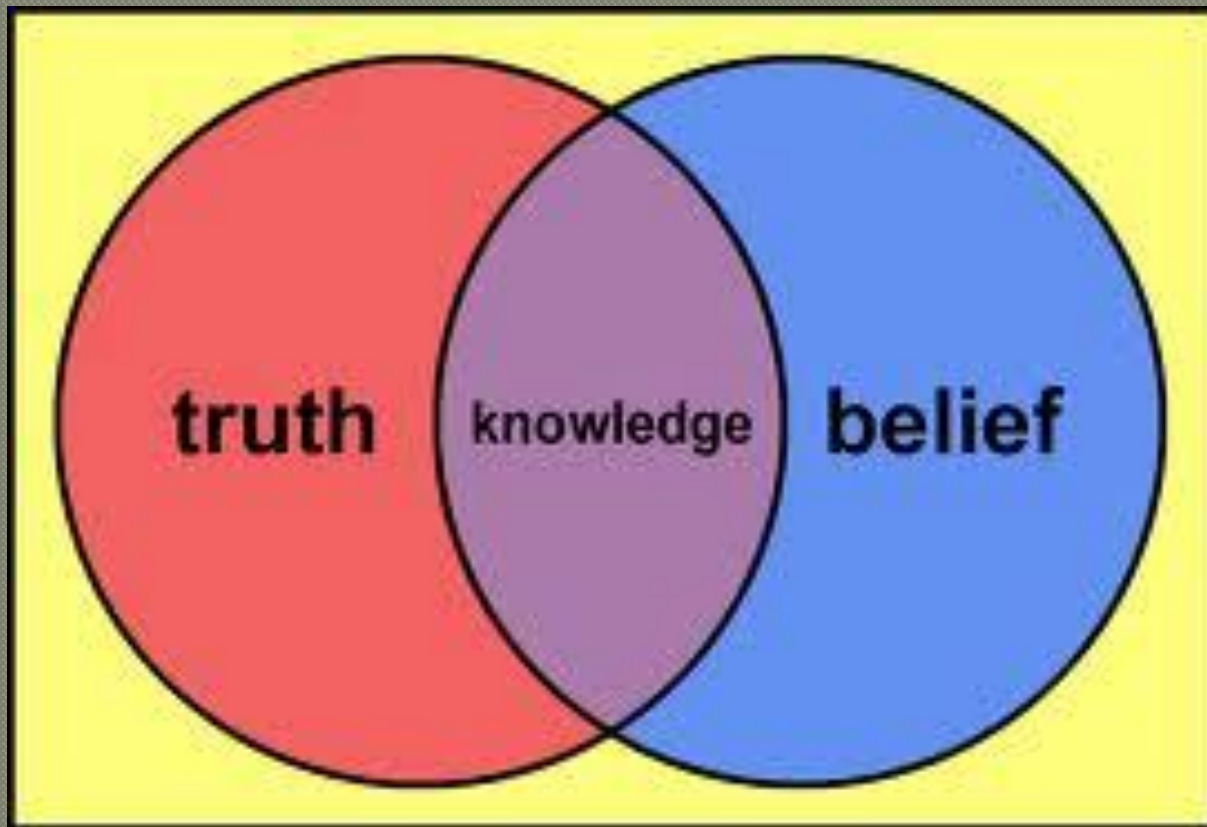


The changing face of journalism and its implication for the consumption of knowledge



Main Objective

- Evaluating the effect of how comment posting on news articles has transformed the ways in which we consume the knowledge within published articles.

Methodology

- To accomplish this goal we found several articles across various online news platforms covering the same topic: Obama's planned access to universally accessible contraception.
- With these articles in hand we engaged with them in various ways.

Preliminary Research

- To obtain a baseline representative of traditional news consumption we engaged in discussion about the articles with fellow students.



Results

- Most of the discussion was on topic.
- The participants were typically friendly and non-aggressive, but periodic verbal ‘jabbs’ were hurled at other contributors.
- The personal views of the most vocal supporters had the effect of polarizing the entire group.

Online Research

- This research thrust was investigated by analyzing comment streams following the selected articles.
- This was of course a very qualitative assessment of this complex phenomenon, but it served to allow some form of analysis.

Results

- Overall the comments were fairly article directed.
- The comments furthest from the date of publication were found to be more articulate and knowledgeable.
- Generally the replies to comments had more of a malicious hue than the comments themselves.

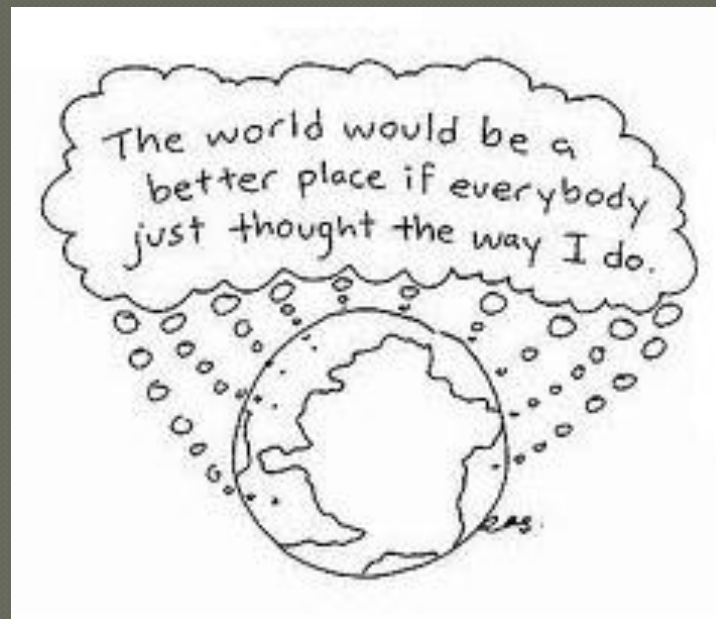
Comparative Analysis

- On the whole these two modes of interaction, while very different at face value, actually appear to be rather similar.
- “Those who read what they find on the Internet...are often dismayed, even appalled by what they see, forgetting that human beings as a rule speak to one another in ways raw, unpolished, even illogical, far below the standards of the written word. It is not so much that cyberspace is begetting trash as that it is giving a degree of publicity and visibility to our ordinary, everyday conversations, and we are -- as representatives of the species -- embarrassed by what we see.”

*-from the introduction of *Scholarly Journals at the Crossroads: A Subversive Proposal for Electronic Publishing**

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- The facilitators of conversation were in both cases outlandish, ridiculous statements made by the most opinionated.

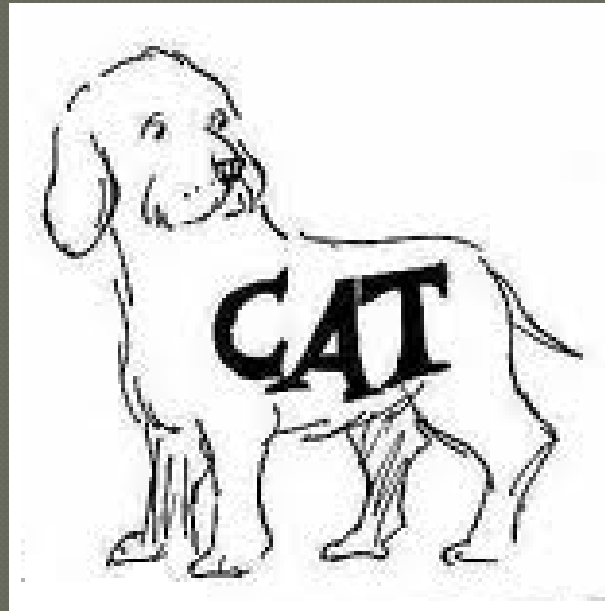


Trolling

- Typically trolls are looked on as a negative, but we found that these people are the ones instigating conversation, both in casual discourse and online dialog.
- As this phenomena has left the living room's casual discourse to the internet's more accessible interactions it has merely become more highly publicized.

Identity Association

- ◉ The anonymity supplied by usernames only serves to accentuate this general concept of trolling.



Curbing this phenomenon

- ◉ Websites have addressed this issues in multiple ways:
 - Deleting “comments [that are] extremely abusive, off-topic, use excessive foul language, or include *ad hominem* attacks.” -Huff Post
 - Completely eradicating user names in favor of Face book mediated commenting Stating, “we’re using facebook...to create a more civil environment for conversation.” -BucyrusTelegraphForum.com

Knowledge via opinion

- The speed at which the internet has progressed from its inception to its fully integrated modern form clearly shows the desire people have for subjective, opinionated knowledge.
- The internet culture has led to a devaluing of supposedly expert opinion leading to the wide scale adoption of the public knowledge pool for critical decision making.

Blogging

- The invasion of blogs show we no longer seek solely objective recounts of the real world, and the news describing it, we also want the subjective reality of general citizens.
- So, comment posting can be seen as the bridge between the opinionated blogs and traditional objective journalism.

Accessibility

- The internet is supplying people with the ability to more quickly access others thoughts on the relevant topics discussed in articles.
- The knowledge inherent in news articles is still there it is just no longer the only thing we concerned with.

Conclusion

- ◉ Knowledge in the internet age is becoming more democratized, putting it in the hands of the masses.

Pro: taking knowledge solely out of the hands of the journalistic elites

Con: Knowledge can be hijacked by trolls

...continued..

- ◉ While it may be too early to determine the ultimate fate of comment posting and its effect on knowledge consumption and proliferation, we believe the pros outweigh the cons.

Questions?