The Transforming Presentation of the Contemporary Self:

Persona, branding and the curation/correlation of identity into digital forms of communication

Professor P David Marshall, PhD, CSU &
Dr Nicholas Qyll, Dortmund U of Applied Sciences and Arts, Germany

Abstract and...

Artwork

Correlation

Curation...

Conclusion

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presented at the....
25 November 2022

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Introduction

Abstract
A great deal of recent research has dealt with the transformation of identity and presentation of the self that has developed from the wider presence, naturalization and normalization of digital culture and communication. Much of this work connects strongly to what has emerged as persona studies over the last decade; but it has to be equally acknowledged that the pandemic of COVID-19 has produced a growing pandemic reconstruction of the public self in contemporary culture.

This paper investigates that this naturalization and normalization of the presentation of the self – a digital persona in both the presentation of “work” identity and what can be called personal or private identity through different and parallel digital reconstructions is producing a new precarity within cultures and interculturally in profoundly complex ways.

Several conceptual forms of categorization are explored in this paper to make sense of the integration of digital reformations of culture and identity. What follows are three categories of contemporary digital persona that are taken from past research studies and are further analysed in this paper:

In many ways, these “curated” and industrially- “correlated” identities of the self – personas – are transforming the conceptualization of influence, cultures, communities and engagement which is producing likely instabilities in the concepts of collectives and formations of what constitutes cultures and individuals in our contemporary world.

1. Covidiquette (Marshall 2022) – a normalised ethical co-presence and presence

2. Zoom/Microsoft Teams/Webinars – the transformation of the presentation of the work-self across professions

3. Aspirational Digital Persona Branding – the normalization of the mediatised editing of the self
The etiquette and netiquette during Covid:

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Zoom and transformation of connection and "disconnection": shifted constitutions of self

the fabrication of location
1. blurred screen
2. black screen/back screen

**Microsoft Teams:** the new "hybrid environment" of work/home and attitude
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Digital Persona Branding (Agency)
Formations of the "self"
Influencer "self"
Entrepreneur -ial self
Fictive reconstructions
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Curating the digital "self": forming & branding identity

a **partial knowledge** of **collective formations** - and an attempt to guide the self - online

**manner** and **connection** - with others and with "**sites**, "**platforms"

The emergence of the categories of the **Influencer** and **followers**
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Industrial "Correlation"

**MicroSoft Viva** - institutional **support** and **analytical transformations**

**Google** - activity/searching  **Facebook** - connections/alliances

The collection of "data" - in terms of programmatic advertising -related algorithms and identifiable **PCAs**
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COMMUNICATING THROUGH CHAOS
Conclusion

the focus of future research in:

1. organisational communication
2. reading these new dimensions of the intercommunication industry into its transformation of social self/presence/co-presence
3. the significance of the fictive, strategic, industrial and entrepreneurial constitution of identity in contemporary digital communication and culture
References and emerging publications


Qyll, Nicholas (2020). Persona as Key Component in (Cultural) Person Branding (PhD thesis).


Upcoming/planned:

Herbst, D. Georg & Qyll, Nicholas (2023): Corporate imagery: How to give your company a face. 2. edition. Cologne: Halem (in German)

Qyll, N. (2023): "Using visual frame analysis (VFA) as qualitative methodology in personal branding research", in: Visual Communication (planned)

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Thank you so much for listening...

We are looking for collaborators in a related research in this area:
The research project is entitled: **Personalized and Collectively Mediatized Institutional Communication: A Study of Zoom**
and we have **9** researchers currently connected to the project: contact me if you are also interested in joining us: **damarshall@csu.edu.au** or **@dmarshallmc** on Twitter

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Personalized and Collectively Mediatized Institutional Communication: A Study of Zoom

There have been profound transformations in the way people are communicating within organisations, clubs, businesses, families and social groups over the last decade. Many of these shifts have been related to the integration of online pathways as well as the transforming capacities and capabilities of (mobile) phones and computers. The growth of social media itself, the integration of visual messaging through applications and technologies - and their sometimes association with text, formations of hashtags and memes - has constituted a distinctively different communication culture.

This project is designed to provide pathways for the investigation of these new systems of communication. It will focus on how individuals maintain their connection to institutions and individuals in these technologically mediated formations of themselves and those with which they are communicating. It will also work to address how the COVID-19 pandemic normalized this mediatized virtuality of the self in millions of meetings, conversations and events across interpersonal and massive collective structures of communication and exchange. In other words, what has been normalized in human culture is another kind of pandemic: the digital transformation of the self and collective identities and related mutated movement of meaning and understanding.

The object of the investigation is the live (and recordable) video streaming application and service called Zoom – a videotelephonic software or platform that predominantly works to link individuals into meetings. According to Statista (Ceci, 29 April 2022), 340 million downloads of the application occurred in the first quarter of 2020. In terms of usage, there are substantiated claims that “350 million daily meeting participants” on Zoom and there is “3.3 trillion minutes of activity per year” on the platform (Wise 2022) (WallStreetZen 2022). The purchase of the app by major institutions and businesses is the primary source of income for Zoom itself which in 2022 with 1.073 billion in revenue (Zoom 2022). Nonetheless, it also plays into individual usage that rivals its precursors in the interpersonal interplay such as FaceTime, Google Hangout to Google Meet and Skype for Business which has been blended into Microsoft Teams since 2017-2019.

The project will be a collaborative effort to work out how Zoom works and plays in our institutional cultures and personal cultures. It will also investigate the forms of “gestural communication” that are redefining human interaction as well as how these kinds of delivery and sharing of information have transformed existing forms of news and information delivery. Visual, audio and text communication – and the associated technologies – will be analysed and form the basis of observational and ethnographic “field” work by the team in different Zoom meetings. This fieldwork will be augmented through semi-structured, anonymized interviews with individuals from an array of institutions/companies/councils/clubs and interpersonal-social meetings.
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Communicating Through Chaos

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Image title: AppWindow Viva-Vista 2022
Artist: P David Marshall
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