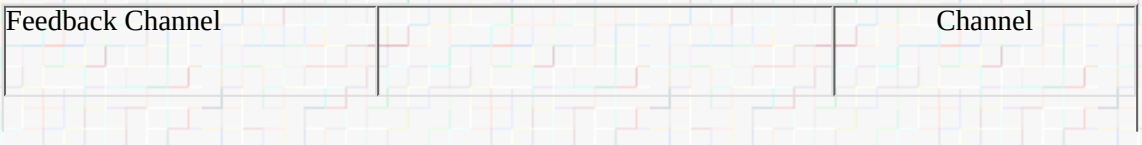
According to K.Devis: "Communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another. It is essentially a bridge of meaning between people. By using this bridge of meaning, a person can safely cross the river of misunderstanding that separates all people".

3.2 Communication process

The communication Process con be understood by going through the flow charts given below-


Source (sender)
Receiver Feedback
Encode Message
Transmit Message
Transmits Feedback
Decode Message
Receiver Message


Conceiving the ideas by sender or source
Encoding the message
Transmission of message
Receiving the message
Behavior of action
Decoding of message


Feedback Channel
Channel

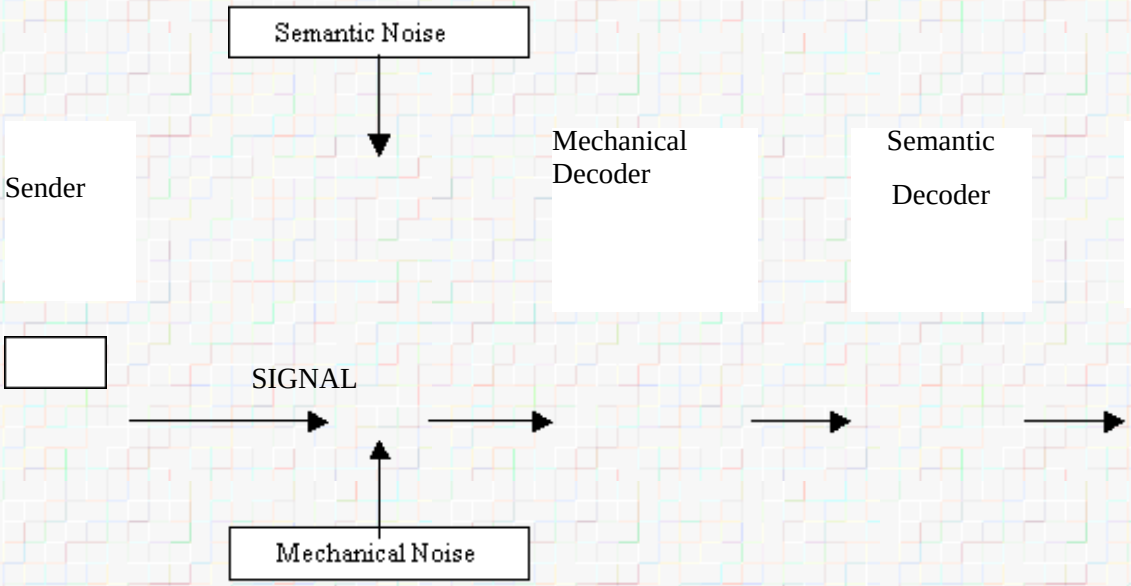
Oral	**NOISE**	Oral
Written		Written
Nonverbal		Nonverbal

Receiver
COMMUNICATION PROCESS

3.3 Communication Culture in Digital Age

This new technology differs also from the 'classic' notion of mass media, the twentieth-century term that has come to represent primarily print media, radio, television and cinema. As a result of technological development, all these individual aspects of the information and communication industries have combined to forge a new product with enormous potential for expansion into all aspects of daily life and significant implications for the economic market. Thus the search for the new labels to deal with this area has begun. Some of the most popular and widely used terms these days include 'informatics', 'telesat-computers' and 'digital technology' (3).

Communication can also be understood by the following charts-



Modified Communication Process (5)

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3.4 Communication Globalization

Bibliotheca Universalis, a G-7 countries global Information Society pilot project, was launched in February 1995 in Brussels. The seven funding partners, mostly national libraries involved in the projects are: Bibliotheca National de France and Ministere et de la Communication (France, pilot), The National Diet Library (Japan, pilot), The Library of Congress (United States), The National Library of Canada (Canada), Discoteca de Stato (Italy), Die Deutche Bibliothek (German), and The British Library (U.K.). The main objective of Bibilotheca Universalis is to provide access to the major works of the world's scientific and cultural heritage digitalized by libraries, to vast public via multimedia technologies, hence fostering the exchange of knowledge and dialogue over national and international borders. It will promote large digitalization techniques, encourage the definition and adoption of global standards and provide a practical framework for international cooperation.

The aim is to exploit existing digitization programs in order to develop a large distribution virtual collection of knowledge and make it available via global communication networks, enhancing the services to the end users (3).

4 GLOBAL TREND

The ability to connect heterogeneous systems of different brands, assuring interoperability and making possible the integration of LAN-MAN-WAN networks, became possible during the 1990s. This facilitates a significant reduction in teleprocessing costs and a

considerable increase in the data communication speed. In addition, as the next century is approached, the following advances can be expected:

Ø Global integration of services, with voice, data and image traffic. Traffic of other human senses, such as touch and smell may be introduced later on.

Ø Total connectivity, meaning that information processing equipment will be manufactured following the 'plug-and-play' philosophy.

Ø Wide-band integrate digital network services, operating at a very high speed, varying from 10 to 622 MBps. Several recent projects are making important progress in this area. One of them is the implementation, in USA, of the information super highway which interconnects computer, teleprocessing, cable TV and other networks throughout the whole country. A similar project has already been started in Europe. These information super highways will break barriers between countries and regions, opening space for many other new technologies, such as interactive TV, videophone, electronic marketing, etc.

Easy access to computational resources and information, distributed geographically throughout the globe, is fast becoming a reality. As a consequence, the time and space dimensions will be completely altered, permitting full interaction of people and equipment located in any part of the planet, through the use of information processing and telecommunication technology (4).

5. OBSTACLES TO GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

The major barriers to effective global communication can be grouped as follows:

Ø ***Language-related:*** Multiplicity of languages and dialects (common to most developing regions of the world); use of jargons-technical and other lingo; use of codes in communication, including man-machine interface; synonyms, homonyms, and homographs, leading to misinterpretation of language.

Ø ***Culture-related:*** Diversity of cultures and traditions; apprehensions about technology; alienness to reality – differences in role perception, needs and experiences of local community; difficulties in comprehending and accepting cultural practices of other groups; inadequate or wrong understanding *of* local culture; and misinterpretation of local practices.

Ø ***Media-related; technology related:*** Tradition, e.g. oral tradition; visual perception; comprehension difficulties; distortion introduced by media: voice distortion, image distortion; environmental noise; and use of inappropriate or inadequate technologies and facilities.

Ø ***Relation between communicator and communicatee***: Nature of relation – employer-employee; family relationship; standing in the subject; and length and experience of previous interactions.

Ø ***Presentation of information:*** Standard used *vis a vis* the audience; clarity and organization of ideas; reception, redundancy, and precision; style and elegance.

Ø ***Legal, administrative and political factors:*** Misinformation and disinformation – unintended or deliberate; propaganda; withholding and/or restrictions in the use of information for economic reasons, confidentiality and security reasons (individual and corporate) administrative reasons.

Ø ***Physical and mental handicaps of communicator and communicatee:*** More particularly impaired vision and/or hearing, and mental disabilities, psychological and behavioral factors that affect communication.

Ø ***Information system - related:*** Some or all of the factors mentioned above may affect the information system and services and interface between communicator and communicatee. In addition, the following system-related factors can affect efficiency and effectiveness of information delivery.

6. AN ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

From the above discussion, it may be suggested that the quest for dialogue and the transcendence of alienation through interpersonal communication is an ongoing revolution in society and that this must be recognized and examined. The point here is to note a social phenomenon, not to lament the lack of good communication. This is both a human and societal problem. The suggestion is that the way people relate to each other in a world of 'internationalized' culture and consciousness may be more important than how nation states relates. This is not to suggest that we should abandon our efforts to improve our communication technology; nor is it proposed that organizational, technical, or even politically organized communication should be limited.

The ultimate ethical power, the communication institutions have within themselves, is to serve the public and the zenith of serving that public is reached when a communication entity succeeds in raising a group, a public, or a world, whatever its size, to a higher level of understanding and insight.

In this spirit we would propose four basic principles, or what one might call a set of considerations:

7. PREVENTION OF WAR AND PROMOTION OF PEACE

If, as so often demonstrated, international media can mobilize for war and exacerbate tensions, why can they not do the reverse? International media and all communication institutions should:

Ø Increase the amount of information available on peaceful solutions to conflicts;

Ø Break down stereotypes that dehumanize opposing population;

Ø Be aware of hidden biases of coverage on controversial issues;

Ø Serve as early warning devices to bring attention to potential flash points;

Ø Remind opponents of peaceful solutions to conflicts;

Ø Confer prestige on the peacemaker;

Ø Help create a public mood conductive to the spirit of reconciliation; and

Ø Put peacemakers on opposite sides in touch with one another.

8. RESPECT FOR CULTURE, TRADITION AND VALUES

International media and communication institutions should:

Promote respect and tolerance for the world's manifold cultures;

Uphold tradition in the face of unchallenged outside intrusion;

Facilitate the often difficult and distorted communication between cultures;

Help diverse value systems arrive at common definitions for such universal goals as peace, integrity and national sovereignty;

Point out that deeply ingrained cultural values determine in part a nation's political behavior; and

Strengthen and preserve cultural identities and support cultures in the face of outside domination.

9. PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY

Communication institutions must provide a voice to the dissenter and the downtrodden. Freedom of speech, of the press and of information is vital for the realization of human rights. Communication should:

Ø Public violation of human rights and international conventions;

Ø Promote access of individuals and group to media outlets in the face of domination by elites or majorities; and

Ø Promote the democratization of communication, which means removing the obstacles to the free interchange of ideas, information and experience among equals.

We would be the first to acknowledge that these principles are general, culturally relative and will at times have different meanings in the context of prevailing ideologies and belief systems (3).

10. CONCLUSION

In the modern world of computerization and mechanization, Communication, offers many opportunities. It allows access to huge resources of information on virtually any subject. Once we are online, we may find linking up with the outside world a fascinating addiction.

Twenty first century has been the century of explosions. It has witnessed the population explosion, socio-cultural explosion, and nuclear explosion and information explosion. The information explosion is due to the fact that information generation is a continuous process. In this era of information explosion, huge amount of information needs application and use of new technology that is information technology.

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