Communication Balance in the Telematic Society and Users' Technical Imagination

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1. Introduction to the Study

1.1 The Problem Statement and Purpose of Study

Today, our everyday life is surrounded by information from media such as news, TV soaps, advertisements, films, posters and so on. It is like the second nature of us, because we obliviously perceive and experience the world through the lenses of media. Our lives largely depend on the media information. Particularly, TV pictures and other media images carry considerable weight in our consumption of information. The images from media overflow in our society and go as far as to substitute our real experiences. They have taken over the dominant position as information code from texts in the contemporary world. Above all, TV has been the dominant media for the last few decades. The problem in this situation is that the media images have been produced by only a few media experts and organizations and most of the people as passive audience have not had access to the process of information production within the media organizations. In this closed media system, it becomes easier for media to collude with political and economic power to deceive and manipulate people. This is a portrait of a modern-day media environment.

The development of the Internet and digital devices, however, has brought significant changes into the media environment. They enabled people to produce and distribute their own information and communicate with each other very easily and with lower costs. Recently, the emergence of social media has expanded the possibility of information production and communication. It facilitates bi-directional communication that counters the one-directional communication system of mass media. It also promotes a transition from the passive audience into the active users who produce and distribute information. The network of active users has potential to counterbalance the dominance of mass media. However, this ideal is not yet fully realized though some significant changes have been made in the media environment. Severe negative symptoms that threaten the optimistic view have also been increasing along with technological development. Therefore, negative views that express concerns over the intensification of the communication imbalance are also increasing. Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web warned, on the 25th anniversary of the web, that the threats of the

Internet by companies or governments could constrict the independence and openness of the Internet and the right to freedom of opinion and expression. He asserts that there are two roads in front of us whether the disappearance of the Internet by the threats or the protection of its independence and the users' right (Kiss, 2014. 3. 12). In other words, there are two roads between the intensification of communication imbalance and the redressing of the imbalance. We do not know clearly which way we are going. Both ways are still open to us and it depends on our decision and effort. If we want to choose the latter, we must strive to deal with the threads and realize the potential of the technology in a correct way. It is not only a technological issue, but also belongs to social and political issues. Therefore, the question is whether we have awareness, intention and ability to do it. It is necessary to take this question as a basis to approach the issues of communication balance.

Flusser's communication theory provides a useful approach to this issue. He finds the causes of communication imbalance in modern media systems and seeks a way to solve the problem. He argues that modern society has been dominated by the media system that manipulates the fragmented mass by deluding them with the media images, which he regards as the dominant information code of modern society. People cannot access and comprehend the media system that produces and distributes the media images in one-direction, so people are impotent against the dominance of the media system. The media system has enormously affected our whole lives including our values, tastes, behavior, lifestyles, and political opinions. He worries about the advent of totalitarianism through the dominance of the media system. However, he does not lose hope, but tries to find a way to solve the crisis. He focuses on the development of "telematics", in other words, the information communication technology. He foresees that the telematics will be able to make connection link between the fragmented people and facilitate interactive communication between them. In addition, people will not remain as passive audience any more, but will be able to participate actively in the information activities. People can handle images for the real purpose of communication, that is, people can use them to produce and preserve information freely to find meaning of the world. The growth of democratic communication system could counterbalance the dominance of totalitarian media system. This is the ideal state of communication balance and Flusser calls this ideal society as the "telematic society". He denies,

however, the optimism based on the technological determinism and emphasizes the role of users. His view on technology and media is more flexible than technological determinism. According to him, the use of media depends on the user's intention and competence to use them correctly along with the technological feature of media. The Internet and digital media can be used for the dialogical communication of people, or, conversely, be used for the dominance of the totalitarian media system. It depends on our intention and competence to make them serve the real purpose of human communication. Therefore, the concept "technical imagination" is centered on the Flusser's discourse. The technical imagination means users' competence to encode and decode media images and use the telematics actively for information activities in order to realize the possibility and find meaning of the world. He asserts that it is necessary for people to develop technical imagination to realize the telematic society. It is a major task we face in our age for the achievement of communication balance.

In this respect, it would be meaningful to take a view of the current media environment in the light of Flusser's communication theory. It is to assess the media environment with the aspect of whether it meets the demand to fulfill the essential purpose of human communication. It is also to find the way to create the media environment that is capable of fulfilling the purpose. It explores the possibility and limitation of communication technology within the social context. Above all, it focuses on the people's awareness and ability to realize the possibility of the communication technology and actively respond to the environment.

Acknowledging the problems mentioned above, this study aims to explore the possibility of communication balance between discursive communication and dialogical communication in today's media environment in the light of Flusser's communication theory. Particularly, it will focus on the aspect of user's technical imagination. In other words, it will explore how people perceive and use telematic media competently in their daily life. The reason for focusing on users is because the ideal communication balance decides what the media is used for and how we realize the technological potential. It rests on the shoulders of people who use media. To be more concrete, this study will focus on the social media and the perception and use activity of its users as a specific research subject. The social media is the newest version of telematic media and regarded as media that has the most dialogical feature ever. That is to say, the social

media seems to be the nearest thing to the telematic media that Flusser discussed. In this respect, this study aims to provide useful sources to understand the possibility and limitation of social media from the aspect of users and explore the way towards the communication balance.

1.2 Research Questions

This study will examine empirically how people perceive and use social media as dialogical communication media compared to mass media as discursive communication media. Based on the result of empirical research, this study will explore its implication for the communication balance. In this regards, this study has a number of research questions as following.

1. How do users perceive and evaluate the characteristics of social media?

1.1 How do users perceive and evaluate social media in comparison with mass media in the aspect of communication structure?

1.2 How do users perceive and evaluate social media in comparison with mass media in the aspect of communication content?

1.3 How do users perceive and evaluate the actual media and social context in the aspect of communication balance?

2. How do users practice and experience the technical imagination while using social media?

2.1 How is the social media embedded in users' daily life?

2.2 How do users utilize social media for information activity? What kind of meaning does it have in their social media use?

2.3 Which chances and problems do social media users perceive and experience in their use activity? How do users deal with them?

3. What are the social and cultural implications of social media users' perception and use activity?

3.1 How do the social media users' perception and use interrelate with the media and social context?

3.2 How is the social media users' technical imagination characterized in their perception and use activity?

3.3 What are the implications of the social media users' perception and use activity in the aspect of communication balance?

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This study consists of a literature review and analysis of a qualitative interview data. In the early chapters of the dissertation, Flusser's communication theory and other theoretical discourses about communication balance are reviewed as a theoretical background. Then, the current state of the development of social media as dialogical communication media is discussed in the aspect of communication balance. In the final chapters, the findings from an empirical research on social media users are described along with the implication of the study.

Chapter 2 contains the core concept of Flusser's communication theory related to the communication balance. It discusses Flusser's analysis of the crisis of modern media system and human communication due to the communication imbalance. Furthermore, it deals with Flusser's discourse of the telematic society that explores the possibility of the solving the communication imbalance through the development of telematic technology. With the introduction of Flusser's communication theory, this study

discusses the theoretical significance of Flusser's communication theory that provides the differentiated and useful points of view to understand the contemporary media environment.

Chapter 3 discusses the actual development of the telematic society and the possibility of communication balance based on the theoretical discourses from Chapter 2. In detail, it deals with the emergence, development, and socio-cultural impacts of social media as the representative case for the current technological condition of the telematic society. At the beginning of the chapter, the technological and communicative characteristics of social media are discussed. Then, the development state of social media is examined with the aspect of the growth of users and media culture. It shows how far Flusser's prospects of the telematic society have been realized in the contemporary society. On the other hand, the opposite on the development of social media is viewed. It is argued that the current significant problem could weaken the growth of social media and hinder the development to the telematic society.

Chapter 4 explains the method and result of the empirical research on social media users. This study conducted an empirical study on how social media users perceive and use social media compared to the mass media through the focus group interviews of Korean social media users. It describes various opinions and experiences of social media users in accordance with the research questions.

Chapter 5 discusses the implication of user's perception and use activity in relation to the topic of communication balance. The typology of social media users is made through the analysis of the interview results. The typology shows the types of users with various degrees of technical imagination. Furthermore, it analyzes the internal and external factors that promote or weaken the users' technical imagination. In conclusion, this paper suggests the importance of developing the technical imagination of users and reviews the theoretical discussion and projects to promote users' competence in the new media environment.

Chapter 6 summarizes the findings of the study in accordance with the research questions. In addition, it discusses the limitation of the study and suggests further research topics in this research theme.

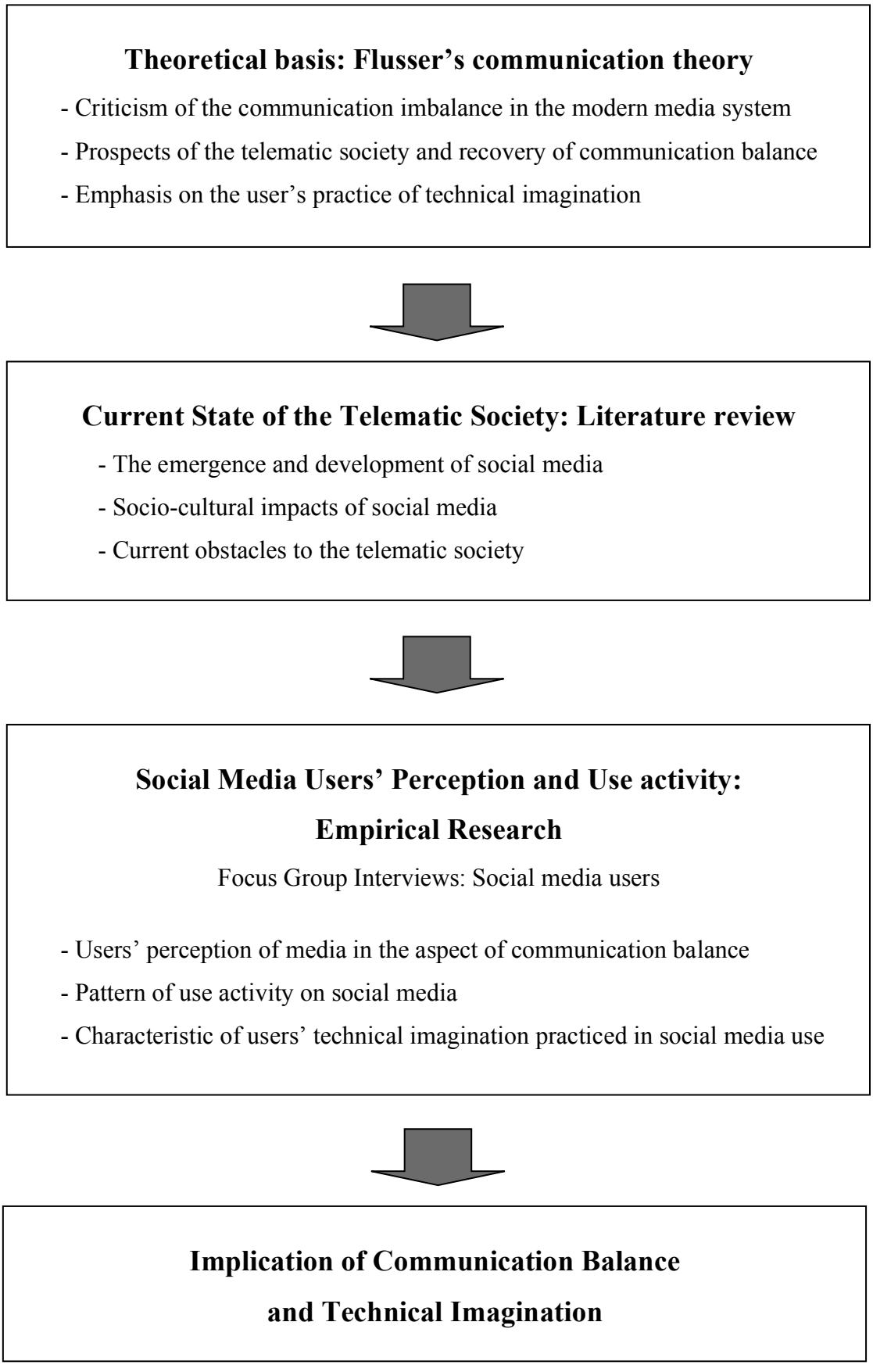


Fig. 1.1 The research scheme

2. Flusser's Theory of the Telematic Society

2.1 Major Themes of Flusser's Communication Theory

2.1.1 Proposition of Communication

According to the communication theory of Flusser, human communication is characterized as an artificial process of the human being as a social and political being. In his communication theory, he asks a basic but fundamental question: why do we as humans communicate on earth? He relates this question with an ontological question of the human being and seeks an explanation for the purpose of human communication on the basis of the ontological proposition about the human being. Flusser sees a human as an alienated being that is sentenced to death and suffers from the isolation and meaninglessness in the world. He states that humans communicate to forget the isolation and the meaninglessness caused by the human fate to the death. He explains this more specifically from two standpoints, namely, an existential standpoint and a formal standpoint. From the existential standpoint, humans communicate with others to overcome the death together. On the other hand, from the formal standpoint, humans communicate in order to produce and save information to deny the nature. Here, what he means by 'the nature' is not only restricted to the nature outside, but also includes the human nature.

Humans have invented an artifact for this purpose of communication. According to Flusser, the artifact is named as code. Humans give meaning to each phenomenon or understand it through symbols agreed among them. The agreement is important here. Flusser argues that all phenomena are agreed with symbols in principle and there are many ways to arrange symbols to codes. The code is every system that arranges the manipulation of symbols. Humans give a meaning to the world and understand it by means of the code. The code is a bridge not only between humans and the world, but also among humans. In other words, humans communicate by means of the code. Humans, however, are not always aware of the fact that they communicate each other with the artificial means, the code. We forget the artificiality of the code after acquiring it. The code becomes a kind of the second nature, and the coded world makes us forget the first nature. The coded world is like an artificial woven fabric.

Die menschliche Kommunikation webt einen Schleier der kodifizierten Welt, einen Schleier aus Kunst und Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Religion um uns und webt ihn immer dichter, damit wir unsere eigene Einsamkeit und unseren Tod, und auch den Tod derer, die wir lieben, vergessen. Kurz, der Mensch kommuniziert mit anderen, ist ein 《politisches Tier》, nicht weil er ein geselliges Tier ist, sondern weil er ein einsames Tier ist, welches unfähig ist, in Einsamkeit zu leben (Flusser, 1998, 10).

Flusser states that the acts and the meanings of the human communication should be interpreted inter-subjectively. It is because he thinks that the communication is not just a data transfer but also an intentional act as a reaction to the fate and the nature of human being. Thus, he regards the communication theory not as the natural science but as the humanity that does not explain the phenomena of communication objectively, but rather interprets them.

Daher ist die Kommunikationstheorie keine 《objektive》 Disziplin und hat mit den Untersuchungen, die Soziologen, Psychologen usw. am Phänomen der menschlichen Kommunikation unternehmen, nur das Phänomen, nicht aber die Methode gemein. Es ist eine 《semiologische》 Disziplin: sie sucht den 《Sinn》 zu erfassen. Und darin ist sie 《phänomenologisch》, nämlich der Sache treu, die in ihr zu Wort kommt. Denn das Wesen der Sache 《Kommunikation bei Menschen》 ist eben der Sinn, die Bedeutung (Flusser, 1998, 255~256).

With this proposition of communication, he tries to develop a new communication theory named “Kommunikologie”, which differs from the classical communication theory. The classical communication model focuses on how to carry a message safely across a sender and a receiver with the least amount of loss and modification; how one can reduce misunderstanding and interferences in the channel of information transmission. Flusser, in contrast, focuses on the following question: how we as human beings manage to create, store, and distribute information to make our conditions acceptable? He also wants to draw attention to the ultimate artificiality and the constructivist aspects of all codes, communication, media, and culture at large (Guldin, Finger & Bernardo, 2011, 83~84). In this respect, Mersch (2006, 139) states that

phenomenology of symbolic codes based on cultural anthropology of cultural technology is at the center of Flusser's Kommunikologie.

2.1.2 Historical Typology of Communication

As mentioned above, Flusser thinks that the human communication is the matter of how to produce and preserve information for overcoming the fate of humans. It is a core of the human communication to accumulate and transmit information from generation to generation. Various types of communication have been developed historically depending on the way of producing and preserving information. Flusser classifies these historical types of communication according to two dimensions, the structure and code of communication, and then, intercrosses the various models of the two dimensions.

Flusser declares that he made the communication models based on the communication phenomena in the human history (Flusser, 1998, 17~18). Flusser thinks that it is necessary to understand both the structure and code of communication, in other words, syntactic- and semantic level of communication together. He keeps his distance from the aspects that focus on the either syntactic- or semantic level. He states as follows:

Zusammenhang zwischen Bedeutung und Struktur, zwischen《Semantik》und 《Syntax》nicht geleugnet werden: Die Form wird vom Inhalt bedingt und umgekehrt (wenngleich nicht notwendigerweise《the medium the message》sein muß) (Flusser, 1998, 19).

1) Structure of Communication

In the aspect of communication structure, Flusser divides the communication into dialogue and discourse. These two forms are contrary but are complementary to each other. Neither dialogue nor discourse can exist alone. Humans exchange a variety of existing information to produce new information. This is the dialogic communication form. Humans distribute information to preserve information. This is an example of the discursive communication form. The participants of dialogue have to use the

accumulated information by accepting the existing discourse in order to generate the dialogue. On the contrary, the distributer of information must possess the information made from the previous dialogue in order to generate the discourse. Thus, the question of the precedence of dialogue and discourse is meaningless. Every dialogue can be regarded as a series of discourses generated from exchange. And every discourse can be treated as a part of dialogue (Flusser, 1998, 16~17).

To distinguish between dialogue and discourse, however, is not sufficient as the method to understand precisely a diversity of human communication. In this regard, Flusser tries to make a variety of communication models by subdividing the dialogue and discourse.

(1) Structure of Discursive Communication

Two core issues of discursive communication are the constancy and the advancement of information. First, the sender of information must be careful not to let the information be transformed by the penetration of noise during the transmission of information. The constancy of information should be kept because the aim of discourse is to transfer information to receiver successfully. Second, it is important to make the receiver of information a sender of the future. The discourse must be able to advance through the information flow. Yet, it is difficult to see the constancy and the advancement of information coincide because two properties somewhat contradict each other. It is crucial to make a good discourse structure that can realize the two values at the same time. This is the core measure for the evaluation of each communication model. In this aspect, Flusser proposes and evaluates four types of discursive communication structure.

a. Theater Type Discourse

The examples of this type are a theater, classroom, concert hall and a living room of a bourgeois family. The characteristic of this structure is that the sender and receiver face each other. This structure blocks noise coming from outside, but allows noise from inside, namely, contestations. It is open for the dialogue. Receivers are in a responsible

position because they can respond to the sent messages directly. In other words, the discourse of theater type is an excellent structure to make the receivers responsible to the distributed information and to convert them to the senders in the future. However, the weakness of this structure lies in the lack of information constancy due to this very openness towards the internal dialogue (Flusser, 1998, 21~22).

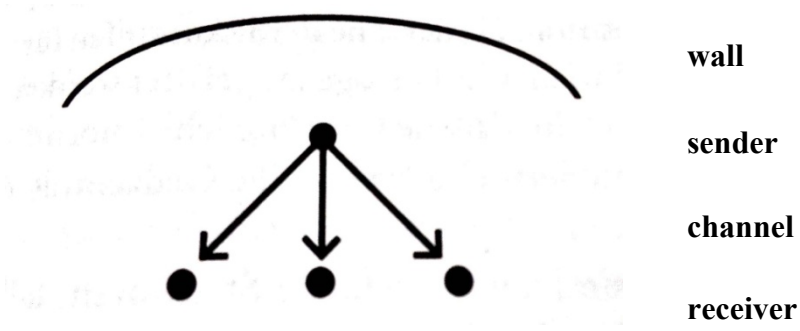


Fig. 2.1 Theater type discourse

Source: Kommunikologie (p.21), by V. Flusser, 1998, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

b. Pyramid Type Discourse

The examples of this type are founded in an army, administration, and political party in a fascist or communist state. The Roman Republic is a prototype of this communication structure. The characteristic of this type is to preserve the consistency of messages. Noise is removed and information is re-coded in stages.

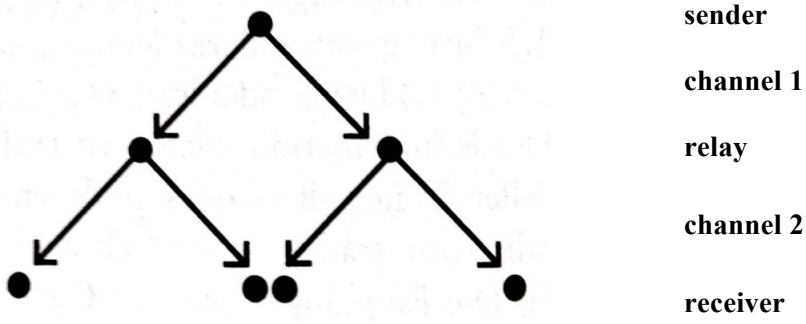


Fig. 2.2 Pyramid type discourse

Source: Kommunikologie (p.22), by V. Flusser, 1998, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

On the other hand, the weakness of this type is its inability to convert receivers to senders and to advance information well. The authorities in each stage can only re-code the information coming from the upper levels. They can hardly make new information by themselves because the structure of information flow is closed (Flusser, 1998, 22~23).

c. Tree Type Discourse

The characteristic of this type is to make new information constantly through resolving and re-coding of original information. The prototype is the discourse of academics. This type ensures the information flow and it might be the ideal type for this. On the other hand, it has weakness in the matter of the information consistency.

The other characteristic is that it has no end receiver. The reason is that the distributed information is re-coded in the closed system and it becomes hard for the outsider to access to it. We can experience this problem, when we try to access to the specialized information and knowledge of academics or technicians. The result is that meaninglessness appears in the end of the discourse. This discourse type has no real receiver and the information distributed through this discourse will only be saved in the artificial and cybernetic memory. The hermetic specialization of information distribution loses its original purpose of human communication to overcome isolation of human beings (Flusser, 1998, 24~26).

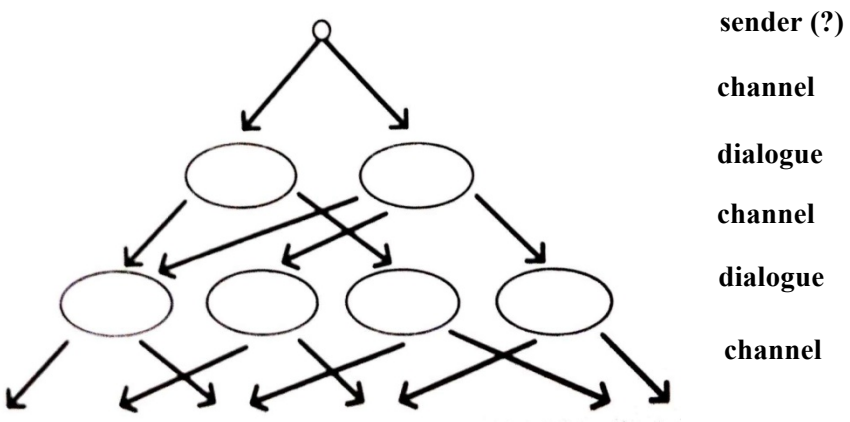


Fig. 2.3 Tree type discourse

Source: Kommunikologie (p.24), by V. Flusser, 1998, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

d. Amphitheater Type Discourse

The prototype of this discourse structure is a circus or the Roman Coliseum. Nowadays, the example is placard, newspaper, and TV, namely, mass media. This structure is composed of just two components essentially. The one is a sender whose memory is programmed by information. The other is the channel that transmits the information that is coded in accordance with the structure. And there will be a receiver, if it is added as the third element. The receiver, however, is like dust floating in illimitable space of transmission.

The characteristic of this discourse is that receivers stay outside of the discourse. They can just receive the messages produced and distributed by the senders in the amphitheater. They cannot retransmit anything back because they have no channel. This type is ideal for receiving information. The code used in this discourse is so simple and uniform that everyone can easily interpret anytime and everywhere. It does not need to transform receiver to sender because the sender transmit information like an auto-mechanism forever. This type is the best form to distribute information. Flusser views this discourse type as the perfection of communication and the symptom of totalitarianism (Flusser, 1998, 27~28).

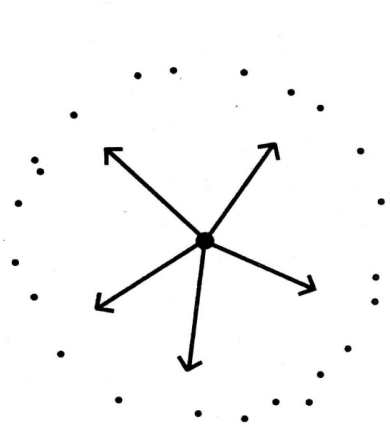


Fig. 2.4 Amphitheater type discourse

Source: Kommunikologie (p.27), by V. Flusser, 1998, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

(2) The Structure of Dialogical Communication

The dialogue is a method to synthesize a variety of existing information. We can find this form of communication in cases such as group dynamics, brainstorming, committee, laboratory, congress and parliament. Flusser, however, states that there are two essential dialogue structures which sort human communication decisively (Flusser, 1998, 29).

a. The Ring Type Dialogue

The principle of this structure is simple: A man finds a common basis of all information saved in the memories of participants and newly synthesizes the information. However, there is a complexity hidden under the simplicity and describes each case in this type of dialogue. It is because the participants in the dialogue are different in terms of their information quality and quantity, communication codes, and perception. So it is very difficult to realize this type of dialogue in reality.

On the other hand, this type is closed circuits. It is a kind of elite communication form because it is inevitable to limit the number of participants. However, it should be open to internal communication and make new information available at the same time. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to realize this model. It will be one of the best communication forms that humans can achieve, if it could only succeed (Flusser, 1998, 30~32).

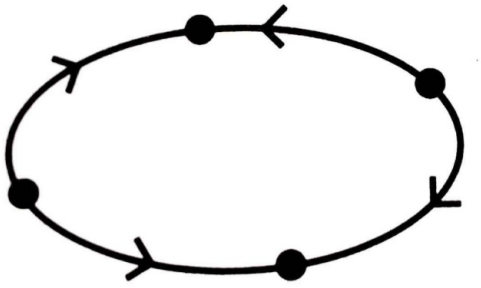


Fig. 2.5 Ring type dialogue

Source: Kommunikologie (p.29), by V. Flusser, 1998, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

b. Net Type Dialogue

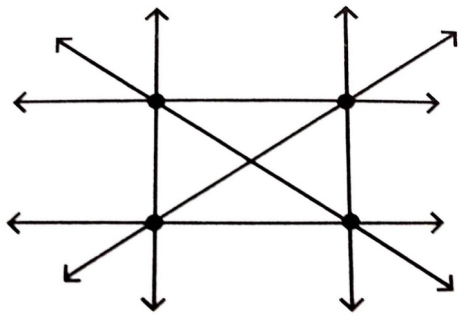


Fig. 2.6 Net type dialogue

Source: Kommunikologie (p.32), by V. Flusser, 1998, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

The communication form of this type is diffusive and open circuit unlike ring type dialogue. Therefore, it can make new information easily. It is democratic. This communication form builds the basic nets that support all other forms of human communication and absorb all information made by humans in the end. The instances of this type are talk, gossip, chat and spread of rumor. Post and telephone system are developed forms of this communication form. Information in this system emerges spontaneously and changes constantly. We call it new information changing constantly the public opinion.

Humans had been aware since long before that net type dialogue built the basis of all communication and human engagement against the death. Thus, the political engagement as a form of communication engagement can be regarded as an engagement in the net type dialogue. Demagogy is opposite to the political engagement in this sense, because the demagogy blocks the penetration of new information into the net and prevents the human transformation through the new information (Flusser, 1998, 30~32).

Flusser analyses today's situation in relation to the structure of human communication: it seems that the theater type discourse and the ring type dialogue do not function well anymore and they are situated in a crisis. The pyramid type discourse is still an important form of communication form, although people might think that this form was over already a generation ago. The tree type discourse (especially science and technology) seems to have conquered magical thought long ago, but there are some

symptoms that make us skeptical about it. It is called the crisis of science. The structure of the tree type discourse becomes more and more authoritative like the pyramid type. Most of all, our situation can be characterized by the synchronization of the amphitheater type discourse and the net type dialogue. That is to say, the current situation is characterized in a way that we are dominated by the synchronizing of the circus sophisticated scientifically and technologically and the primitive chat on the net. Flusser expresses the concern that this situation is a totalitarian depoliticizing although it is shown as a generalized participation seemingly (Flusser, 1998, 32~34).

2) Codes of Communication

(1) Historiography of Codes

A code means more than a tool for human communication. The code programs the human beings surrounded by it. In the net of codes, humans experience, perceive, and evaluate the world and the life. Flusser argues that a change in dominant codes within a society and age can cause transformation to human beings and society, which can lead to a decisive shift in the human history.

Nicht nur gibt jeder Code der Welt eine ihm spezifische Bedeutung (kodifiziert sie auf seine Weise), sondern die Struktur des Codes strukturiert auch das Denken, Fühlen und Wollen. Ein Beispiel: Der alphabetische Code kodifiziert die Welt zu einem Kontext von linearen, kausalen und historischen Prozessen und strukturiert das Denken, Fühlen und Wollen des modernen Menschen nach einer spezifischen Logik, Ethik und einem existentiellen Erleben. Wenn, wie heute, dieser Code durch andere ersetzt wird, dann bedeutet dies, daß die Welt eine neue Bedeutung gewinnt und das Dasein in ihr andere Formen. Darum darf von einer Kulturrevolution gesprochen werden (Flusser, 1998, 242).

Flusser conceptualizes the Western history according to the change of codes. He divides it to three great epochs: pre-alphabetic period (B.C. 4000~1500), alphabetic period (B.C. 1500~A.D. 1900) and post-alphabetic period (A.D. 1900~). Main codes in

the three epochs are images[1], texts and technical images respectively. He denies, however, both the progressive historical view and the tendency to regard a specific historical epoch as superior to others such as logo-centric perspective.

Vielmehr stellt jede einzelne dieser Stufen eine andere Richtung weg von der Welt dar, eine andere Form von Verfremdung und des Versuchs, diese zu überwinden. Jede von ihnen kann zu einem anderen Höhepunkt, zu einer anderen Existenzform, einer anders kodifizierten, aber gleich《hochstehenden》(gleichermaßen verfremdeten) Welt beziehungsweise Kultur führen (Flusser, 1998, 87).

Table 2.1 Characteristics of three historical epochs

Gesellschaftlicher Code	vor-alphabetisch	alphabetisch	nach-alphabetisch
Denkform	kreisend (Mythos)	linear (Logos)	punktuell (Mosaik)
Mediale Form	symbolisierende Szene	lineare Prozesse	Zustände
Kulturtechnik	Deuten	Lesen/ Schreiben	Komputieren
Grundgeste	Einbilden	Erzählen	Informieren
Gesellschaftsform	Magische Kultur	Industriegesellschaft	Wissensgesellschaft
Ästhetik	zweidimensional	eindimensional	nulldimensional

Source: Medienphilosophie (p.266), by F. Hartmann, 2000, Win: WUV.

[1] I translated the german word "Bild" into the English word "image". But the word "image" does not perfectly coincide with the word "Bild". Flusser states this problem as well: „Die Bedeutung von 《Bild》 deckt sich nicht hundertprozentig mit der von 《image》 " (Flusser, 1998, 114). Despite of the problem of translation, I will use the word "image" here, because Flusser restricts the meaning of the word "Bild" in his discourse as a specific definition. He defines "Bild" as plains covered with symbols. The word "image" is defined here as "Bild" defined by Flusser.

His aim of using the historiography is not to describe the embryological history of the codes such as the rise and fall of alphabet. His discussion has rather a functional purpose. He aims to observe how different types of codes overlap each other in us and in the world. He deals with the variation of the roles of image, text and technical image in the coded world and in our consciousness (Flusser, 1998, 116).

Flusser explains the relationship and the mechanism of interaction between humans and world by means of codes. The way of his explanation is dialectic. According to his explanation, humans expelled from the world try to bridge the gap by codes. They win a standpoint to the world through the feedback between existence and code. The code, however, used as a bridge between humans and the world does not work for the original function any more. On the contrary, it screens the world from humans. Humans try to overcome this contradiction by means of a new code. This process is dialectic. The contradictory situation takes place again.

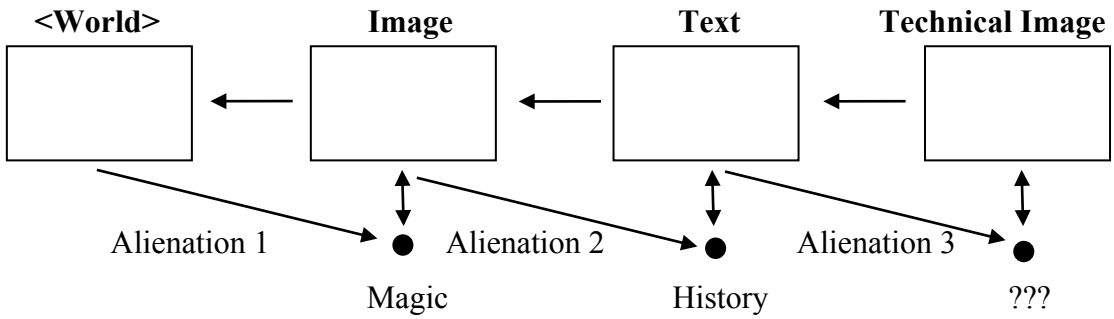


Fig. 2.7 Sketch of code's function in human history

Source: Kommunikologie (p.107), by V. Flusser, 1998, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

At first, humans used images as the code and won a standpoint to the world, the magical awareness, through the code. Images, however, lost the original function and became opaque. Consequently, the world coded with images was stuck in the wall that blocks humans from the world of experiences and became phantom and fantastic (Flusser, 1998, 116). So humans left the world of images and attempted to bridge abyss between humans and images with text. Humans gained a new standpoint, the historical awareness, by means of the feedback between existence and text. However, humans left again texts as they left images, because texts became opaque as time passed. Now we do not see images behind texts, but ourselves as the creator of texts. We understand the

world of text as a world created by ourselves. We are alienated from the world of text. Now humans try to make a new bridge between texts and us by means of technical images (Flusser, 1998, 109).

Flusser names this human effort to bridge the world by means of the codes the "abstraction game". Every real thing has four-dimension of time and space. But we can abstract a world from the real world through the abstraction game. The various unreal worlds are created in this abstraction game. The process of abstraction game in the human history is explained below:

Four-dimensional real time and space → Three-dimensional world of sculpture → Two-dimensional world of plane (world of image) → One-dimensional world of line (world of text) → Zero-dimensional world of point (computerized world)

(2) The Three Types of Code

a. Images

Es (Bild) ist eine Fläche, in welcher sich Symbole in der Weise zueinander verhalten wie die Bedeutung dieser Symbole im vierdimensionalen Zeit-Raum. Mit anderen Worten: Ein Bild ist eine Reduktion der《konkreten》, vierdimensionalen Verhältnisse auf zwei Dimensionen (Flusser, 1998, 111).

Flusser defines an image as a plain covered with symbols. His definition is broader than the general definition: Images are a reduction of the four-dimensional real world. According to Flusser, a specific competence is necessary to abstract the four-dimensional world to the two-dimensional plain. He refers the competence as imagination. The Flusser's definition of imagination is different from the general definition as the definition of image. Imagination defined by Flusser is an ability to imagine the relationship of the symbols on the plain and to analogize the relationship of objects in the world. In other words, imagination is a competence to create a specific

code, that is to say, to code and interpret the world with images. Therefore, it mediates between humans and the world by means of images. And it is an agreed method that humans use to communicate each other and give the world and life a meaning. We have to learn the ability to live in the world (Flusser, 1998, 115).

We hardly, however, are aware of the conventionality, artificiality and technicity of the image codes because imagination is an age-old technique that programs us deeply. We are programmed to believe images. We do not see the world through images, but are programmed to see the world in the context of images. And this program will be destroyed, if we begin to be aware of the program. People who are not aware of the conventionality of image cannot distinguish between the 'real' world and the 'imaginary' world; to them is the world of image a real world abstracted two-dimensionally (Flusser, 1998, 117).

Seeing the world in the context of images involves a specific temporal and spatial structure. Simply put, the temporal structure of imagination is a recurrent structure. People programmed by the image codes experience the time as a permanent circular thing: the time of sawing and harvest, day and night, and birth and death.. According to Flusser, they perceive the world with magical awareness. It is far from the causal thinking, often found in modern people. To see the elements together, view the complementarity of all elements in the whole scene, and focus on the order of the space through the circling time raise magical awareness (Flusser, 1998, 120).

The spatial order of image is like that in the text, but more of a total order. The "up" and "right" on the two-dimensional plane are the absolute positions. These are sublime and right. Therefore, the primary order in images has totally different characteristic from the order of text.

Images that mediated the humans and the world, however, became opaque to the world and began to be an object of worship in itself. So the function of imagination is over. The world coded by images came to be phantom, and fantastic. In this reason, linear letters were invented as a solution to this situation. The invention of linear letters aims to make the opaque images transparent again (Flusser, 1998, 120~124).

b. Texts

Texts as a form of linear code replace the imaginary relationship of two-dimensional plains with a conceptual relationship. Flusser calls it "to explain". The linear and conceptual code is an intentional impoverishment of the plain and imaginary code. In other words, the clarity and distinction found in the linear and conceptual code is a result of methodological intention to counteract confusion and proliferation of imaginary codes. Texts are description, explanation and dissolution of images.

Wenn ich ein Bild in einen alphabetischen Text übersetze (wenn ich es erkläre), dann kann ich zwar theoretisch alle im Bild enthaltenen Bedeutungen in den Text übertragen; ich muß nur lange genug schreiben und in der Sprache, die meine Schrift bedeutet, entweder die entsprechenden Worte finden oder sie schaffen. Aber betrachte ich dann das Geschriebene, so stelle ich fest, daß sich unter der Hand ganze Dimensionen der im Bild enthaltenen Informationen verflüchtigt haben, nämlich gerade diejenigen, die im vorangegangenen Absatz die《sakralen》genannt wurden (Flusser, 1998, 127).

Flusser argues that the linear code brought a change in the frame of perception towards time and the world. The people using the linear code do not experience the world as scenes, but as events. It means that they experience time as irreversible thing. The linear code transforms imaginary scenes to process, that is, from circle to lineation. The recursive and magical time of the image code is transformed to the historical time. Humans acquired an awareness of history through the linear code.

Die Welt der Texte stellt sich nicht nur als Vermittlerin zwischen die Bilderwelt und den Menschen, sondern sie durchbricht auch jene Bilderwelt, um auf die Welt tout court hinzudeuten. Das geschichtliche Bewußtsein ist ein Standpunkt, der den magischen Standpunkt《überholt》, das heißt, ihn auf neue Ebenen hebt und ihm dadurch eine neue Bedeutung zumißt (Flusser, 1998, 133).

Texts has lost, however, its original meaning and function just like images that had lost their function previously. The concept has proliferated as imagination did in the past and texts have become fantastic like images did. Flusser states that:

Wir erfahren alle an uns selbst und an anderen, daß die Texte aufhören zu vermitteln und Wände zu bilden beginnen, sobald sich das Verhältnis zwischen Mensch und Text umwendet, sobald man die Welt nicht mehr durch Bücher erkennt, sondern umgekehrt die Welt als Buch (natura libellum). Das Symptom dafür ist, daß die Informationen der Texte unvorstellbar werden (Flusser, 1998, 134).

c. Technical Images

Flusser refers the new dominant code of our age as technical images, which have substituted texts. According to his definition, technical images are the plain covered with the symbols that mean the concepts of linear text. Technical images are like the classical image in the point of view that it is the plain covered with symbols, but what it means is different from the classical images: While the classical images mean the scene, technical images mean the concept. Unlike all other images, technical images are located in the other stage, and its origin is different as well. It is a revolutionary new code (Flusser, 1998, 140). The instances of technical image are microfilm, slide, videotape, and telescope made by modern technology. Some of the classical images meaning concepts are also technical images, e.g. blueprints, design, statistical curves or sketches in texts.

Flusser argues, however, that almost of us cannot interpret technical images correctly. It is because we have not learned how to analyze technical images the way we have learned to paint a picture or to read and write text during the childhood. But the more essential problem is that we believe we can analyze technical images without learning how to analyze it. We think that we can see posters, understand films, criticize TV programs and even interpret X-rays. Flusser points out that these beliefs are significantly mistaken as a matter of fact. He states that it is the crisis of our age that we do not read the world programming us and we do not know what the world means, even though the world programs us (Flusser, 1998, 147).

He emphasizes that we should first know the operating mechanism of technical images and should learn how to analyze them. To analyze technical images means to unmask them. Therefore, Flusser brings up these questions: how are the technical images programing us, how can we receive the information without decoding and understand how it functions?

2.1.3 Balance of Communication

In Flusser's understanding, the core purpose of human communication is, as noted above, to produce information and transmit it from generation to generation to overcome loneliness and meaninglessness of life. Humans have been trying to accomplish this purpose through the two communication forms, dialogue and discourse. Flusser thinks that this can be accomplished when dialogue and discourse are balanced. It cannot be achieved when there is of the imbalance between the two communication forms. In fact, the balance of communication seems ideal because it has rarely been realized in human history. As Flusser states, mostly one of the two communication forms has predominated in each epoch or society in human history. In this aspect, the human history seems to be undergoing a repeated process where humans try to maintain the balance but fail to do so.

Tatsächlich läßt sich behaupten, daß die Kommunikation ihre Absicht, die Einsamkeit zu überwinden und dem Leben Bedeutung zu verleihen, nur dann erreichen kann, wenn sich Diskurs und Dialog das Gleichgewicht halten. Wenn, wie heute, der Diskurs vorherrscht, fühlen sich die Menschen trotz ständiger Verbindung mit den sogenannten 《Informationsquellen》 einsam. Und wenn, wie vor der Kommunikationsrevolution, der dörfliche Dialog gegenüber dem Diskurs vorherrscht, fühlen sich die Menschen trotz Dialog einsam, weil von 《der Geschichte abgeschnitten》(Flusser, 1998, 17-18).

Flusser derives a specific viewpoint on human history from the discourse of communication balance. According to Flusser, the historical epochs could be classified according to the predominating communication form, that is, either the dialogue or discourse. It is this very history that has ceaselessly alienated humans and made them lonely despite all the efforts to overcome such solitude and isolation. It is still a essential problem for humans to maintain homeostasis or the harmonic balance of a communication environment.

Flusser's discourse resembles the perspectives of the media ecology represented by Herold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, and Neil Postman. Media Ecology regards the communication media as a sensorial-symbolic environment surrounding us and affecting our perception, emotion, consciousness and further socio-cultural issues.

Innis who founded the ‘media culture history’ states that medium of communication has its own bias coupled with communication forms. He characterizes the bias as temporal or spatial one. According to Innis, in a given civilization it is the dominant medium of communication that favors certain forms of temporal or spatial orientation over others. All past civilizations have used certain media to control time and space. When these two concerns are in balance, social stability results from it. When one or the other is overemphasized, collapse is inevitable (Casey Man Kong, 2006, 150). Through his study about media history, Innis tries to provide a foundation for a critical assessment of modern society beset by mass media and commercialism. He criticizes the tendency of media monopoly and, as a result, the monopoly of information and knowledge. Furthermore, he emphasizes that we have to resist the media monopoly and restore the balance of communication environment.

Postman emphasizes the balance of communication too. He first used the term “media ecology” and regarded the communication media as an ecological environment with the term. He defines that the term “ecology” is not essentially about the nature, but about the rate and scale and structure of change within an environment. It is about how balance is achieved in the environment of human beings a balanced mind and society as well as a balanced forest (Postman, 1979). With this understanding, he concentrates on the change of symbolic environment related to the development of communication technology. He expresses concerns particularly about the imbalance of symbolic environment in the modern society in which the print culture declines and the image culture represented by TV and electronic communication media flourishes. Although it is hard to find direct intercourses between Flusser and the scholars of Media Ecology, it seems that they have similar perspective that concentrates on the relationship of the human and the communication environment, and emphasizes the balance of communication environment.

Flusser’s works focus on the communication environment in the late 20th century in which mass media like TV and film were explosively developed. He analyzes the modern communication environment by seeing how the dominative communication code and structure work and interact. It seems that his frame to analyze the communication environment and his emphasis on the balance of communication is valid to analyze the communication environment in the 21th century.

2.2 Imbalance in Communication in the Age of Technical Images

Flusser is mainly concerned about how technical images work on the modern communication structure. He thinks that technical images have obtained the position as a dominant code in the modern culture and they work well with the mass media that have rapidly changed the modern communication structure. He criticizes that the modern communication environment is in a state of imbalance biased by the discursive communication structure coupled with the domination of technical images. Technical images are produced and delivered in a media system characterized by the one-directional communication structure. According to Flusser, technical images function to deceive and manipulate people, who have mostly passive attitude to receive them. He argues that this imbalanced media environment could cause a severe crisis in our society.

2.2.1 A Mechanism and a Function of Technical Images

Flusser looks into the mechanism of technical images. He divides technical images into two types. The one is elitist technical images and the other is mass technical images. The elitist technical images can be decoded only by the experts who learned how to decode it. For example, pictures in an electron microscope, curves of statistical chart, X-ray images, etc. These images don´t need to be unmasked, because people who cannot decode them do not usually deal with them. Mostly, the experts who can decode them deal with them. For instance, X-ray images are decoded only by medical professionals who have expertise to deal with them. Whereas Flusser points out that the mass technical images are problematic, because they deceive us. He explains how mass technical images deceive us. Technical images are shown just as the classical images in appearance. Thus we regard them as same thing with the classical images and pay scant attention to the specific characteristics of them. We do not feel a need to learn how to treat and interpret them. For example, have we decoded images correctly, if we bought some goods after seeing the posters advertising them? We could think that we decoded the meaning of symbols on the poster correctly. According to Flusser, it is a misinterpretation of technical images. In this case, we acted as we saw the classical images depicting charming goods. But we should have read a text encoded in technical

images.

If so, how can we learn how to decode technical images correctly? Can we learn this from the experts who can decode elitist technical images? Flusser does not contradict the possibility, but he is negative to the actual condition, because the experts are also impotent in decoding mass technical images in daily lives. For example, they rarely decode technical images, only when they watch TV at home after work or go to a movie. They gladly receive technical images and let themselves be programmed by images just as the masses do. This is the crisis of our age.

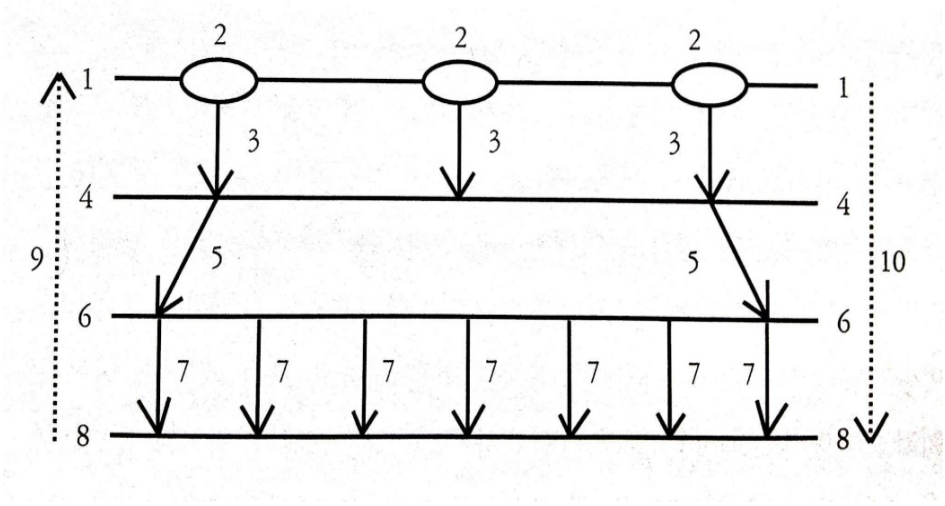
The distinctive point of Flusser's theory in comparison with other discourses about images lies in the distinction between classical images and technical images. Many other discourses about images are not so sophisticated in conceptualizing and analyzing the characteristics and functions of images in modern days. According to Flusser's view, much of the misunderstanding about images in our age results from regarding two types of images, the classical images and the mass technical images as the same.

2.2.2 The Media System in the Age of Technical Images

Flusser defines the dominative media structure of our age as the synchronization of the amphitheater type discourse and the net type dialogue. The main code of the media system is technical images. Technical images are produced by experts in the amphitheater, that is, mass media invented and managed scientifically and technically. The receivers of technical images cannot access the media system and the process of production. The images produced by this way are sent onto nets unceasingly. The images spread out quickly through the nets synchronized with the amphitheater type discourse. In this way, technical images overflow into our society. The main value of information in this mechanism is "sensation". Nowadays the sensational events occur simultaneously and form the same opinion over the world through the media that have overcome the limits of time and space. Events and reactions are synchronized over time and space. This is the mechanism where the public opinion is generated, simply put, to spread the sensational news and information coded technical images through the synchronized system of the amphitheater type discourse and the net type dialogue. Public opinion makers create the need and demand of the public through this

mechanism.

Kurz, der Konsensus verlangt, was von ihm verlangt wird. ... Man könnte meinen, die öffentliche Meinung verlange nach Krieg, weil Waffenfabrikanten daran interessiert seien, nach Seife, weil Seifenfabrikanten neue Rohmaterialien verwenden müßten, und nach einer anderen Regierung, weil sich Kreisdialoge innerhalb der Eliteebene zu einem Regierungswechsel entschlossen hätten (Flusser, 1998, 70).



1. Tree type discourse of science and technique	**universal level**
2. Dialogue of specialists and technocrats	
3. Information sending from science and technique to administration	
4. Administration (pyramid type of discourse)	
5. Programming of amphitheater	
6. Amphitheater (mass media)	
7. Mass media program (film, placards, newspaper etc.)	**mass level**
8. Net type dialogue (public opinion)	
9. Sporadic emerging to the universal level	
10. 'Opinion research' (manipulation of consensus)	

Fig. 2.8 Function of technical images

Source: Kommunikologie (p.107), by V. Flusser, 1998, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

In <Figure. 2.8>, Flusser describes the mechanism of the modern media complex in which the amphitheater and the net are synchronized and technical images function with them. Flusser expects that the autonomous and automatic media complex might subordinate all other communication structures and lead the world to the post-historical totalitarianism. He also states that the symptoms of the totalitarianism arise around us already.

Die 《Informationsquelle》, welche uns ständig programmiert, ist funktionell ein gigantisches Relais, welches lineare Codes in Technocodes, Geschichte in Nachgeschichte umkodiert. Die Geschichte fließt aus den Texten (und vor allem aus den wissenschaftlichen und technischen Baumdiskursen) in die Komplexe Apparat-Operator (zum Beispiel in die Amphitheaterdiskurse des Fernsehens, der Filmindustrie, der Reklame, der Illustrierten), um als Nachgeschichte (in Flächen-codes) über eine zur Masse verschmolzene Menschheit rundgefunkt zu werden. ... Die ganze Geschichte strömt gegenwärtig dem Komplex Apparat-Operator entgegen, um dort in Nachgeschichte umkodiert zu werden (Flusser, 1998, 152).

2.2.3 Domination of Technical Images and Mass Deception

The public or receivers are depicted as the impotent and irresponsible mass in this system. They have become fragmented and lost human contacts. On the contrary, technical images more and more become powerful to overpower the reality. They look like more real than the reality, and then people become dependent on technical images ontologically. Flusser analyzes the states bleakly.

Die Vorherrschaft der wissenschaftlich verwalteten Amphitheater, die Kodifizierung der von ihnen rundgefunkten Informationen in Technobilder und die Synchronisation des Rundfunkens mit weitgehend archaisch gebliebenen Netzdialogen, verbunden mit der mitleidslosen Unterwerfung oder Ausschaltung aller übrigen Kommunikationsstrukture-n, ist im Begriff, nicht nur alle früheren Gesellschaftsstrukturen zu einer amorphen, homogenisierten Masse zu zermalmen, sondern auch alle früheren Bewußtseinsstruktur-en (《Kategorien》) umzukodieren (Flusser, 1998, 49).

Passive mass audience was one of the main concepts in the critical discourses about mass media and mass culture such as Frankfurt School. In this aspect, Flusser's discourse seems to share the similar perspective with them. But he steps further from this point and differentiates from other critics. He defines the media system as a kind of automatic· autonomous complex. The automatism and the autonomy are possible in two dimensions.

The first, the autonomy of modern media system is by virtue of the popularization of the code, the technical images. Flusser thinks that the automatism and autonomy of programming are inherent in technical images. The inner structure of technical images does not allow the resistance to the programming. He explains this character comparing with linear texts. Linear texts promote an active receiving attitude of readers because of the own intrinsic properties.

Die Struktur des Alphabets erfordert, daß man der Reihe folgt, in welcher die Buchstaben geordnet sind, um die Information zu empfangen. Der Leser《denkt》also während des Empfangs, er《entziffert die Botschaft》. Es ist ein aktives Empfangen. ... Der Leser von linearen Texten steht den Texten gegenüber: er transzendiert sie. Das ist, was mit《Denken》gemeint ist: ein Zurücktreten und dann ein Sich-beugen über das Zubedenkende. Das heißt, wer liest, steht außerhalb des Gelesenen und sieht sich gewissermaßen zu, während er liest. Aber eine solche Reflexion ist Technobildern gegenüber unmöglich. Sie umgeben den Empfänger, er ist in sie getaucht,《befindet sich mitten unter ihnen》(Flusser, 1998, 67~68).

People in our age are constantly exposed to technical images through posters, newspapers, magazines, TV programs, cinema and the Internet. We cannot reflect at a distance from technical images or read them critically following inversely like reading text. We just automatically respond to technical images.

However, the reception of technical images does not end the communication process. Receivers are not sponges that simply absorb. On the contrary, they must react. On the outside, they must act in accordance with the technical images they have received: buy soap, go on holiday, vote for a political party. However, for the interaction between

image and person under discussion here, it is crucial that receivers also react to the received image on the inside. They must feed it. A feedback loop must appear between the image and the receiver, making the images fatter and fatter. The images have feedback channels that run in the opposition direction from the distribution channels and that inform the senders about receivers' reactions, channels like market research, demography, and political elections. This feedback enables the images to change, to become better and better, and more like the receivers want them to be; that is, the images become more and more like the receivers want them to be so that the receivers can become more and more like the images want them to be. That is the interaction between image and person, in brief (Flusser, 1985/2011, 54).

The second, Flusser states that elites who control the amphitheater and the net are programmed by the amphitheater as well. The programs that they perform are the results of the previous programs of the amphitheater. Thus, the communication used by the elites work as the functions of the amphitheater that have goals to conduct specific programs. This means that the power elites are also pre-programmed for the popularization. Everyone belongs to the mass in the autonomous media complex. According to Flusser's view, all historical events that are taking place at present operate within the functions of the autonomous media complex. These historical activities and events aim to be transformed to technical images and be sent from the amphitheater to the nets. Flusser states that the history will, strictly speaking, come to an end, if all historical activities are for the autonomous media complex.

Wenn gesagt wird, daß gegenwärtig jedes historische Engagement in Funktion des Komplexes Apparat-Operator geschieht, um dort zu Programm zu werden, und jede wissenschaftliche Forschung, künstlerische Tätigkeit und politische Handlung in letzter Analyse das Ziel hat, in Technobilder umkodiert und in einem Amphitheater ausgestrahlt zu werden, so ist nicht nur gemeint, daß jeder Roman ein virtuelles Filmskript ist, sondern vor allem, daß jede Handlung, beginnend mit einer politische Rede und endend mit Revolution oder Krieg, für einen Apparat-Operator-Komplex bestimmt ist. Wenn aber jede historische Handlung ein Engagement für einen Apparat-Operator-Komplex ist, dann geht, strenggenommen, die Geschichte ihrem Ende

entgegen. Denn dies bedeutet, vom Standpunkt der Codes aus gesehen, daß alle Texte auf ein Umkodieren in Technobilder zielen (Flusser, 1998, 153).

People will be more and more integrated into the autonomous media complex in this situation. Thus, an extreme situation might be considered where all humans function as the operators of the autonomous media complex. All humans as the operator would engage in the work to transform texts to technical images, history to programs, and a concept to technical perception, in short, life to sensation. This creates a path towards totalitarianism.

This portrait of totalitarianism which Flusser describes does not resemble the world of George Orwell (1949)'s "1984" , where big brother controls people and dominates society to keeping people under surveillance. However, it is rather similar to the world of "Brave New World" of Aldous Huxley (1932), where people live in comfort and happiness in a perfectly controlled society. Flusser argues that the major problem lies in that people have no intention to use the media dialogically but are ready to be distracted by technical images released by media. They want to be just happy as the citizens in "Brave New World".

The people want to be scattered by the images so that they don't have to collect and assemble themselves, as they would if there were in fact a dialogue. They are happy not to have to do it anymore. ... People want to disperse themselves to lose consciousness, to become happy. The present dispersal of society has resulted from a general wish to be happy: we are on the way to a happy society. Shangri La is just around the corner.

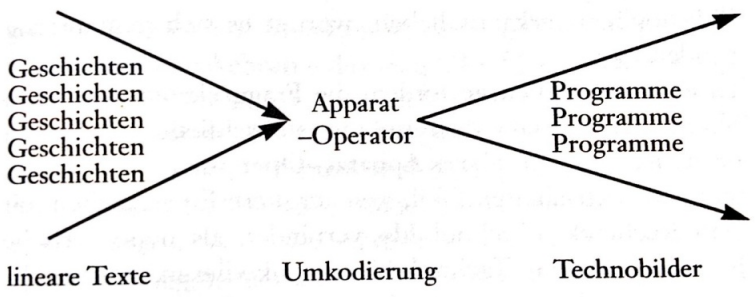


Fig. 2.9 Function of the apparatus-operator complex

Source: Kommunikologie (p.153), by V. Flusser, 1998, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

Everyone is at once a mouth that sucks on the images and an anus that gives the undigested, sucked thing back to the images. Psychoanalysis describes this happiness as the oral-anal phase; cultural analysis calls this happiness《mass culture》. It is happiness at the level of the nursery, intellectually as well as morally ad aesthetically. The present dispersal of society can be seen as a move toward this happy twilight condition (Flusser, 1985/2011, 65).

At present, telematic gadgets – all the videos, videogames, videodisks, and cassettes – in fact support the senders that program them. The feeling of emptiness we get from them is justified. It is not their technical construction that causes them to function in this way, however; rather their users are programmed to use them in this way and no other. On the contrary, they are technically constructed to serve a truly dialogic function. Users of gadgets are programmed to distract themselves. Distraction is the contract between images and people. Therefore people use telematic gadgets to distract themselves (Flusser, 1985/2011, 84).

If so, is there not any possibility to resist coming of post-historical totalitarianism? Or is there any other possibility that we do not expect. How can we find it? Flusser does not see the tendency such as the uprising of technical images and the scattered and powerless masses negatively. He is conscious of potential possibilities despite the negative perspective. He states that contemporary tendency cannot be reversed, but it would destroy the old society and a new one may appear. He suggests that we can have an opportunity for enlarging a new space of possibility in the net of media complex. He foresees an emergence of people with new consciousness and ability. Flusser refers this new consciousness and ability to "technical imagination". The other possibility is to convert the one-directional communication structure into two-directional one. He names the society of two-directional communication the "telematic society".

Es ist möglich, daß die gegenwärtige Synchronisation von Massenmedien und Netzdialogen- bei gleichzeitiger Unterwerfung aller übrigen Kommunikationsformen unter diese Synchronisation- nicht zur Errichtung eines nachgeschichtlichen Totalitarismus, sondern zu einer neuen Stufe menschlicher Kommunikation führt. Beide

Möglichkeiten sind aus der gegenwärtigen Kommunikationsrevolution ersichtlich: Der Totalitarismus ist vorstellbar, denn seine Manifestationen um uns herum sind geradezu greifbar, und die andere Möglichkeit ist denkbar, weil sich Ansätze dazu überall feststellen lassen (Flusser, 1998, 50).

Technical images must first destroy the old society so that a new one may appear. Today we are witnessing, not decadence, but the emergence of a new social form. And we can actually see this now. The relationship between people and images is descending into entropy, a fatal boredom is setting in, generating an impulse toward a new consensus opposed to mass culture and in favor of a humane visual culture. This new social structure can be seen, with a bit of optimism, as a transitional phase in the rise of a new culture (Flusser, 1985/2011, 68).

2.3 Prospects for Communication Balance in the Telematic Society

2.3.1 A Communication Structure of the Telematic Society

Flusser seeks an alternative model of society in contrast to the post-historical totalitarianism dominated by the autonomous and automatic media complex. He names it the "telematic society". People communicate each other freely through networks in telematic society. The information can be created and transmitted in human networks. The human communication is interactive and the communication system is democratic. Flusser thinks that new communication technology and the information revolution through the technology provide the socio-technological condition for the emergence of the telematic society. This can transform the structure of communication dominated by the autonomous and automatic media complex. The magical circle between technical images and people can be broken and the new dialogical communication between people through technical images can be formulated. The socio-technological condition, however, is not sufficient for the realization of the telematic society. According to the Flusser, the more important thing is consciousness and the ability of people to use the telematic media dialogically.

The problems in the early age of technical images related to this were that the operators were, on the one hand, limited to a small number of experts and institutes and the masses were scattered and alienated from the process of information production, on the other hand, the operators and the masses had little consciousness and intention to use apparatuses for a dialogic function.

The first problem seems to be relieved by the development and popularization of the telematic media. These days, people can easily own and use the telematic media and produce technical images. We can run even our own broadcast channels, distribute own content, or share them with others all over the world. These phenomena are the characteristics of the telematic society that Flusser expected at the dawn of the ICT revolution. Although new unexpected problems have been taking place, it is evident that we are witnessing and experiencing the potentials of the telematic society.

The second problem is how people get the new consciousness and ability to treat technical images and the telematic media correctly. Flusser thinks that the telematic technology gets the dialogical inherence, but it would be useless if people cannot use it correctly. Thus he emphasizes the role of telematic users, especially, their awareness and competence to use the telematic media. In this respect, he mainly discusses the new probable models of human beings who are able to realize the telematic society.

The use contradicts the gadgets' inherent technical construction, and only by being used in this way do they become gadgets. If the potential of these telematic resources were to become clear, they could become powerful tools to oppose the discursive society. The reason this hasn't happened yet is that the general agreement favors dispersal and puts assembly at a disadvantage. ... For if people turn to telematic technology to use it for conversation, rather than to be distracted by it, then technical images suddenly change character. Suddenly they become surfaces where information is produced and through which people can enter into dialogue. They suddenly play the mediating role that linear texts once played between correspondents: they become letters, except that images can carry infinitely more information than texts. For surfaces consist of infinitely many lines. The art of letter writing is almost lost. Images that can be telematically manipulated could give rise to an art that is still inconceivable, a pictorial dialogue infinitely richer than linear, historical dialogue could ever have been (Flusser, 1985/2011, 84~85).

2.3.2 Users of the Telematic Society

1) Post-human: The Apparatus-Operator Complex

Flusser tries to define the characteristics of human beings in the telematic society. According to his definition, the humans living in the telematic society are different from the human beings in the past. One of the characteristics of these new human beings is the "apparatus-operator complex". An apparatus means a tool used for the creation of technical images. In fact, the relationship between humans and the apparatus is one of the old themes in the Western intellectual tradition. To put it simply, there are dichotomous opinions about it. One is the optimistic view that regards humans as "homo faber" just use the apparatus as a tool to free themselves, and the other is the pessimistic view that sees humans as being subordinated to the apparatus and threatened to be deprived of freedom such as Luddism or the depiction in Charlie Chaplin's film "Modern Times". Flusser points out that these critiques, whether optimistic or pessimistic, are based on the subject-object dichotomy. The optimistic view is based on the premise that humans as the subjects can use and control apparatuses, which are mere tools for humans. This view lacks critical understanding of the apparatuses. On the other hand, the pessimistic view is based on the premise that human beings are dominated by the modern apparatus and this is the crisis of the subject.

Flusser aims to avoid falling into the trap of the classical dichotomy and frames a new relationship between humans and the apparatus. He suggests a model that explains more flexible and dynamic interactions between humans and the apparatus. According to him, functions of the apparatus and the operators are interlinked.

Für unsere Lage ist nämlich charakteristisch, daß das Verhältnis zwischen Mensch und Werkzeug nicht die beiden klassischen Formen hat, wie sie hier ausgemacht wurden. Weder funktioniert der Apparat in Funktion des Operators (etwa wie sich der Schmied des Hammers bedient), noch funktioniert der Operator in Funktion des Apparates (etwa wie der Arbeiter in Funktion der Maschine und des Industrieparks). Vielmehr sind die Funktion des Apparats und die des Operators miteinander verschmolzen. ... Weder 《befreit》 der Apparat den Fotografen (wie es Werkzeuge tun, die Menschen

dienen), noch《versklavt》er ihn (wie es Maschinen tun, denen Menschen dienen), sondern Apparat und Fotograf bedingen einander (Flusser, 1998, 151).

This supposition is based on Flusser's phenomenological perspective on technology and its interactions with humans. In other words, every object is situated in the relations of the intentionality. An apparatus may function as a device for the discursive communication or a device for the dialogical communication, depending on the intentionality of usage.

Die Herausforderung, vor die wir gestellt sind, besteht darin, den Sprung aus allem Hergebrachten zu wagen. Die Schwierigkeit liegt in der Entscheidung. Es gibt wenig《technische》Schwierigkeiten, etwa das Fernsehen dialogisch zu gestalten und zu einem《demokratischen Kanal》umzubilden: es gibt ja Fernseher, die wie Telefone funktionieren (Flusser, 1998, 226).

His perspective is similar to the ideas of Brecht. Brecht (1932) argues a radio has to be used as an apparatus of communication rather than as a means of distribution. Until then, the radio was mainly used as a substitute for things like concerts, lectures, café music, and local newspapers.. He implies that the radio could and should be used to transmit information as well as to receive it, and to let the listener speak as well as to listen. This function would bring the audience into the relationship instead of isolating them. In terms of Flusser's communication theory, Brecht paid attention to the possibility to transform the radio which was used for a discursive communication into the one for a dialogical communication. Brecht and Flusser are share common thoughts where they regard the apparatus as being technically flexible.

Flusser also emphasizes the necessity and possibility of ontologically new human beings who can reconstruct a relationship with the apparatus in the telematic society. He names this new kind of human beings "post-human" or "post-historical being". The new human beings have new consciousness and self-identity. The old categories are no longer valid to explain this new concept of human being.

..., sondern sie (die Situation) erfordert geradezu neue anthropologische Konzepte: Ein

《Operator》(oder Apparatschik) ist ein 《Mensch》in einem neuen, posthistorischen Sinn: Weder ist er《tätig》(ein Handelnder, ein《Held)), noch ist er《leidend》(ein Behandelter, ein 《Dulder)),… . Dieses nachgeschichtliche Dasein, dieses Dasein nicht nur jenseits von gut und böse, wahr und falsch, schön und häßlich, sondern überhaupt jenseits der Kategorie aktiv- passive, umgibt uns seit Jahrzehnten von allen Seiten (Beispiele: Eichmann, Manager, Parteisekretär, General, kurz《Funktionär》), kann aber trotz gründlicher Analysen noch nicht in unsere anthropologischen Kategorien eingebaut werden. Sobald uns das gelingt, ist das geschichtliche Dasein beendet (Flusser, 1998, 151).

His discourse of the apparatus-operator complex is further developed to encompass the issue of artificial intelligence in the telematic society. He predicted that the question of the relationship between humans and artificial intelligence would become a central issue in the near future. Nowadays, we witness that his prediction being realized. The technology of artificial intelligence is developing so fast that it is substituting the role of human beings in many spheres. Many people have expressed their concern that the status of human beings could be undermined in this situation. Flusser suggests, however, of the new human beings who can negotiate their relationship with the apparatus, including artificial intelligence, try to find some possibilities in the telematic society where the former boundaries or values are disrupted.

Telematics can steadily increase the competence not only of all human beings but also of all artificial intelligences, and these artificial intelligences will also become more like geniuses. So the question of how human intelligence and artificial intelligence are related will become the center of the dialogue very soon. We will face the unpleasant choice between humanizing artificial intelligences and making human ones more like apparatuses. But this may be only a pretelematic view of the question. In telematic dialogue, human and artificial intelligences will be connected in such as a way as to make it meaningless to try to distinguish between the human and artificial factors involved in producing information. In telematic dialogue, human and artificial intelligence will merge into a unity in a way that can be seen now in embryonic form between photographer and camera. The freer people become, the more competent the

computers to which they are connected. The more refined the artificial intelligence, the greater the visionary power of the people who produce images in collaboration with it. Of course, this human-apparatus connection must be truly dialogical and not one in which the human being is programmed by the apparatus, as things stand now. ... From the perspective of a truly operative telematic society (not from the standpoint of the present apparatus- human being circuit), increasingly competent apparatuses lead to increasingly competent people (Flusser, 1985/2011, 113~114).

Flusser's discourse seems to be on the radical side, but it provides useful concepts and insight to understand and analyze the recent media environment in which humans and apparatuses become more and more merged and interdependent. He opens a gate for human beings to explore their new identity and possibilities.

2) From Subject to Project

Flusser declares that we are not the subject of the given objective world any more, but project of the alternative world (Flusser, 1993, 283). He questions the concept of subjective and objective world and tries to conceptualize the human beings in a new way with this declaration. Why does he doubt the subject and the objective world? Why do we need a new concept of human beings?

It is not a sudden issue to doubt the human being as subject standing firmly on the objective world. The concept that had developed in the Age of Enlightenment has been undermined by the new great discoveries since the 19th century more and more. For significant instances, we can mention the discoveries of Faraday and Maxwell in the 19th century and of Einstein and Heisenberg in the 20th century. These discoveries have generated impactful and radical concepts to understand the reality. The concepts can be summarized with the term relativity.

Im neunzehnten Jahrhundert verlor sich mit Faraday und Maxwell der Glaube an letzte materielle Partikel – an die Stelle des Äthers als physischer Substanz trat das neue Erklärungskonzept vom elektromagnetischen Feld, und damit eine neue Ontologie. Diese Änderung des Weltbildes hat Auswirkungen, die sich durch alle philosophisch-

wissenschaftlichen Diskussionen des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts ziehen. Wir wissen (obwohl wir es manchmal nicht glauben), daß die Welt nicht aus solider Gegenständlichkeit besteht, sondern daß ihre Gegenstände eine Wahrnehmungskonstruktion sind. Wenn die Objekte dergestalt verschwimmen, dann hat das auch Auswirkungen auf unsere Selbstwahrnehmung als Subjekte (Hartmann, 2000, 295).

In the 20th century, Einstein's principle of relativity and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle have encouraged understanding of human beings and the world to change significantly. It is contrasted with the Newtonian assumptions of a fixed and absolute framework of space and time, and of observers entirely capable of neutral and objective reports on what they read in nature's book. According to Einstein's principle of relativity, time and space change as a function of the relative movements of objects and observers within them. There is no place in which an observer can take a fixed stand outside these relationships, no position from which an observer can construct a detached, neutral, defining element of that reality. In short, there are multiple realities of which accounts may be given, and each is dependent on the stance of the observer in relation to it.

Heisenberg's uncertainty principle confronts the Newtonian paradigm too. His discovery shows that there is an irreducible amount of uncertainty in our knowledge of the physical world, at least at the subatomic level. Because all the rest of our knowledge is built-up from there, we can never attain the full and certain knowledge of the reality that the Newtonian paradigm promised. The only reality of which one can have knowledge is the reality that the conditions of observation require.

From this new point of view, it can be asserted that the reality is not the objective world outside of us but a certain kind of interpretation of the information about the reality that is formed by our perception, investigation, representation and communication. We cannot delude ourselves any more that we perceive directly the reality itself. We experience disappointment in every explanation, interpretation, and reading of the world. We lose the position as the subject who changes the given reality. Flusser's opinion isn't, however, pessimistic about it. Flusser tries to answer with a new conceptualization of human beings. He states that we cannot be the subject but we are the project who realizes the possibilities. As the project, we are the ones who project

meaning on the world. We process the perceived things to reality and construct realities. According to the Flusser's thought, the change from the subject to the project is inevitable and urgent.

Die existentielle Veränderung von Subjekt in Projekt ist nicht etwa die Folge irgendeiner《freien Entscheidung》. Wir sind dazu gezwungen, ebenso wie sich unsere entfernten Vorfahren gezwungen sahen, sich auf zwei Beine zu stellen, weil die damals eintretende ökologische Katastrophe sie dazu nötigte, die Zwischenräume zwischen den schütter gewordenen Bäumen irgendwie zu durchquerten. Wie hingegen müssen jetzt die Gegenstände um uns herum, aber auch unser eigenes Selbst, das früher Geist, Seele oder einfach Identität genannt wurde, als Punktkomputationen durchschauen. Wir können keine Subjekte mehr sein, weil es keine Objekte mehr gibt, deren Subjekte wir sein können, und keinen harten Kern, der Subjekt irgendeines Objektes sein könnte. Die subjektive Einstellung und dadurch auch jede subjektive Erkenntnis sind unhaltbar geworden. Das alles haben wir als kindliche Illusionen hinter uns zu lassen und müssen den Schritt ins weite offene Feld der Möglichkeiten wagen. ... Nichts ist uns《gegeben》außer zu verwirklichende Möglichkeiten, die eben《noch nichts》sind (Flusser, 1993, 283~284).

The new issue here is how we as the project can construct the reality and realize the possibilities. Flusser focuses on the role of codes in this regard. We use codes such as words, images, number, signs and symbols to interpret the information of the reality. Therefore, the codes play an important role in our consciousness and the construction of reality. What he concerns especially is technical images. While the alphanumerical code is the one for explanation, interpretation and reading of the world, technical images are the one for visualization of the imagined and for shaping the alternative world. We can plan and visualize the worlds of imagination which replace the only world that we have regard as given.

Was machen diejenigen eigentlich, die vor den Computern sitzen, auf Tasten drücken und Linien, Flächen und Körper erzeugen? Sie verwirklichen Möglichkeiten. Sie raffen Punkte nach exakt formulierten Programmen. Was sie dabei verwirklichen, ist sowohl

ein Außen als auch ein Innen: sie verwirklichen alternative Welten und damit sich selber. Sie《entwerfen》aus Möglichkeiten Wirklichkeiten, die desto effektiver sind, je dichter sie gerafft werden. Damit wird die neue Anthropologie in die Tat umgesetzt (Flusser, 1993, 283).

Flusser does not put a high value on distinguishing reality and virtuality. He states that the term virtuality becomes meaningless, if everything is digital, that is, everything is a synthesis of bits. In this condition, the term realistic becomes relative, because we can say that it becomes more realistic, when the knit of bits is tighter. This discussion relates to the discourse of media reality, that is, media construct reality. It is hard nowadays to reject this argument, because we hardly distinguish more and more the reality and the reality constructed by media. The media provide us the flow of images and information that influence our perception of the world. Therefore, Flusser's discourse is about whether we can be a constructor of our own meaningful reality or we live just passive in the reality constructed by autonomous media complex. He looks forward to the telematic society in which people can construct their own alternative world by producing and exchanging information freely on the network. Thus, the significant thing in the telematic society is how humans as the project projects meaning on the world no matter how realistic or virtual the world is.

Wir bilden uns nicht mehr ein, daß wir irgendeinen soliden Kern in uns bergen (irgendeine《Identität), ein《Ich》, einen《Geist》oder eine《Seele》), sondern eher, das wir in ein kollektives psychisches Feld getaucht sind, aus dem wir wie provisorische Blasen auftauchen, welche Informationen erwerben, prozessieren, weitergeben, um wieder unterzutauchen (Flusser, 1992, 32).

Many cultural critics pessimistically worried about the collapse of the subject under the dominance of mass media. Flusser, however, tries to suggest an alternative way by conceptualization of human beings as the project. His deconstruction of the concept, subject and object may seem radical, but it provides us a unique approach to find a possibility for exploring an alternative world. His prospects are valuable especially in present time when the digital technology is developing fast, threatening traditional values and existing territories of society.

3) The Emergence of Technical Imagination

Technical imagination means the competence to produce technical images from texts and to decode images to the symbols of concepts. It aims to make a bridge between humans and text that became opaque. In other words, its goal is to make concepts imaginable and create images that mean concepts. This implies the attempts to design theories, explanations and ideologies with images newly. It does not mean to understand the world procedurally, one-dimensionally and linearly, but systematically, multi-dimensionally and visually.

Man kann unsere Lage auch mit einer anderen Metapher zu fassen versuchen, nämlich als Wettlauf zwischen der Tendenz zur Automation und Autonomie der bestehenden Apparat-Operator-Komplexe, und dem Versuch, die Technoimagination bewußt zu machen. Siegt die erste Tendenz, dann wird sich unsere Kommunikationssituation zu Totalitarismus und Massifizierung verfestigen. Siegt die zweite, dann ist eine unvorstellbare (und daher unbegreifliche) Öffnung für eine neue Daseinsform gegeben. ... – das bleibt der Technoimagination eines jeden von uns überlassen (Flusser, 1998, 229~230).

Flusser tries to describe the world of the technical imagination. At first, he talks about the change of standpoint to the world and truth. According to him, the objective standpoint to the world and the truth of the linear historical era based on texts will be changed into the inter-subjective standpoint. In the world of technical imagination, the keeping back from object and the world is impossible. Thus, there's no criterion to judge the various standpoints. Every standpoint has same value. The concepts such as progression, history and objective truth will not be valid anymore in the world of technical imagination.

Versucht man jedoch, sich durch Technoimagination ein Bild von einem solchen Begriff der Wahrheit zu machen (ihn etwa zu fotografieren oder auf ein Videoband aufzunehmen), dann erscheint der Prozeß des Angleichens des Erkennenden an das zu Erkennende als eine Art Tanz von Standpunkt zu Standpunkt. Die Suche nach Wahrheit

erscheint dann als das Umkreisen eines Problems, welches durch dieses Umkreisen überhaupt erst zu einem Objekt wird. ... Und dieses Umkreisen des Problems durch die Technoimagination hat nicht die Absicht, das Problem zu《entdecken》oder zu《enthüllen》, geschweige denn, es zu einer《Offenbarung》zu motivieren, sondern Bilder davon herzustellen, die von anderen entziffert werden können. Das führt natürlich zu einer ganz bestimmten Vorstellung von《Wahrheit》: Eine Aussage ist danach desto wahrer, je größer die Zahl der Standpunkte ist, die in ihr zu Worte kommen, und je größer die Zahl derer ist, die diese Standpunkte einzunehmen imstande sind. Nicht《Objektivität》, sondern《Intersubjektivität》lautet dann das Wahrheits-kriterium. ... Wahrheitssuche ist dann nicht mehr eine Entdeckungsfahrt, sondern der Versuch, sich mit den anderen hinsichtlich der Welt einig zu werden. Man sucht dann nicht mehr nach Wahrheit, um die Welt zu erkennen und zu beherrschen, sondern um gemeinsam mit anderen in ihr leben zu können (Flusser, 1998, 212~213).

The temporal and spatial perceptions and experiences change in the world of the technical imagination too. Simply say, the centers of time and space are "now" and "here". The concept of time that flows from the past to the future linearly is not valid in the consciousness of the technical imagination. The historical time mutates and becomes relative. The new temporal experience is relative. The presence is only real and it is where I am because I am always present. This would cause some results. Flusser suggests a few predictable results as follows. The first, to talk about the direction of time such as the distinction of progression and reactions, becomes useless, because the future flows to me in the presence. The second, the specific time conception that emphasizes the presence lead me to the efforts to extend the presence. The third, all attempts to explain the future with the causality with the past: the future does not result from the past, but just comes. Flusser argues that we have to recognize that the progressiveness is a symptom of a level of consciousness that does not come along more and a new, unprogressive and unhistorical future is predicted (Flusser, 1998, 214~217).

It is impossible to imagine time and space separately in the technical imagination. The space is also relative in the world of technical imagination like the time. The center of the space is here, where I am. Flusser writes as follows:

Die Entfernung eines Gegenstandes ist nicht absolut, sondern nur relativ zu meinem Dasein meßbar: Ein Gegenstand ist desto näher, je mehr er mich angeht. Je 《wirklicher》, er wird, je mehr er sich in mich und ich mich in ihn einmische (je 《interessanter》 er wird), desto näher ist er. Der Maßstab eines solchen Zeit- und Raumerlebnisses ist mein Interesse (Flusser, 1998, 219).

Therefore, the transcendence of the world means the transcendence of subjectivity. People can transcend the limitation of the world by incorporating with other people and extending their interests now and here. The world of mine extends, when people around me become more and more. However, a new consciousness level of the technical imagination has not come to the surface yet. Flusser tries to discover the characteristics of this new consciousness initiatively and suggests ways to do this.

Betrachtet man einerseits die Versuche der Spezialisten in den wissenschaftlichen und technischen Baumdiskursen, sich Bilder von den Begriffen zu machen, mit denen sie operieren, und betrachtet man andererseits die Manipulationen der Erzeuger von Massentechnobildern, kann man die Herausbildung einer neuen Bewußtseinsebene beobachten. Sie unterscheidet sich von der historischen vor allem dadurch, daß sie nicht linear ist. Daher sind für sie Kategorien wie früher- später, wenn- dann, wahr-falsch, wirklich- unwirklich usw. entweder sinnlos oder erhalten eine neue Bedeutung. Dafür gewinnen andere Kategorien zentralen Bedeutung, für die das geschichtliche Bewußtsein nicht programmiert ist, zum Beispiel Intersubjektivität, Standpunktwechsel und Nähe (Flusser, 1998, 222).

In addition to this, the technical imagination is necessary because it can make people see through and resist against the deception and manipulation of the media complex. Furthermore, people can make new information coded with technical images and play with them. This could enable people to take a leap to a new level of being and consciousness. This is an attempt to make a new bridge to the world. If we succeed in getting this technical imagination, we can liberate ourselves and the world coded by technical images from the dominance of the automatic- autonomous media complex.

2.3.3 Socio-Cultural Characteristics of the Telematic Society

1) Democratization of Information Production

Flusser states that the central problem to be discussed with regard to the telematic society is to generate information. According to his opinion, the principle of generating information changes in the telematic society, the true information society. The new principle is that the process of generating information is dialogical and democratic one. Flusser opens his discussion on it by re-conceptualizing the term creativity. The new characteristic of generating information in the telematic society is related to the change of characteristic of creativity. He argues that the creativity in former times was mythologized. People have thought for a long time that creativity is a kind of special talent of only a small number of creative people, and information is produced through the talent and inner dialogues of them. Flusser opposes, however, this myth of creativity. He states that information isn't the creation out of nothing but a synthesis of prior information. The production of information is a game of assembling prior information, and thus information producer is not a genuine creator but a player with information. Therefore, to generate information rather means to work with groups in a dialogue. Information is easily copied, circulated, and reproduced endlessly in telematic networks connecting people.

What happens to creative inspiration in the production of a video clip, for example, in which many people participate and where the work, the tape, cannot only be endlessly reproduced but also continually changed? For a telematic society, this is a crucial question. There, all information will be infinitely reproducible, and will be designed to be changed by its receivers and forwarded as new information. Can there be creative inspiration in such a situation, without author or work? Can there be that disregard of self, that absorption in work that constitutes freedom? (Flusser, 1985/2011, 95).

One of the cultural effects of this change is the so-called crisis of authority. Reproducibility of information makes all lesser authorities superfluous because it enables message to be passed automatically in vast quantities. Flusser states that the

creation will not be limited to a few creators and instead everyone will participate in the creative process (Flusser, 1985/2011). The democratization of generating information means also that the power of autonomous media complex that has monopolized the information production and programmed people could be weakened. The centralized senders will not function well and telematic users will be able to program and handle their own apparatuses. All these individual programs will be measured against one another, enriching and correcting one another, and that there will be an ongoing dialogical programming of all apparatuses by all participants. Instead of the traffic between people and images radiated by the media complex, the traffic between people by way of images would lie at the heart of such society. Furthermore, the deceitful policy of media complex can be exposed and resisted by the dialogical communication of people. When people can participate freely in this process of generating information, they can project meaning on the world, construct their own reality with information and realize the possibilities. That is to say, they will program rather than be programmed.

For the first time, people will be in a position to methodically generate information, and not only empirical information, using a technology modeled on perception. Information will then surge like a rising tide against entropy. If we define human beings by their negentropic tendency, then this is when they will become truly human for the first time, that is, players with information; and the telematic society, this "information society" in the true sense of the word, will be the first genuinely free society (Flusser, 1985/2011, 94).

2) Metaphor of Telematic Society: A Global Brain

Flusser compares the telematic society to a brain. A brain is not centrally controlled but rather governed through interactions between areas and functions of brain. According to him, the telematic society is like a brain that functions well. In telematic society, people are networked like nervous pathways and nerve cells join together. People generate, transmit, and store information through the telematic network like a brain. He names the telematic society a global brain.

Today we have access to deeper insights into brain function and telematic technologies that would permit us to turn a stupid society into a creative one, specifically on the basis of a circuitry that does justice to the interaction among brain functions. In such a social structure, there would be no more broadcast centers. Rather each point of intersection in the web would both send and receive. In this way, decisions would be reached all over the web and, as in the brain, would be integrated into a comprehensive decision, a consensus. ... The single "I" would maintain its singularity (as does the single cell in an organism and the single animal in the herd), but the production of information would take place at another level, namely, at the level of society (Flusser, 1985/2011, 92~93).

Flusser's metaphor of global brain resembles the McLuhan's "global village". McLuhan compares the world of the electric age to an organic whole. He witnessed the speed-up of the electronic age and recognized that the characteristics of society were changing. He states that the distinction between center and margins and the flow of impact from center to margins becomes invalid in the electric age.

Our speed-up today is not a slow explosion outward from center to margins but an instant implosion and an interfusion of space and functions. Our specialist and fragmented civilization of center-margin structure is suddenly experiencing an instantaneous reassembling of all its mechanized bits into an organic whole. This is the new world of the global village… This biological approach to the man-made environment is sought today once more in the electric age (McLuhan, 1964, 93).

It seems that Flusser considered McLuhan's concept of "global village" and intended to make a new concept reflecting his vision of telematic society in which the telematic technology had developed further than the age of McLuhan. Flusser states:

In the face of the emerging situation, controlled by dialogically linked keys, we can no longer use concepts like McLuhan's global village. One can no longer speak of a village when there is no public village square and no private houses. The web of keys and dialogical connections between them is more reminiscent of brain structure. One

might speak of a global brain rather than a global village. And in such a structure, no distinction can be made between the pressing of a shutter release of the photographic camera and the start button of a washing machine. Both movements receive and send to the same extent (Flusser, 1985/2011, 30).

In spite of some differences between Flusser's and McLuhan's concepts, their ideas have something in common. Both of them thought that the center-margin structure was weakening and the characteristics of society resembled those of the organic nervous system. Flusser emphasized that the changes in the electric age described by McLuhan went further and it was no longer possible in telematic society to clearly distinguish between the public and private spheres. The former structure within society by which the public and private spheres had been differentiated was undermined in telematic society.

3) Society of Homo Ludens

According to Flusser, another feature of the telematic society is the playfulness in people's dialogic lives. Flusser (Flusser, 1985/2011) states that the telematic society as a dialogical cerebral web must be regarded as a social game. The systematic search and production of new information would be a dialogical social game. The separate pieces of information, as they appear in the course of the telematic play (single, constantly revised technical images), will become increasingly improbable as a result of this strategy. He calls it "a society of homo ludens".

Such a society, in dialogue through images, would be a society of artists. It would dialogically envision, in images, situations that have never been seen and could not be predicted. It would be a society of players who would constantly generate new relationships by playing off moves against countermoves, a society of Homines ludentes in which inconceivable possibilities would open to human existence (Flusser, 1985/2011, 85).

He finds a possibility in the dialogical playfulness of the telematic society to counter

the dominance of the autonomous media complex. People in the telematic society twiddle with silly telematic gadgets as children play with inedible, infertile, and harmless pebbles. To play is a purposeless, useless, anti-economic, celebratory, and theoretical gesture. Furthermore, people using telematic gadgets produce empty chatter and a flood of banal technical images, and twaddle on a global scale. Cultural critics may criticize these phenomena, but Flusser thinks they are positive. He contends that it is completely wrong to wonder what purpose people will make images in the future. According to his view, this question is typical of pre-telematic, historical, purpose-bound thinking. He predicts that people's state of mind in the future will be precisely the relaxation of making images, beyond any what for, in the absence of a motive. Thus, new information will be generated and the sum of available information will continually grow larger, but this flow of information will not become useful or beneficial. It will only be used for celebration. He states that these purposeless behaviors can connect isolated and distracted people and promote dialogues among them instead of the circuit of people and technical images. Telematics can permit us to recognize ourselves in others through images festively, leisurely, and purposelessly, and this change has potential to prevent the coming of totalitarianism. He argues that revolutionary engagement has to begin not with the centers but with the silly telematic gadgets, although other critics criticize the radiating centers to change. He says that the centers will collapse of their own accord, if the change in private sphere is successful. This prediction is related to his thought that the telematic society functions cybernetically as a global brain where there is no distinction of private and public sphere.

But that is not all. As a result of this creative play and counterplay, a consensus would arise, allowing society to program the apparatuses by means of images. Apparatuses would then serve this broadly human intention, which is to say, to release people from work and free them for play with other people in a way that constantly generates new information and new adventures. I believe this is the utopia that engages the unspectacular revolutionaries (Flusser, 1985/2011, 86).

3. Development of the Telematic Society

3.1 Current State of the Telematic Technology

3.1.1 The Emergence of Social Media

In the past decade, the terms “social media” or “Web 2.0” have become popular. It is said that the development of social media or Web 2.0 is a new significant change in the media environment after the emergence of World Wide Web. So it is called as Web 2.0 to distinguish it from the first stage of World Wide Web, that is, Web 1.0 era. The most distinguishing feature of social media or Web 2.0 is that it isn’t just a source of information, but a platform where ordinary users can contribute information and content, and create network and interact with other users. However, the technology and the features of Web 2.0 are not entirely new, but they were intended and designed in the beginning of the Internet. The Internet started out as a giant Bulletin Board System (BBS) that allowed users to exchange software, data, messages, and news with each other. Many of popular usages of Web 2.0 such as Weblogs, Wikis or network platform existed already at the early stage of the Internet (Allen, 2012, Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, Schmidt, 2009). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) insist that social media probably started in 1998, when Bruce and Susan Abelson founded “Open Diary,” an early social networking site that brought together online diary writers into one community. But the concept “social media” and social media use in the aspect of users became popular, since social networking sites such as MySpace (in 2003) and Facebook (in 2004) were launched. In addition to this, the growing availability of the high-speed Internet access and mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets facilitated the popularization of social media. In fact, it can be said that the original spirit and features of the Internet were not fulfilled in the stage of Web 1.0, and they are now truly realized with the concept and the concrete form of social media and Web 2.0 by retransforming the World Wide Web.

Recently, people use the terms such as social media, Web 2.0, social Web, and social network service confusingly without the precise definition. It is because the media form named as social media or other terms and its boom are relatively new and

still ongoing process. Despite the confusion and ongoing state, there have been various efforts to define the terms and core characteristics. Based on the earlier studies, in this study is the term social media regarded as the comprehensive concept that includes the other terms. One of the most comprehensive articles that define and explain social media is the one of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). The authors do not only succeed in providing a clear definition of social media, but they also developed a classification of social media services.

Kaplan and Haenlein define that "social media is a group of the Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, 61). In addition, they define clearly the Web 2.0 and UGC (User Generated Content) in the relationship with social media as follows:

We consider Web 2.0 as the platform for the evolution of Social Media. When Web 2.0 represents the ideological and technological foundation, User Generated Content (UGC) can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of Social Media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, 61).

In this definition, the terms Web 2.0 and UGC are the central pillars that constitute social media. Social media is a group of the Internet-based applications or platforms via which people create and exchange UGC. Its ideological and technological foundation can be found in Web 2.0. Therefore, it is necessary to understand Web 2.0 and UGC first in order to discuss the social media. The term Web 2.0 was first used in 1999 by Darcy DiNucci, a consultant on electronic information design (information architecture). In her article, DiNucci writes:

The Web we know now, which loads into a browser window in essentially static screenfuls, is only an embryo of the Web to come. The first glimmerings of Web 2.0 are beginning to appear, and we are just starting to see how that embryo might develop. The Web will be understood not as screenfuls of text and graphics but as a transport mechanism, the ether through which interactivity happens. It will (...) appear on your computer screen, (...) on your TV set (...) your car dashboard (...) your cell phone (...)

hand-held game machines (...) maybe even your microwave oven (DiNucci, 1999, 32).

After DiNucci first introduced the term Web 2.0, the term was popularized by Tim O'Reilly at the Web 2.0 conference in 2004 (O'Reilly, 2005. 9. 30). The term Web 2.0 describes World Wide Web sites that use technology beyond the static pages of earlier websites. Although Web 2.0 suggests a new version of the World Wide Web, it does not refer to an update to any technical specification, but rather to cumulative changes in the way web pages are made and used (Web 2.0, 2013. 10. 7). According to O'Reilly, the main characteristics of Web 2.0 are as follows: radical decentralization, radical trust, participation instead of publishing, users as contributors, rich user experience, the long tail, the web as platform, control of one's own data, remixing data, collective intelligence, attitudes, better software by more users, play, and undetermined user behavior (O'Reilly, 2005. 9. 30).

Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an "architecture of participation", and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences (O'Reilly, 2005. 10. 1).

After the popularization of the term Web 2.0 by O'Reilly, there have been rigorous discussions and efforts to explain the term and the phenomenon of Web 2.0. There are differences in the points of view. It is because Web 2.0 has been developing further and there are various web applications or web services that are characterized by Web 2.0. Still, it is difficult to find an authoritative single-sentence definition of the term Web 2.0.

However, it is not impossible to find a common ground in the various discourses about Web 2.0. It is that the user plays a significant role on Web 2.0. It is the most important and distinguishable element of Web 2.0. In Web 2.0, users continuously modify applications and content in participatory and collaborative ways. "While applications such as personal web pages, Encyclopedia Britannica Online, and the idea

of content publishing belong to the era of Web 1.0, they are replaced by blogs, wikis, and collaborative projects in Web 2.0" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, 61). Web 1.0 is characterized by a top-down approach. Webpages and their content were created and edited by experts. Users could only view webpages but not contribute to the content of the webpages. Technologically, Web 1.0 concentrated on presenting, not creating so that UGC was not available (Web 1.0, 2014. 1.5).

To sum up, Web 2.0 is a platform where ordinary users can communicate each other, form a network, and distribute their own content. These content are consumed, remixed and redistributed by other users. Users also contribute to shape the platform itself by creating and extending personal links between users. Therefore, the Web 2.0 platform can be expanded or shrink according to the users' activities. This is a distinguishable feature of Web 2.0 compared with Web 1.0,which only lined between documents existed.

In this regard, users' activity and its outgrowth, the UGC are essential for Web 2.0 and reversely Web 2.0 is essential for them. Dialogical or two-way communication system of Web 2.0 encourages the publishing of users' own content and its sharing and collaborating work between users. These activities and the accumulation of the outgrowth vitalize Web 2.0. Rainie & Wellman state that social media created people's desire to contribute and not just consume.

Networked individuals have new powers to create media and project their voices to more extended audience that become part of their social worlds. (...) Social media allow people to tell their stories, draw an audience, and often gain social assistance when they are in need. (...) A major impact of this democratization of media participation is that it enables a new breed of media creators to step onto the cultural stage. This reshuffles the relationship between experts and amateurs and reconfigures the ways that people can exert influence in the world. Those who have things to say have new opportunities to pitch their voices into the information commons and gain a following (Rainie & Wellman, 2012, 13~18).

On the other hand, social media promotes not only creation of individual's expression and information, but also people's collaborative work for common values

and purposes. People can participate in information creation with other users. They can meet each other on social media platforms and produce information or resolve problems exerting collective intelligence. Wikipedia is an example of collaborative work on social media. It shows that it can form a new influential culture.

In detail, according to the report of The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), three basic requirements of UGC are like follows (OECD, 2007. 4. 12, 8):

- **Publication requirement**: While UGC could be made by a user and never published online or elsewhere, we focus here on the work that is published in some context, be it on a publicly accessible website or on a page on a social networking site only accessible to a select group of people (e.g., fellow university students). This is a useful way to exclude email, two-way instant messages and the like.

- **Creative effort**: This implies that a certain amount of creative effort was put into creating the work or adapting existing works to construct a new one; i.e. users must add their own value to the work. The creative effort behind UGC often also has a collaborative element to it, as is the case with websites which users can edit collaboratively. For example, merely copying a portion of a television show and posting it to an online video website (an activity frequently seen on the UGC sites) would not be considered UGC. If a user uploads his/her photographs, however, expresses his/her thoughts in a blog, or creates a new music video any of these could be considered UGC. Yet the minimum amount of creative effort is hard to define and depends on the context.

- **Creation outside of professional routines and practices**: User generated content is generally created outside of professional routines and practices. It often does not have an institutional or a commercial market context. In extreme cases, UGC may be produced by non-professionals without the expectation of profit or remuneration. Motivating factors include: connecting with peers, achieving a certain level of fame, notoriety, or prestige, and the desire to express oneself.

In addition to the third item, the OECD report explains that "although conceptually useful, the last characteristic is getting harder to maintain. While in the beginning UCC was a grassroots movement, there is now a trend towards the monetization of UCC from the user-side. (…) The mere term UCC may thus be inadequate as content creators are much more than just users. Still, the creation of content outside of a professional routine and organization is a useful concept to separate it from content produced by commercial entities" (OECD, 2007. 4. 12, 8).

UGC culture has been growing fast along with the development of Web 2.0. There are other factors that promoted the growth of the UGC culture. The OECD report points out four factors behind this: technological drivers, economic drivers, social drivers, and institutional and legal drivers (OECD, 2007. 4. 12, 14).

- Technological Drivers

  - Increased broadband availability

  - Increased hard drive capacity and processing speeds coupled with lower costs

  - Rise of technologies to create, distribute, and share content

  - Provision of simpler software tools for creating, editing, and remixing

  - Decrease in cost and increase in quality of consumer technology devices for audio, photos, and video

  - Rise of non-professional and professional UGC sites as outlets

- Social Drivers

  - Shift to younger age groups (digital natives) with substantial ICT skills, willingness to engage online (i.e. sharing content, recommending and rating content.) and with less hesitation to reveal personal information online

  - Desire to create and express oneself and need for more interactivity than on traditional media platforms such as TV Development of communities and collaborative projects

  - Spread of these social drivers among the group of older people and to fulfill certain

societal functions (social engagement, politics and education)

- Economic Drivers

  - Lower costs and increased availability of tools for the creation of UCC (e.g. for creating, editing, hosting content) and lower entry barriers

  - Increased possibilities to finance related ventures and UCC sites through venture capital and other investment possibilities

  - Lower cost of broadband Internet connections

  - Increased interest of commercial entities to cater to the desire for user-created content and the long tail economics (including mobile operators, telecommunication service providers, traditional media publishers and search engines)

  - Greater availability of money related to advertisement and new business models to monetize content

- Institutional and Legal Drivers

  - Rise of schemes which provide more flexible access to creative works and the right to create derivative works (e.g. flexible licensing and copyright schemes such as the Creative Commons license)

  - Rise of end-user licensing agreements which grant copyright to users for their content

UGC has already been produced and available since the early stage of the Internet, but it became a social and media phenomenon based on the combination of Web 2.0 and other drivers mentioned above. The most famous examples of UGC culture are YouTube, the video sharing platform, and Wikipedia, the collaborative encyclopedia. Since YouTube was created in 2005, it has gained tremendous popularity globally and reshaped the contemporary media landscape. It became the symbol of UGC culture with its slogan “Broadcast Yourself”. By encouraging users to upload their own content, YouTube has transformed users from content consumers to content producers. Now more than 1 billion unique users visit YouTube each month. 100 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute and over 6 billion hours of video are watched each

month on YouTube (YouTube, 2014. 3. 9).

Wikipedia, a collaboratively edited, multilingual, free Internet encyclopedia, is also the symbol of UGC culture and Web 2.0. It caused a sensation and showed the power of the Internet users' collaborative work, since it launched in 2001. It took over from the authority of traditional printed encyclopedia such as Britannica. Volunteers[2] worldwide collaboratively write Wikipedia's 30 million articles in 287 languages. (…) According to the report of The New York Times in February 2014, Wikipedia recorded 18 billion page views and nearly 500 million visitors a month and ranked fifth globally among all websites (Wikipedia, 2014. 4. 3).

Along with the development of Web 2.0 and UGC culture, various types of social media have been developed. Thus, it is necessary to classify them systematically in order to understand the development and recent state of social media. There have been putting various efforts to do this with various criteria. One of the well-known classifications of social media is of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). They classify social media into six different types by applying a set of theories in the field of media research (social presence, media richness) and social processes (self-presentation, self-disclosure).

Table 3.1 Classification of social media by Kaplan and Haenlein

		Social presence/ Media richness		
		Low	**Medium**	**High**
Self-presentation /Self-disclosure	**High**	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

Source: "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media," by A. M. Kaplan & M. Haenlein, 2010, Business Horizons, vol. 53, p. 62.

2 Active editors: 129,828, total accounts: 21,310,525 in April, 2014.

This classification provides a useful frame to understand the characteristics of various social media applications and type or categorize them. There are, however, critics that this classification is not proper to grasp the field of social media. It is because the boundaries between the different types have increasingly become blurred as the applications evolve by adding new features and functions. Kaplan and Haenlein's classification model still seems useful, but it will need to be appropriately revised to the change of social media field.

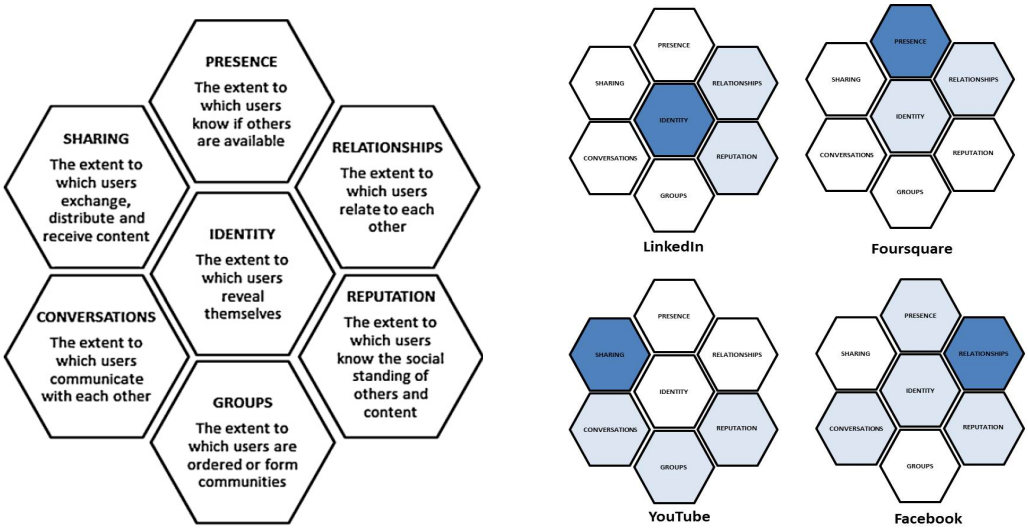


Fig. 3.1 Social media functionality and the functionalities of social media sites
Source: „Social Media? Get Serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media," by J. H. Kietzmann, et al., 2011, Business Horizons, vol. 54, p. 243, 248.

Kietzmann, et al. (2011) present a framework to define various social media applications by using seven functional blocks: identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups. These components enable them to examine a specific facet of social media user experience. They are neither mutually exclusive, nor do they all have to be present in a social media activity. They construct to make sense of how different levels of social media functionality can be configured.

According to the framework, social media services show differences in their functionalities. For example, YouTube has the strongest functionality in sharing, but the functions such as identity, relationships, and presence are weak. Conversely, the relationship is the strongest function of Facebook, and sharing and groups are relatively

weak functions. However, this framework has to be also revised as the boundaries and main functions of social media sites are blurred. For example, the sharing and groups functions of Facebook become strong more and more. Facebook is extending its boundary from relationship network to information channel.

The characteristics of social media described above imply that social media is distinct from mass media in many aspects. The pulling capacity of Web 2.0 is the ordinary users and their activities, while mass media are led by professional organizations and experts. Social media enables anyone to publish or access information and content in simple and inexpensive ways. The difference between mass media (industrial media) and social media can be listed with various properties as following (Social media, 2014. 4. 5):

- Quality: In industrial (traditional) publishing- mediated by a publisher- the typical range of quality is substantially narrower than in niche, unmediated markets. The main challenge posed by content in social media sites is the fact that the distribution of quality has high variance: from very high-quality items to low-quality, sometimes abusive content.

- Reach: Both industrial and social media technologies provide scale and are capable of reaching a global audience. Industrial media, however, typically use a centralized framework for organization, production, and dissemination, whereas social media are by their very nature more decentralized, less hierarchical, and distinguished by multiple points of production and utility.

- Accessibility: The means of production for industrial media are typically government and/or corporate (privately owned); social media tools are generally available to the public at little or no cost.

- Usability: Industrial media production typically requires specialized skills and training. Conversely, most social media production only requires modest reinterpretation of existing skills; in theory, anyone with access can operate the means of social media production.

- Immediacy: The time lag between communication produced by industrial media can be long (days, weeks, or even months) compared to social media (which can be capable of virtually instantaneous responses).

- Permanence: Industrial media, once created, cannot be altered (once a magazine article is printed and distributed, changes cannot be made to that same article) whereas social media can be altered almost instantaneously by comments or editing.

Social media is also different from mass media in the process of content distribution and its value chain. The value chain and distribution model for UGC on social media is contrasted to a simplified traditional and offline media publishing value chain. Mass media publishing value chain is characterized with a series of steps to select and consent content. The creation of the work to be published and its physical distribution can be expensive undertakings. After the gatekeeper's choice, only few selected and filtered content are distributed to receivers and consumed. The behavior of consumers and their preferences is feeding back to the content distributors in the name of the rating of viewers or sales (OECD, 2007. 4. 12, 21~22).

As opposed to the traditional mass media publishing chain and its selectivity as to what content shall be published, here all users with access are able to create and publish their content. In some cases, users even have their personal blog that does not rely on an external UGC platform. In this process, there is a little filtering or selecting process by gatekeeper. Users are also inspired and they build on existing works. The selection of

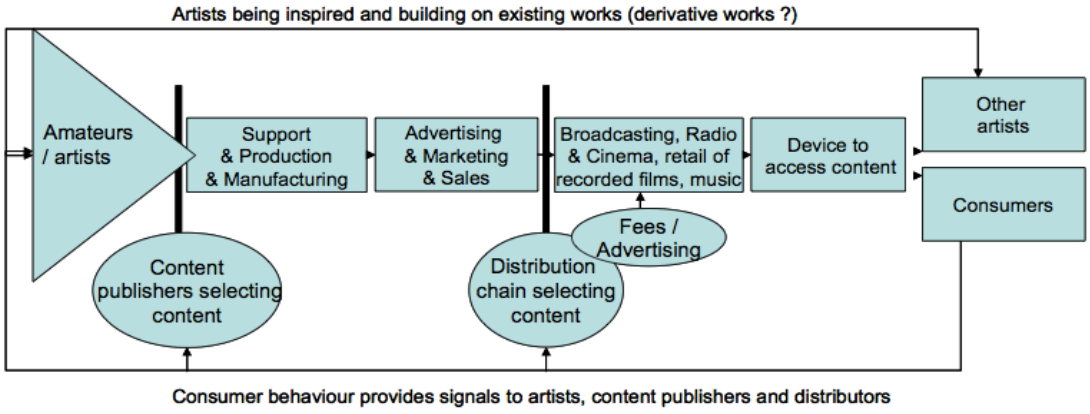


Fig. 3.2 Mass media publishing value chain

Source: Participative web and user-created content (p. 21), by OECD, 2007. 4. 12)

which content works and which does not is made by the users themselves, through making recommendations and rating (i.e. another form of advertising) content. This possibly leads some creators to become famous and recognized which would not have been possible under the traditional media publishers. The time it takes for content to be created and spread is significantly reduced as compared to the traditional media publishing chain. This may impact the type and quality of content (OECD, 2007. 4. 12, 22).

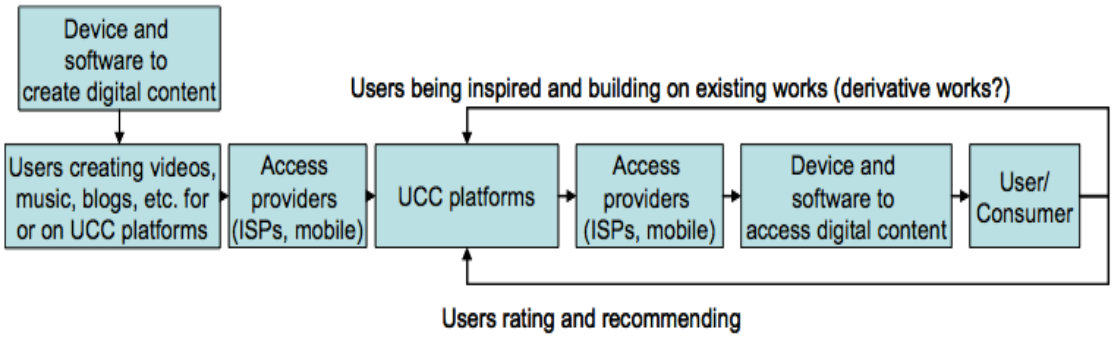


Fig. 3.3 UGC publishing value chain on social media

Source: Participative web and user-created content (p.22), by OECD, 2007. 4. 12.

3.1.2 A Growth in Social Media Users

For the past decades, the Internet users have fast grown along with the development of Web technology. The rate of increase in the world's Internet users is more than doubled in the last decade. By end 2014, the number of Internet users globally will have reached almost 3 billion. It is an Internet-user penetration of 40 percent globally. The Internet user penetration in developed countries is 78 percent and 32 percent in developing countries. Europe's Internet penetration will reach 75 percent by end of 2014, recording the highest in the world. About 67 percent of people in the Americas will be using the Internet by end 2014, the second highest penetration rate after Europe. One-third of the population in Asia and the Pacific will be online by end 2014. Asia-Pacific region has the greatest number of Internet users globally, around 45 percent of the world's Internet users. In Africa, almost 20 percent of the population will be online by end-2014. In developing countries, the number of Internet users increased almost

five times during the last decade, from 408 million in 2005 to 1.9 billion in 2014. The statistics show that the Internet penetration and the number of users have grown fast. The interregional disparity is still severe between developed countries and developing countries. Yet, the gap seems to be closing as the Internet penetration rate is rapidly rising (International Telecommunication Union, 2014, April).

Unit: percentage of population, Note: * Estimate

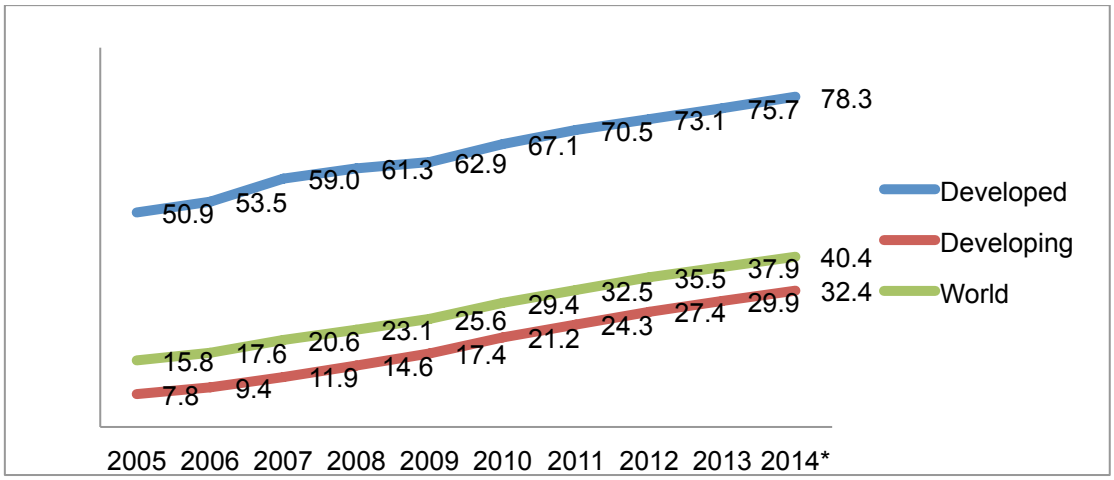


Fig. 3.4 Percentage of world's individuals using the Internet

Source: Key ICT indicators for developed and developing countries and the world, by ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database, 2014. 5. 12.

Unit: millions, Note: * Estimate

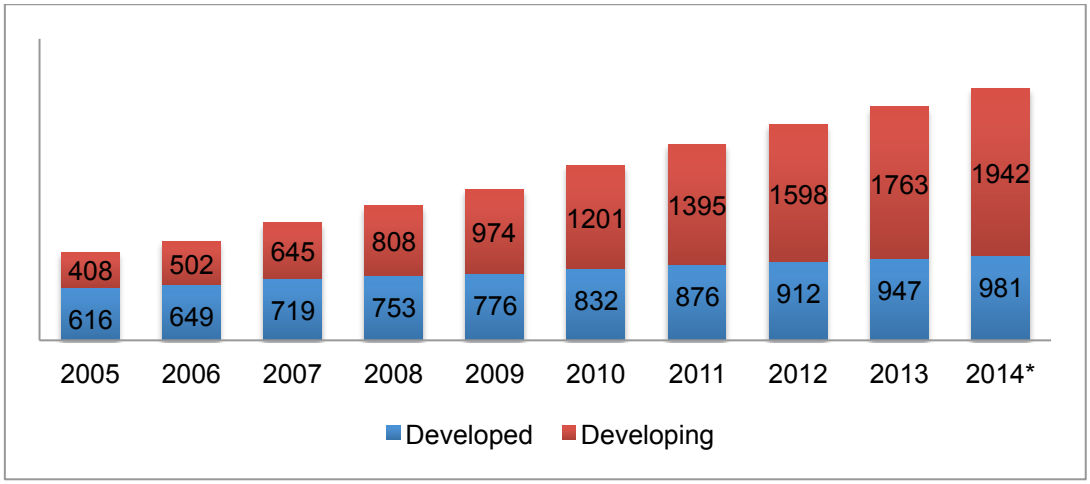


Fig. 3.5 World's individuals using the Internet

Source: Key ICT indicators for developed and developing countries and the world, by ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database, 2014. 5. 12.

Unit: percentage of population

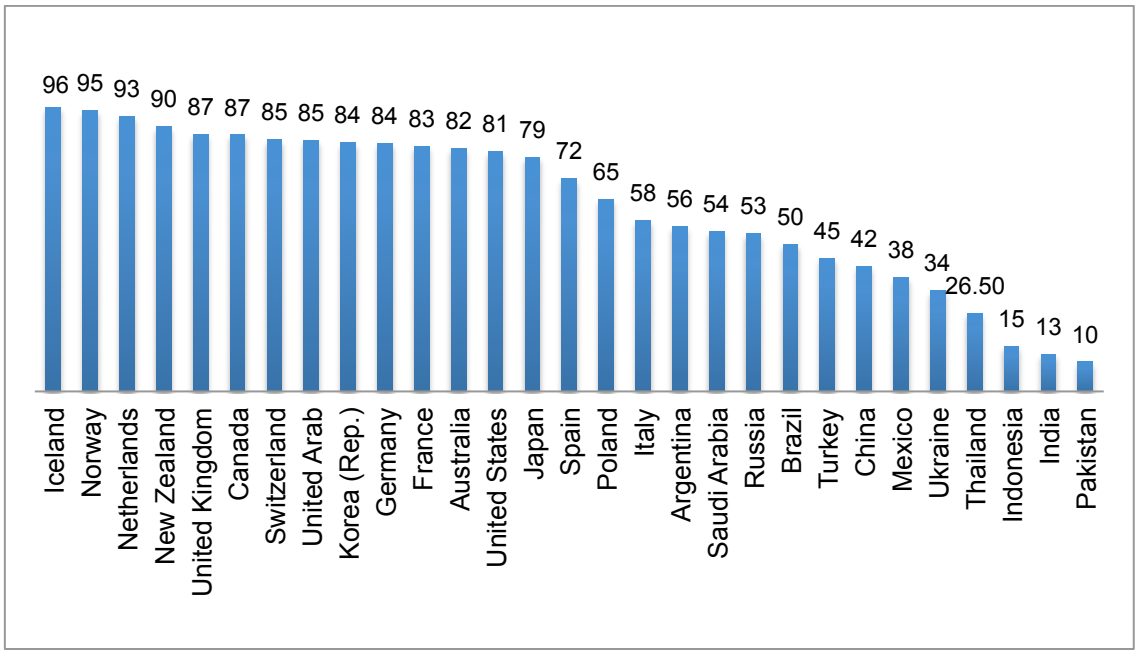


Fig. 3.6 Percentage of individuals using the Internet by country

Source: Percentage of Individuals using the Internet, by ITU World Telecommunication /ICT Indicators database, 2014. 5. 13.

Unit: percentage of population

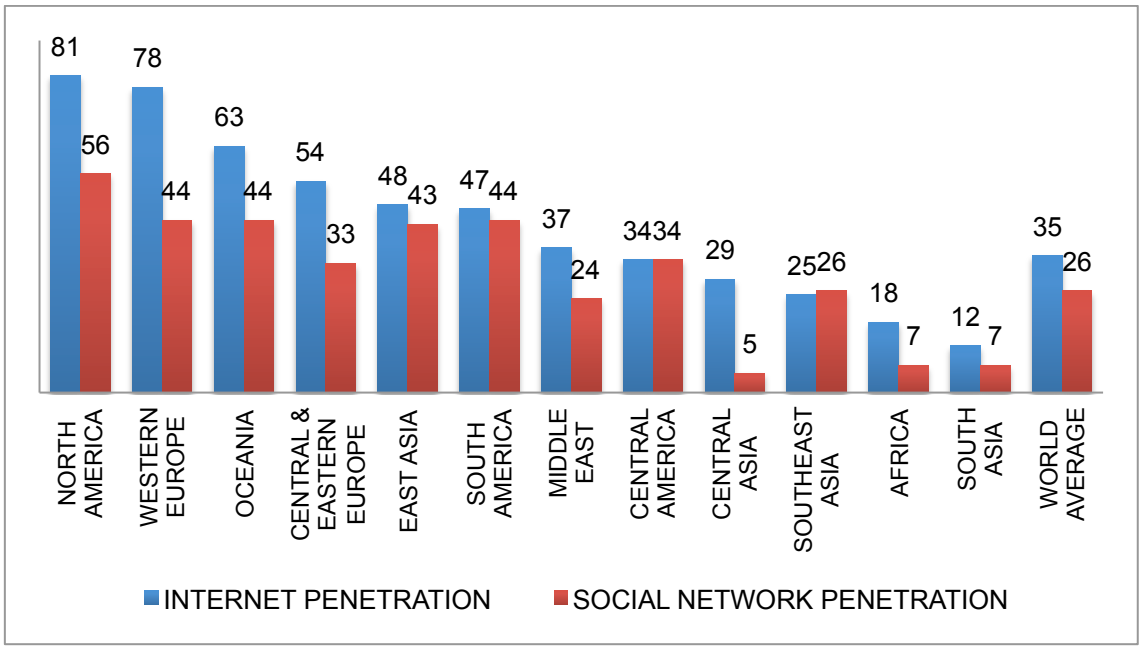
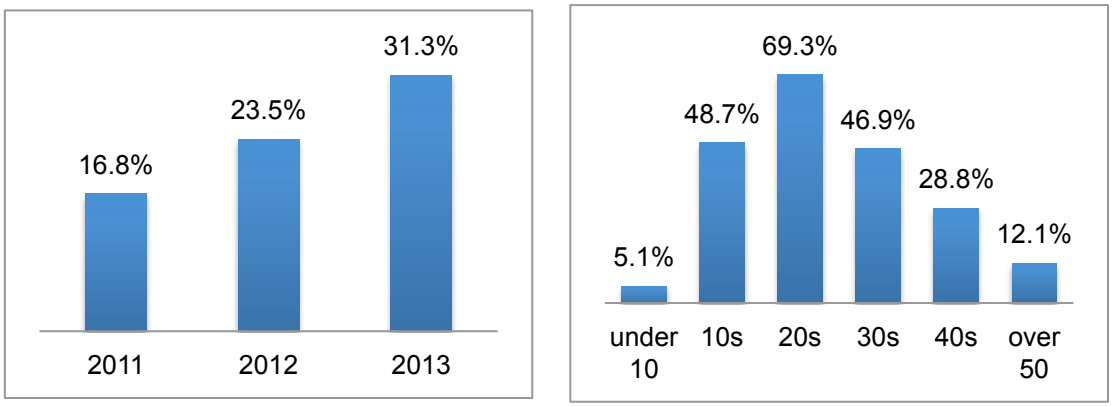


Fig. 3.7 Internet & social network penetration by region

Source: Global digital statistics 2014 (p. 8, 10), by We are social, 2014. 1. 8.

Social media users also have grown fast in the last decade in tandem with the Internet penetration. The number of social media users is globally 1.73 billion and the penetration rate is 24 percent in 2013. It is 18 percent increase compared to 1.47 billion in 2012 (Social media today, 2013. 12.11). In 2014, the rate is expected to reach almost 1.86 billion, 26 percent of world's population (We are social, 2014. 1. 8). <Fig 3. 7> indicates that the tendencies of the Internet penetration and social media penetration are similar each other. The social media penetration in the countries where the Internet penetration is high tends to be also high. Like the Internet, the interregional disparity in the social media penetration is also severe between developed countries and developing countries. As an exception, the use rates of social media in East Asia and South America are relatively high. In these regions, the average time spent on social media is very high. For example, the time spent on social media in Argentina is 4.3 hours per day, and Mexico 3.8 hours, Thailand 3.7 hours, Brazil 3.1 hours, and Indonesia 2.9 hours. It is very high compared to the world's average, 2 hours per day (We are social, 2014. 1. 8).

South Korea is one of the countries where the infrastructure for the Internet is well developed. South Korea ranks the first for the high-speed access to the (wired- wireless) Internet in the world (International Telecommunication Union, 2014, April). In Korea, 84 percent of individuals use the Internet, and Korea belongs to the top-level countries.



Total *N*= 2011: 12,000, 2012: 10,319, 2013: 10,463 over 6 year olds

Fig. 3.8 Percentage of SNS users in South Korea

Source: 2013 Korean Media Panel Survey (p.18), by M. C. Kim, J. H. Shin, Y. H. Kim, T. L. Ha, & S. Shin, 2013, Seoul: Korea Information Society Development Institute.

However, the percentage of social media users in Korea is 31.3 percent in 2013 as shown in the <Fig. 3. 8>. The social media penetration is relatively low compared to the other countries that have similar degree of the Internet penetration. The time spent on social media by social media users isn't so much too: average one hour per day. It is a half of world's average, 2 hours per day (We are social, 2014. 1. 8). The percentage of individuals using social media in their 20s is 69.3 percent. It is followed by the teenager group with 48.7 percent and people in their 30s with 46.9 percent. The percentage of social media users aged over 40 is fairly lower compared to the younger age groups. In Korea, the influence of Korean native social media platforms is stronger than that of the global social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. "Kakaostory", a Korean social media platform has the greatest number of users and service in Korea. The market share of Kakaostory has rapidly increased from 31.5 in 2012 percent to 55.4 percent in 2013, while the market share of the global platforms decreased (Kim, Shin, Kim, Ha, & Shin, 2013).

One of the most popular social media platforms, Facebook has about 1.2 billion subscribed users over the world. Another most famous social media platform, YouTube also records about 1 billion visitors per month. The other major social media platforms have millions subscribed users (We are social, 2014. 1. 8). It implies that more than 1 billion people can make and share information, and communicate and interact with other users. On the basis of the huge network, an enormous amount of information and

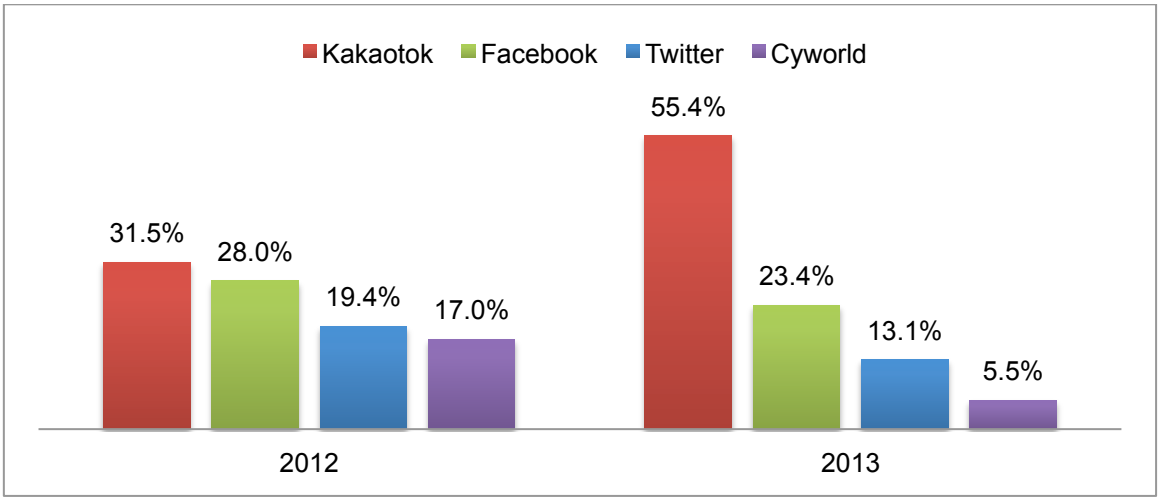


Fig. 3.9 Market shares of social media platforms in South Korea

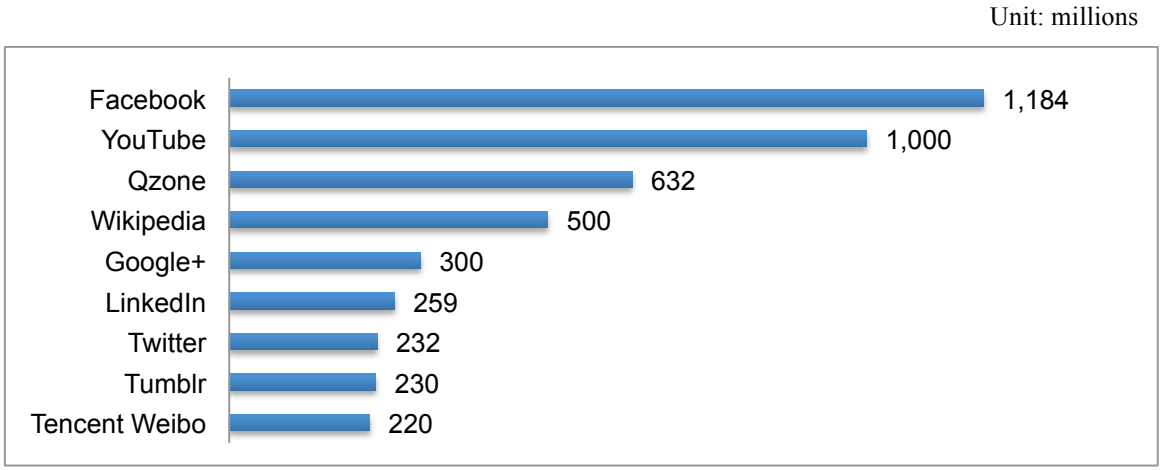


Fig. 3.10 Active users of social media platforms

Source: Global digital statistics 2014 (p. 11), by We are social, 2014. 1. 8.

content of users is uploaded and shared on social media platforms. For example, users on Facebook share 2.5 billion pieces of content per day. 5,700 tweets with maximum 140 characters are posted on Twitter every second. More than 5 million pictures are uploaded everyday on Instagram (Bennett, 2014. 1. 20). Video files with the total playtime of 100 hours are uploaded to YouTube every minute and over 6 billion hours of video are watched each month on YouTube (YouTube, 2014. 3. 9). The interest thing is that the format of information and content on social media is various from the short text of 140 characters to pictures and videos. Social media users have been trained to produce and consume the multimodal content.

3.2 The Development of Dialogical Media Culture

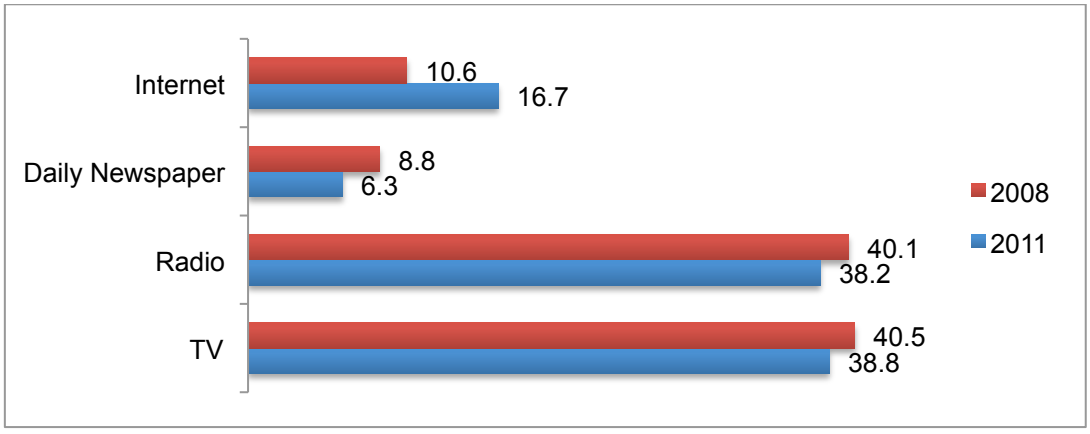
The development of Web technology and the increase of users are the basic conditions for telematic society. However, these are not enough. Only with these factors, it is hard to be optimistic about the realization of the telematic society and solving the problem of communication imbalance. It is needed to look inside the qualitative aspect of user's media practice and social and cultural aspect intertwined with Web technology. For this work, the following questions need to be asked: How do users actually use social media? What is the usage pattern? How does the penetration of social media have

influence on people's daily information activities and media landscape? What is the influence on cultural and social aspects? Is the growth of social media use really invigorating the dialogical communication and counterbalancing the dominance of discursive media order? Are there any new problems along with the development of social media?

3.2.1 Diversification of Information Media Use

Mass media still maintain the dominance as the information channel in people's daily lives, although the Internet has been penetrating rapidly into our society and challenging the dominance of mass media. Studies on media use confirm this fact. In both Germany and South Korea, TV is the most favorite media not only for general use but also for getting information.

In Germany, the amount of time used for TV and other media has a little decreased and it seems to be substituted by the Internet use. However, the Internet is not very preferred as the information channel in Germany. Radio and newspaper are still playing significant roles as major information channels (Mende, Oehmichen, & Schröter, 2012).



Total *N*= 2008: 1,802, 2011: 1,800 over 14 year olds, in %

Fig. 3.11 Percentage of media use in Germany

Source: "Fernsehen, Radio, Zeitung und Internet im Vergleich: Medienübergreifende Informationsnutzung und Informationsrepertoires," by A. Mende, E. Oehmichen, & C. Schröter, 2012, Media Perspektiven, 1, p. 4.

Table 3.2 Used media for information of regional/national/international events in Germany

Aktuelle Ereignisse aus der Region, in der Sie leben	Aktuelle Ereignisse aus dem Bundesland, in dem Sie leben	Aktuelle Ereignisse aus Deutschland	Aktuelle Ereignisse aus Europa und der Welt
Ja* 56,0	Ja 56,0	Ja 71,1	Ja 79,7
und zwar: Tageszeitung 59,1 Radio 37,1 Fernsehen 32,7 Internet 12,6 Videotext 1,3 woanders 1,3	und zwar: Fernsehen 56,1 Tageszeitung 45,2 Radio 34,1 Internet 10,9 Videotext 1,9 woanders 0,6	und zwar: Fernsehen 71,1 Tageszeitung 37,6 Radio 36,3 Internet 16,5 Videotext 1,8 woanders 0,4	und zwar: Fernsehen 78,2 Radio 34,8 Tageszeitung 33,8 Internet 19,8 Videotext 1,3 woanders 0,2

* sehr interessiert bzw. sehr/etwas interessiert, Total *N*= 1,800 over 14 year olds, in %

Source: Fernsehen, Radio, Zeitung und Internet im Vergleich: Medienübergreifende Informationsnutzung und Informationsrepertoires, by A. Mende, E. Oehmichen, & C. Schröter, 2012, Media Perspektiven, 1, p. 6.

Total *N*= 2,048 over 18 year olds, in %

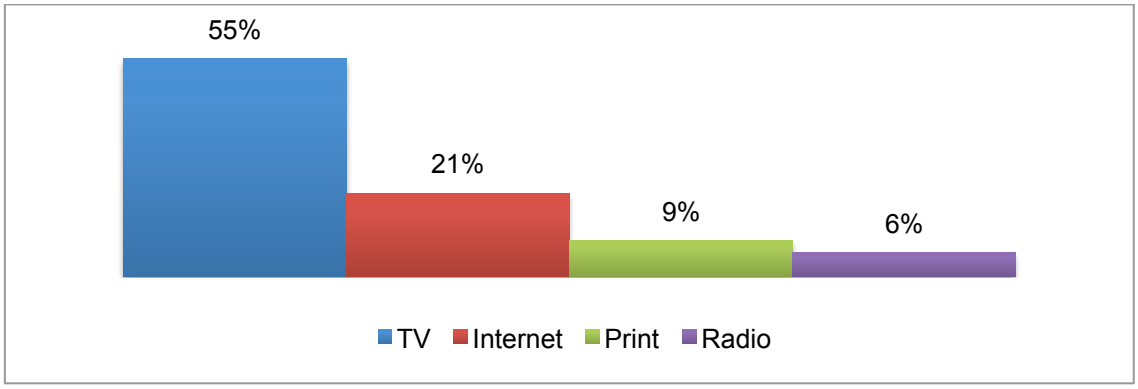
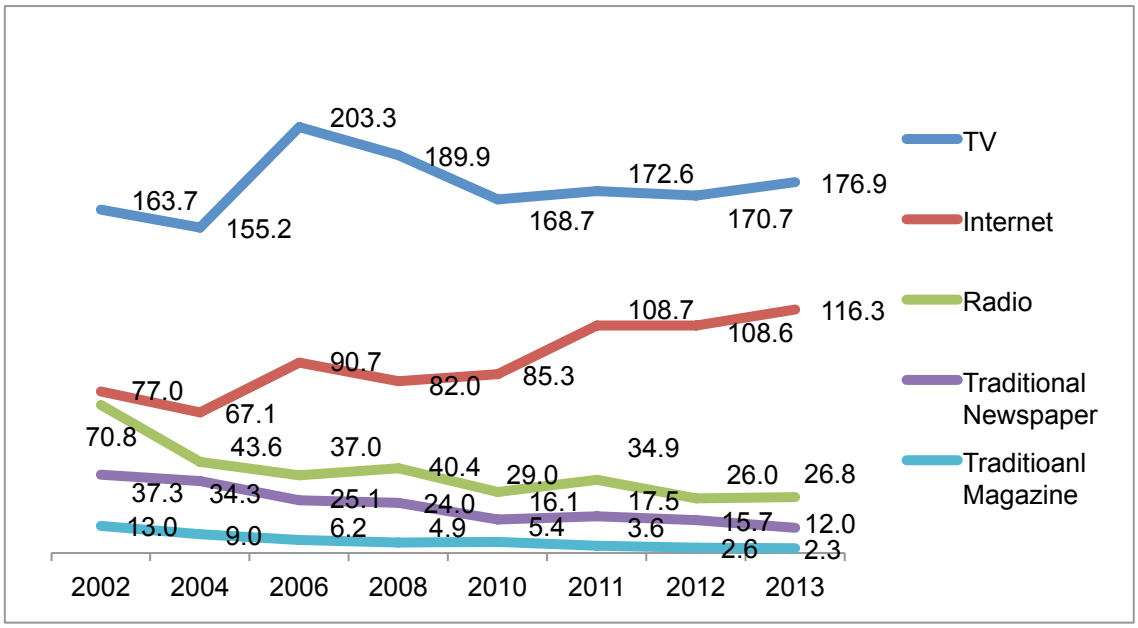


Fig. 3.12 Preferred media as the main source for news in the U.S. by type

Source: TV Is Americans' Main Source of News, by L. Saad, 2013. 7. 8., Gallup.

In the United States, the penetrating rate of the Internet and online media is very high. In 2013, the amount of time spent with digital media (online and mobile device (nonvoice): 5h 14m) among American adults surpassed the amount time spent for watching TV (4h 31m) for the first time (EMarketer, 2014. 4. 22). However, TV is still the most preferred source of news source. The percentage of people who use the Internet to get new information is higher than that of print media and radio, but much lower than the percentage of people using TV as a major news source (Saad, 2013. 7. 8).

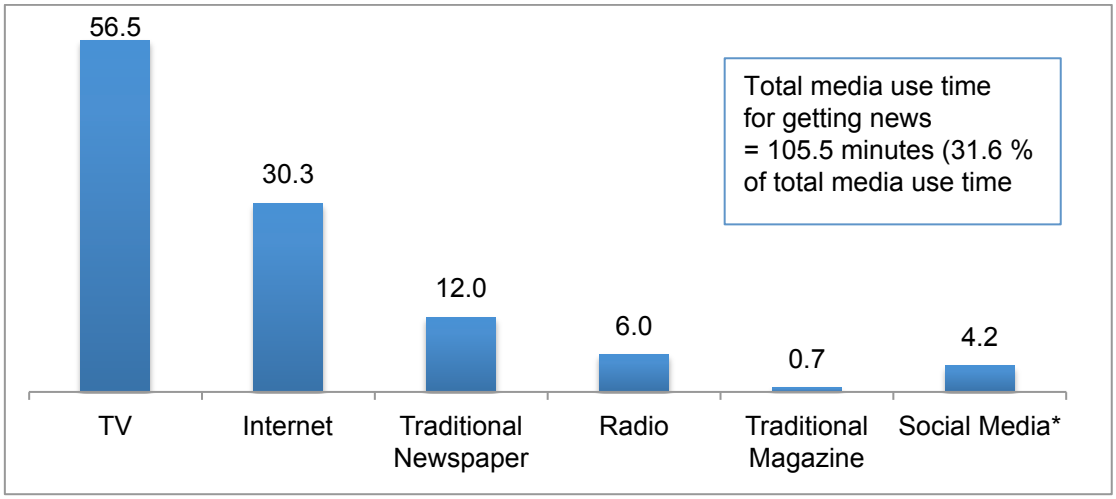
In South Korea, TV dominates the media consumption. People's reliability of TV as information channel is very high in comparison with other media. On the other hand, other traditional media such as radio, newspaper, and magazine have fast gone into decline. It is big difference in media landscape between Germany and South Korea. One more difference is the preference of the Internet. The Internet is more proliferated in South Korea than Germany. The Internet is second favorite media in general use and in getting information. The reliability of the Internet is also higher than other traditional media except TV. Social media makes up around 20 percent of the Internet use (Korea Press Foundation, 2013).



Total *N*= 5,082 over 19 year olds, in minute

Fig. 3.13 Average daily media use in South Korea

Source: Media Audience Survey 2013 (p. 23), by Korea Press Foundation December, 2013.

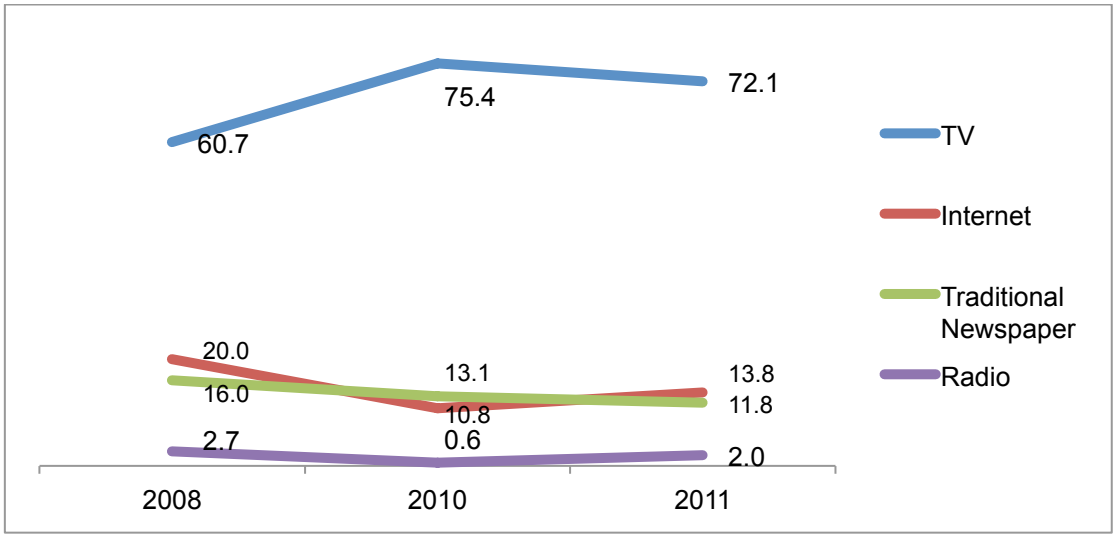


* The time of social media use is included in Internet use time.

Total *N*= 5,082 over 19 year olds, in minute

Fig. 3.14 Daily media use time for getting information in South Korea

Source: Media Audience Survey 2013 (p. 26), by Korea Press Foundation, 2013, December.



Total *N*= 5,082 over 19 year olds, in %

Fig. 3.15 Audience's most reliable media on same topic in South Korea

Source: Media Audience Survey 2013 (p. 44), by Korea Press Foundation, 2013, December.

It is a new phenomenon in the Internet scene and the whole media landscape. Current trends suggest that the roles of the Internet and social media will grow gradually and they will challenge the traditional mass media.

Even if TV has maintained the dominant power in modern society, social media is invading various aspects of contemporary life. It is changing people's perception and use pattern of media. It is changing the way of information production and distribution and shaking the landscape of traditional media that has maintained the monopoly status during the process. One of significant changes is that the role of social media as information source recently becomes bigger and bigger. Lovink asserts on the tendency as follows:

..., let us note that social media are playing an increasingly large role in the "organization of information" in general and that they compete with search engines, email, and web portals. Originally brushed aside as an ordinary online address book, generating meaning through informal chats amongst "friends", social media are now a prime news source for millions. This in turn affects the way we transform news items into issues that we act upon (Lovink, 2011, 160)

Researches in various countries show this common tendency. The research conducted by the Pew research center shows that roughly 30 percent of the general American population get news from social media in 2013. Among the social media services, Facebook plays the biggest role. According to the research, two-thirds of U.S. adults use Facebook, and half of Facebook users acquire news from there. On YouTube, 20 percent of users get news. YouTube has the second greatest reach in terms of general usage, at 51% of U.S. adults. So the users who get news on YouTube amount to 10 percent of the adult population in the U.S. The percentage of Twitter users who use it to get news is very high: about half of the total Twitter users (52%). The rate is 8 percent of U.S. adults (Holcomb, Gottfried, & Mitchell, 2013. 11. 14).

Do, Sim, and Lee (2010) found that social media was perceived and used as an attractive information media by Korean social media users. According to the study, the pursuit of information is the greatest motivation for usage that raises users' satisfaction on social media in South Korea. In addition, the study verified that the more people

used social media for getting information, the less they used newspaper and TV news for information channel. The experts stated in expert interviews for the study that the one of main reasons for the growth of news consumption through social media is people's distrust of mainstream media and the hostility to its traditional gatekeeping.

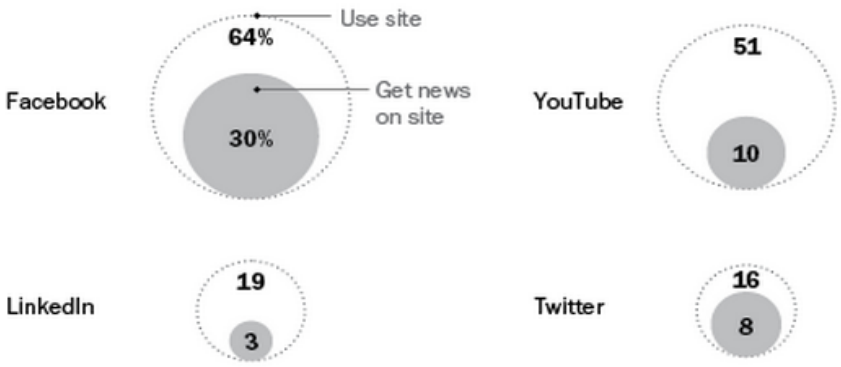


Fig. 3.16 Social media as a pathway to news: Facebook leads the way

Percent of U.S. adults who use each social media site & percent of U.S. adults who get news from each social networking site

Source: News Use Across Social Media Platforms, by J. Holcomb, J. Gottfried, & A. Mitchell, 2013. 11. 14, Pew Research Center

This tendency is found also in the studies of German social media users. ARD/ZDF-Onlinestudie (Busemann, 2013) indicates that the role of social media as information platform is growing. The rate of users who search daily news on politics and economics is 21 percent of private community users on social media. There has been an increase by 5 percentage points compared to last year. In addition, 20 percent of users state that the importance of classical information platforms such as spiegel.de, süddeutsche.de, tagesschau.de and heute.de is reduced to them, because now they can get all significant information on social media.

According to these studies, social media that users perceive and experience bring about a shift in communication and media environment. It shows that the user's pattern of getting information changes along with the growth of social media as information channel. Conversely, the role of traditional mass media as information channel and gatekeeper weaken.

Rainie & Wellman (2012, 18) explain this tendency as a "paradoxical impact" in the

environment of information explosion. They argue that the explosion of information and information sources has had the paradoxical impact of pushing people on the path of greater reliance on their networks. There is more uncertainty about whom and what information sources to trust in the contemporary information society where an increasing amount of information pour into people's lives. In addition, people are in less hierarchical and less bounded networks. They do not depend on the earlier authoritative information sources but gather information actively from various sources. They cycle back and forth between the Internet searches and discussion with the members of their social networks, using in-person conversations, phone chats, and emails to exchange opinions and weigh their options.

Pariser (2011) writes about the "disintermediation effect" of social media. Social media promises to make unmediated, direct connections between people or various information sources. The disintermediation makes the existing information mediators unnecessary and weakens the authority and power of them.

It (media) sits between us and the world; the core bargain is that it will connect us to what's happening but at the price of direct experience. Disintermediation suggests we can have both (Pariser, 2011, 83).

Nowadays, people find little differences in the authority of information source between the mainstream media and social media. Users can easily compare information from various sources and judge which information source is correct or trustworthy. The authoritative mainstream media is no exception. With the fall of traditional gatekeeper, the disintermediation brings about the emergence of new information curator. It is similar to the paradoxical impact in the environment of information explosion that Rainie & Wellman (2012) discussed.

If trust in news agencies is falling, it is rising in the new realm of amateur and algorithmic curation. If the newspaper and magazine are being torn apart on one end, the pages are being recompiled on the other- a different way every time. Facebook is an increasingly vital source of news for this reason: Our friends and family are more likely to know what's important and relevant to us than some newspaper editor in Manhattan (Pariser, 2011, 83).

3.2.2 A Growth of Dialogical Information Activity

This tendency implies that information activity in social media era becomes more dialogical way than before. “Getting information has become more interactive than was in the twentieth-century way of passively receiving it from printed sources such as books and newspapers and from one-way broadcast media such as TV, radio, and movies” (Rainie & Wellman, 2012, 224). Information, communication, and sociable activity are intertwined and the lines among them that were clear in the past have become blurred more and more.

Consumption of information for them (networked individuals) can be- and often is- a networking experience as they contribute to and share it as part of their effort to enrich their network relationships and build their reputations. Similarly, social networks help people find the information they want and to understand its meaning. It is commonplace now for a point to come up in conversation, and for participants to use their smartphones or wireless laptops to search for more information (Rainie & Wellman, 2012, 243).

Lovink defines online video viewing such as YouTube videos as social viewing, which is different from the traditional TV and film viewing. He states “YouTube is a hospitality service, giving us the energy to express ourselves and the warm feeling that we exist, that at least someone cares. This added layer of social viewing is what makes video today distinctive from the film and television age” (Lovink, 2011, 138). In video sharing and viewing on YouTube, there is no transparency regarding the intention of communication, no face-to-face communication, and no sense of common time sharing, but it forms a new type of social interaction. Users post videos, write comments, reply to comment, distribute videos to friends for enjoying together, and chat with friends about what they viewed together by sharing. Burgess and Green (2009) provide also the similar insight on the online video culture through the analysis of online video viewing on YouTube. According to their analysis, YouTube is not only about production and distribution but is about video viewing within the culture of a community. This characteristic is demonstrated by the analysis data. The data indicate that even though

UGC is not statistically the most viewed, it more often generates more reaction and feedback from other users than most viewed PGC on YouTube. In other words, the conversation between users is the core feature of UGC use on YouTube.

Similarly, Manovich (2009) focuses on a new communication phenomenon proliferated by social media: the conversation through media. He states that conversation around piece of content on social media takes place actively. For instance, users comment below photo or video posted on social media responding not only to the media object but also to other comments. Around the piece of content, conversation between users takes place back to back. In addition, users can communicate each other regardless of their location by means of web technology and mobile media. Nowadays this situation of conversation is quite common. It is more interesting to see the conversations with visuals responding to visuals on social media. For instance, responding to a video with a new video on YouTube, pictures to pictures on Flicker. Social media platforms contain huge numbers of such conversations through media.

The representative example of the conversation through media object is an Internet meme. The Internet meme means "an idea, style or action which spreads, often as mimicry, from person to person via the Internet, as with imitating the concept… An Internet meme may take the form of an image, hyperlink, video, picture, website, or hash tag. It may be just a word or phrase, including an intentional misspelling. These small movements tend to spread from person to person via social networks, blogs, direct email, or news sources" (Internet meme, 2014. 5. 12). The characteristics of the Internet meme include that it is selected and developed by massive users, not by a few professionals. It can be referred to the networked art and play of massive users in the digital age. Users transform the original content such as pictures and videos with their own creativity and redistribute the altered forms online. This online activity often takes place in large scale for a short period of time. It is a new type of dialogical communication transcending barriers of region, language, and so on. Erlehmann and Plomlompom describe the characteristic of the Internet meme as follows:

Um sich die Werke anderer in eigenen Videos anzueignen, scheinen die YouTube-Nutzer insgesamt alles durchzuprobieren, was sich in der Geschichte des Films an Montage-, Collage-, Filter- und Verzerrungsverfahren angesammelt hat. Dabei

entstehen Werke, die stark ans Avantgarde-, Experimental- und Found-Footage-Kino des 20. Jahrhunderts erinnern. Im Gegensatz zu diesem werden sie aber nicht nur von kleinen Zirkeln, sondern von vielen Millionen Menschen gesehen und gestaltet (Erlehmann & Plomlompom, 2013, 185).

Notable examples of the Internet meme include the online parody boom of a music video "Gangnam Style" in 2012 and the online video "Harlem Shake" in 2013. The music video of "Gangnam Style" released on YouTube by a South Korean musician Psy became the most viewed video in the YouTube history. It has recorded over 1.99 billion views as of May 2014. YouTube called it a massive hit ever at a global level. What is unique about the Gangnam Style's massive hit is the Internet meme that parodied the music video. After the video was uploaded, many parodies from all over the world were produced and uploaded to YouTube. In addition, fans around the world organized flash mobs to have the dance of "Gangnam Style" and videos that contained the flash mobs were also uploaded to YouTube. During the two weeks after the release of the music video, about 1,000 videos with the word "Gangnam" in the title were uploaded onto YouTube (Gangnam Style, 2014. 5. 13).

Original Music Video

Parody Video 1

Parody Video 2

Flash Mob Video

Fig. 3.17 "Gangnam Style" music video and Internet memes

The “Harlem Shake” is also a very popular Internet meme. In February 2013, the original Harlem Shake video was uploaded to YouTube. In the video, five Australian teenagers performed a comedy sketch accompanied by a short excerpt from the song “Harlem Shake”. Following the video, thousands of “Harlem Shake” videos in which people performed like the original video were made and uploaded to YouTube every day at the height of its popularity. About 40,000 Harlem Shake videos were uploaded during the first two weeks, and Harlem Shake hit the 1 billion views just in 40 days after its first upload. The time that Harlem Shake needed to hit 1 billion views is about half the time that “Gangnam Style” took to hit 1 billion views (Harlem Shake (meme), 2014. 5. 14).

The common features of the two Internet memes point out that these took place with social media at a global level in a short period of time. In the process of these Internet memes, the mainstream pop culture and users’ activities, mainstream media, and social media interacted with each other. The original source was produced in the field of mainstream pop culture (Korean pop music video and American pop music) and users produced new altered content by using the source. These spread fast on social media and mainstream media reported them and amplified the ripple effect.

Original Harlem Shake Video

Parody Video1

Parody Video 2

Flash Mob Video

Fig.3.18 “Harlem Shake” video and Internet memes

Christensen, Rasmussen, & Kofoed (2009) named this new type of social interaction through media "the mediated sociality[3]" in the post-modern life. Social viewing and conversations through media are necessary communicative responses of people in the post-modern society where individualization and globalization are intensified in various fields of society.

Hence competition, sharing, community and personal network may all be parts of a post-modern trend of mediated sociability but it is also important to realize that the social media may be a necessary communicative response to an increasingly individualized society and media-use where each piece of content seems to be targeted at very specific audience groups and it is difficult to share experiences with for example your family as used be the case in traditional sociable TV viewing (Christensen, Rasmussen, & Kofoed, 2009, 9).

They especially focus on UGC and try to interpret its meaning and value in a new way. They state that the significant characteristic of UGC is intertextuality. According to them, "primary texts are produced elsewhere but are cut up and distributed on a site for sharing, they take on a quite different horizontal intertextuality. Texts are more or less leveled out and become part of a massive maelstrom of all kinds of content organized using tags and folksonomies. Therefore, UGC is not a prefixed media text as such but becomes fixed through its use, comments and distribution history online" (Christensen, Rasmussen, & Kofoed, 2009, 7). Users participate in the process of intertextualization of UGC. With this activity, people produce and experiment identity, and collaboratively make or interpret social and personal meaning.

In this context and in a society characterized by its lack of traditions and omnipresent risks, UGC can be understood as a collaborative effort to navigate and construct a particular meaning of life as regards common cultural practices but also as a moral compass, where the sharing of content not only delivers symbolic communicative

3 The original definition of sociability put forward by George Simmel states that sociability is about being together socially without any other purpose but that of spending a good time in each others' company (Christensen, Rasmussen, & Kofoed, 2009).

expressions but becomes a negotiation of what is good and bad in society (Christensen, Rasmussen, & Kofoed, 2009, 14).

The aspects of Christensen, Rasmussen, & Kofoed (2009) is similar to the discourse of Flusser about the dialogical use of visuals. Flusser newly conceptualizes the terms "creativity" and "information production". He asserts that the production of information is no longer an individual work with an inner dialogue of a person, but a work by groups in dialogue.

For a telematic society, this is a crucial question. There, all information will be infinitely reproducible, and will be designed to be changed by its receivers and forwarded as new information. Can there be creative inspiration in such a situation, without author or work? Can there be that disregard of self, that absorption in work that constitutes freedom? (Flusser, 1985/2011, 95).

Such a society, in dialogue through images, would be a society of artists. It would dialogically envision, in images, situations that have never been seen and could not be predicted. It would be a society of players who would constantly generate new relationships by playing off moves against countermoves, a society of Homines ludentes in which inconceivable possibilities would open to human existence (Flusser, 1985/2011, 85).

An Internet meme seems to be purposeless, useless, playful, and celebratory as two instances mentioned above. Some critics evaluate these phenomena negatively. But Flusser point out the positive aspect of them as Christensen, Rasmussen, & Kofoed (2009) evaluate that users who participate in the process of intertextualization of UGC take part in the collaborative work for making and interpreting social and personal meaning. Flusser also asserts that the dialogical visuals making is like relaxation, purposeless play and celebration. These purposeless behaviors can connect isolated and distracted people newly and promote the dialogue between them to make and find meaning together.

3.2.3 The Development of Networked Political Activism

People's information activities on the network are not restricted to the private sphere and the purposeless individual dialogues. It has also significance in the social and political aspect. But it is needed to interpret the concept, the private sphere in a new light before discussing the social and political meaning of social media. It is because the new media environment blurs boundaries between the private and public sphere. Furthermore, it demands us to rethink the traditional notions of individual, public, politics, participation, political expression and activities. Papacharissi's (2010) discussion of the notion, the private sphere in a new light offers an insight of the new meaning of private sphere and the change of political communication in the new media environment.

The private sphere does not suggest that the individual is disconnected; on the contrary, it enables connectivity from spaces that the individual delineates as private. (...) Online convergence technologies situate the private sphere in a similar spatial context, which evokes both distance and proximity to produce narratives of social, cultural, and political relevance for the individual. The private sphere interweaves multiple configurations of public and private to suggest spaces of cultural meaning for the individual (Papacharissi, 2010, 138).

To Papacharissi, the private sphere is not an isolated and disconnected cocoon, but a new space where individuals are connected with social and cultural sphere. In other words, in the networked environment, the private sphere and public sphere are not separated, but rather overlap each other.

I argue that in the private sphere neither the personal nor the political are prevalent, but rather a peculiar mixture of both, which simultaneously renders citizenship less political that it was in the past, but also more autonomously defined. (...) As such, the private sphere is a sphere of connection and not isolation, as it serves primarily to connect the personal to the political, and the self to the polity and society (Papacharissi, 2010, 163~164).

Along with the changes in the characteristics of the private sphere, the mode of political communication and activity is also changing. The political participation tends to revolve around the individual interests. This is one of the phenomena of the post-modern society where the macro discourse has disappeared. People want to connect their individual concerns with political process rather than engaging in political issues in a macro level. Social media facilitates this. People can find and join the groups online that share common interests. They can acquire more information and knowledge by subscribing to news-feeds of the groups. "Globally, platforms like Facebook allow remotely located individuals to connect over shared interests and beliefs, and donate to, and recruit support for, the causes they are interested in" (Papacharissi, 2010, 158).

There is criticism about this political activism tailored to personal interests. They argue that it could lead to a tribalization of the global agenda, or a cyberbalkanization of political discourse (Sustein, 2001). Some have concern that the online spaces for people's political communication and activity are concentrated on the platforms of big global companies such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and so on. These platforms can be also "key tools for regime propaganda, political surveillance, counterinsurgency and corporate espionage" (Kaul, 2012. 6. 30, 10). In this reason, Kaul asserts that the excessive dependence on the Internet and digital media for political activity is a threat to the democracy. This is realized by the NSA scandal in 2013.And the scandal reinforces the pessimistic view on the political function of the Internet.

On the other hand, some critics cautiously try to find and evaluate new democratic potentials from the new mode of political activity. These approaches rethink and broaden the rigid notion of the democratic and political activity of previous times. Papacharissi (2010) states that individuals in the age of convergence internalize the convergence of public and private, operate in the social, and absorb technological convergence as audience, publics, and citizens. In addition, these individuals engage in the political communication in a new way using the innovative modes of expression and communication on social media. He views this new mode of political activity and communication could enhance the democracy. Loader & Mercea (2011, 761) asserts that various kinds of political self-expression more widely experienced and performed through a variety of text, visual, audio and graphic communication forms as aspects of the political: for example, the playful repertoires of innovative YouTube videos, mobile

texting language, protest music, and the celebration of trivia.

These new modes of political communication and activity are seen in the various political campaigns. One of the new modes is the increasing use of political UGC on YouTube. YouTube is often used as a platform for political expression of individuals and activist groups. YouTube is the most popular platform of Internet meme as seen in the case of PSY's music video and the Harlem Shake video. The culture of Internet meme is combined with political activism. Politically-oriented videos can now be produced by ordinary citizens, or users, and shared on YouTube. Some of these videos are explosively spread through social media platforms and become popular a Internet meme. In this process, the political videos make a social impact. A representative instance is the political parody videos for election campaign. The political parody video became very popular ever since the big hit election video "This land" produced by JibJab, a digital entertainment studio during the 2004 US presidential election campaign. The election video boomed in 2008 US presidential election campaign. The representative election video was "I Got a Crush on Obama" in 2008 US presidential election campaign. This video became a mega-hit and so many memes were produced and uploaded to YouTube. With the popularization of political parody videos, YouTube became a powerful source of campaigning for the 2008 Presidential Election (Viral Video, 2013. 5. 18).

The popularization of a political Internet meme implies that the characteristic of political communication and activity is different from the previous time. It is more playful and celebratory participation in political activity and this characteristic is similar with the other non-political Internet activities. It is a mixture of a playful online culture and a meaningful political practice. Kim also found the similar characteristics through the analysis of political YouTube videos during the 2008 candlelight protests in South Korea:

While individual YouTube users may be confined to major corporate media culture, they are still actively engaging those forms to (re) create new dimensions of meaning in their everyday lives. In other words, the current modes of YouTube- humor, spectacle, self-referentiality, parody, and mash-up- are not determined to be conformist or bad from their own forms per se. Rather, it is their practical uses with specific intentions that actualize their genuine social political effects (Kim, 2011, Spring, 6).

Original Video

Parody Video 1

Parody Video 2

Parody Video 3

Fig. 3.19 "I Got a Crush on Obama" music video and Internet memes

As illustrated above, the political expression on social media became a representative mode of political communication and activity in these days. It reveals a playful mood that results in a creative and nonsensical pastiche of content, which is the style of post-modern culture. But it is not the whole of the political potential of social media. Social media further facilitates the people's mobilization and the participation in the political movements. The role of social media in the Arab spring, a revolutionary wave in the Arab world from 2010 to present has shown this potential. During the Arab Spring, the social media has become an important platform of the communication and mobilization for demonstration and protests. Frangonikolopoulos and Chapsos positively evaluate the role of social media in the Arab Spring being cautious not to overstate its role and meaning.

… , it would be wrong to characterize the uprisings as 'revolutions' of the social media. Their 'leaderless' character was a genuine bottom-up expression of public will. The

political, economic and social oppression of the Arab people, the lack of government transparency and unemployment were the real motivating factors behind demands for reform. ... The growth and use of social media in the Arab region, however, did play a critical role in mobilization and change. For it was the social media, not formal institutions or political parties, that provided the effective tool for activating the public, for allowing the loose networks of activists and protesters to mobilize, communicate and collaborate. They provided an alternate space for reviving a dormant public consciousness into a sentient, dynamic social discourse (Frangonikolopoulos & Chapsos, 2012, 17).

According to Frangonikolopoulos and Chapsos (2012), the role of social media during the Arab Spring is characterized by three factors. First, social media functioned as an alternative information and expression channel. Social media created unprecedented opportunities for exchange of information outside the control of the dominant and supervised mainstream media of the Arab regimes. Public could express views, ideas, and criticism and discuss on the social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. With the external support such as the "Speak-2-Tweet" offered by Google and Twitter, people could also counteract and bypass the censorship and blackout attempts by the regime to block local and foreign information and support for the protestors. The activists used Twitter as a main broadcaster to provide news source with pictures and videos taken at the demonstration. International news media or external activist groups gained information on the internal situations and distributed it to the world.

Second, social media was useful for the mobilization and systemization of the protests. Social media enabled people to express their opinions, discuss and act together. Prior to the Egyptian revolution of 2011, social media played a role in communicating, coordinating and channeling the rising tides of change from below. Active young users and activists made group or issue pages on social media platforms and raised their voices against the regime. As more people gathered in these pages and were mobilized around common issues, mass protests were coordinated. One of the well-known example of these pages is the "We are all Khalid Said" on Facebook, established by Wael Ghonim in 2010. He made the page to let all people know about a young Egyptian

Khalid Said's death by police violence. He filled this site with video clips and newspaper articles about police violence. By the end of 2010, the page had more than a half million fans and on this page, they built a network, shared information and opinions, and jointly participated in the protests. This kind of activity on social media was some of the driving forces of the Arab Spring.

Third, in Arab Spring, social media empowered a new type of democratic movement network, that is, a leaderless network. The activity on social media is characterized with the diffuse and horizontal actions because of the intrinsic characteristic of network. So it is hard for a hierarchical and centralized organization to be formed. The leaderless network differentiates itself from the authoritarian regimes and even from the earlier forms of civic participation. Furthermore, the leaderless and collaborative network showed that it could pose a serious threat to the traditional authoritarian politics and institutions. In this reason, the leaderless network formed in the Arab Spring has political and democratic implications.

3.3 Current Obstacles to the Telematic Society

3.3.1 Users' Passivity in Social Media

Nowadays, it seems that people have partly obtained the communication power through the development of personal digital media and social media. It seems, however, that a new problem comes up. A new cultural division occurs between people, countries, and regions. It is a division between active users who make the best use of the social media and digital device and passive or nonusers who have fewer resources and competence to use them. It is a social- and cultural division between a new cultural elite and a new cultural underclass. Bill Ivey, the former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, and Professor of sociology at Vanderbilt University Steven J. Tepper pointed out this new problem. They expressed concerns that the new cultural underclass will still stay under the dominance of the discursive media complex and increasingly rely on the cultural fare offered by it (Ivey & Tepper, 2006. 5. 19).

Increasingly, those who have the education, skills, financial resources, and time required to navigate the sea of cultural choice will gain access to new cultural opportunities. (...) They will be the pro-ams [professional amateurs] who network with other serious amateurs and find audience for their work. They will discover new forms of cultural expression that engage their passions and help them forge their own identities, and will be the curators of their own expressive lives and the mavens who enrich the lives of others. (...) At the same time, those citizens who have fewer resources- less time, less money, and less knowledge about how to navigate the cultural system- will increasingly rely on the cultural fare offered to them by consolidated media and entertainment conglomerates. (...) Finding it increasingly difficult to take advantage of the pro-am revolution, such citizens will be trapped on the wrong side of the cultural divide. So technology and economic change are conspiring to create a new cultural elite- and a new cultural underclass. It is not yet clear what such a cultural divide portends: what its consequences will be for democracy, civility, community, and quality of life. But the emerging picture is deeply troubling (Ivey & Tepper, 2006. 5. 19).

Kim, et al. (2013) express similar opinions based on the study of the Korean social media users and the typology. They state that social media is not yet a common media, but a media that mainly engages the young, well-educated, white color population in Korea. It could be a significant social problem because the division of people in social media use can cause the distortion of public opinion and widen the social gaps between age groups and social classes.

Hutton and Fosdick analyze users' activities on social media through a lens of passive-to-active behaviors. According to the analysis, the three leading social media activities are all passive pursuits: "watch video clips online (77 percent)", "visit a friend's social network page (69 percent)", and "read blogs or weblogs (64 percent)". By comparison, the bottom three activities are active pursuits: "leave a comment on a blog site (51 percent)", "start a topic on a message board (50 percent)", and "upload photos to a photo-sharing Web site (48 percent)". The highest-ranked active activity is the "manage a profile on an existing social network (62 percent)". With the analysis, they conclude, "consumers are more likely to be involved in passive rather than active usage largely because such activities demand less conscious effort. Media's role as a major entertainment source in consumers' lives applies as much to social media as it

does to more traditional forms of mass media (Hutton, & Fosdick, 2011 December, 566).

Dijck (2013) points out the passive use pattern of YouTube users and argues that the myth of YouTube as the symbol of UGC culture has to be dismantled. According to Dijck, passive users became the majority of the YouTube users along with the fast growth in the number of users since 2007, when Google acquired YouTube. Kim (2012) argues that Google intentionally decreased the characteristics of YouTube as a UGC platform for its commercial purpose. Google made YouTube more commercial-friendly by emphasizing PGC instead of UGC, forming an ad-friendly media environment and enforcing the copyright law more strictly.

A recent study shows that 80 percent of YouTube users are passive users who hardly upload a video or comment on a posted video. Only less than 20 percent of YouTube users actively upload videos. Furthermore, 20 percent of these active users contribute 73 percent of the videos and attract 97 percent of views. In other words, just 4 percent of the entire YouTube users account for most of the views on YouTube. On the other hand, over 63 percent of the most popular uploaders do not upload their own UGC but "user-copied content" to YouTube (Ding et al., 2011. 11. 2). User-copied content is not the video created by uploaders themselves, but mostly PGC (Professionally Generated Content) that users copied from other sources and re-uploaded on YouTube. These include music video, movie trailer, and video clips of TV programs.

Based on the study on the social media users in Germany, Eimeren and Frees assert that even the young active users of social media, the so-called "net generation", are not really active in using social media, but they rather reveal the passive use patterns. Their media use patterns are not quite different from their parents' generation.

Die "Netz-Aktivisten" sind weiterhin die unter 30-Jährigen, was sich vor allem bei Social Networks sowie Audio- und Videoabrufen zeigt. Dennoch ist das Medienverhalten der Jüngeren dem ihrer Vorgängergeneration nicht unähnlich – wenn sie auch heute andere "Tools" benutzen: Ähnlich wie in der Generation ihrer Eltern und Großeltern dominiert im Medienverhalten der Jüngeren eine passiv-konsumierende Grundhaltung, was auch den Umgang mit dem Internet einschließt. Über das Netz pflegen Jugendliche ihre privaten Kontakte und lassen sich unterhalten. Das Internet ist für sie kein neuer Medienkosmos, den sie selbst aktiv gestalten, sondern eine nützliche

Erweiterung der „alten Medien“ (Eimeren & Frees, 2012, 378).

How is, then, the proportion of each type of social media users and the characteristics of their media use in detail? The ratio of the user types can be a useful indicator to figure out the qualitative state of social media use. So existing quantitative researches are referred to know the proportion of each type and its characteristic. The studies show in common that the proportion of the active social media users is still relatively low and the passive or pragmatic users are majority. It implies that social media users have to be more developed.

Kim, Shin, Lim, & Lee (2013) made a typology of Korean social media users. According to the study, the social media users are divided into four groups: limited users group (37.3%), experimental users group (28.4%), intensive users group (23.4%) and specialized users group (10.9%). The study analyzes that the social media usage in Korea is at a relatively primary stage of diffusion. It is because social media is largely led by the intense user group whose proportion is still low. The users of this group are heavy users of social media in daily life, and actively make full use of its various features. On the other hand, the majority of users stay still at the level of passive user who focuses on the passive information activities such as getting information, writing comments on the others' postings or recommending them. Jeon (2013) shows similar result that about 40% of Korean online users have no experience of producing, sharing or distributing information.

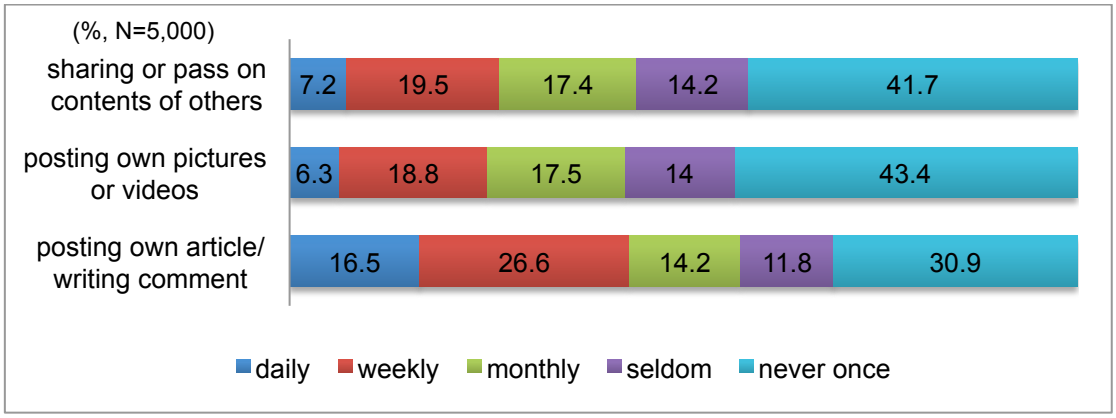


Fig. 3.20 Online activity for information production in South Korea

Source: 2012 Survey on the Information Culture (p.49), by J. S. Jeon, 2013, Seoul: National Information Society Agency.

Table 3.3 Typology of U.S. social media users

Sparks (3 % of the US general adult population)
heaviest daily usage and creation, multiple media across multiple networks
Mix-n-Minglers (19 %)
actively engages on multiple networks with a diverse group
Cliquers (6 %)
actively engages on one network with a close circle of friends and family
Onlookers (16 %)
consumes content daily across multiple networks, but rarely contributes
Newcomers (15 %)
belongs to one network, mainly observes, rarely posts
No Shows (41%)
does not participate in any form of social media

Table 3.4 Web 2.0 German user typology

Die Macher (5,3 Mio. 12,1 % der Internetnutzer)
die initiativ Inhalte erstellen und im Social Web veröffentlichen. Sie wollen selber machen, zeigen und gesehen werden
Die Partizipativen (4,9 Mio. 11,2 %)
die reaktiv auf bestehenden Projekten bzw. Plattformen aktiv werden – mitreden, mitteilen und mitmachen (teilhaben)
Die Sozialen (8,5 Mio, 19,6 %)
ein Profil in mindestens einem online Social Network pflegen und für die das Internet vor allem dem sozialen Kontakt zu bestehenden und neuen Freunden und Bekannten dient
Die passiven Zuschauer (29,4 Mio, 67,7 %)
am Web 2.0 nicht aktiv teilhaben und mehr oder (eher) weniger bewusst Zuschauen, d. h. neben redaktionellen Inhalten auch nutzergenerierte Inhalte konsumieren

Sorenson (2014) suggests the typology of US social media users constituted of six primary social media group. According to the study, the rate of active users and passive users is similar with the ratio of Korean social media user groups. The users of the two groups, “sparks” and “Mix-n-Mingler” are the active users and they are 21 percent of the US general adult population. The passive users are typed as “onlookers” and “newcomers” and 31% of the US general adult population. The people who do not use social media are 41 percent.

According to the German studies, it seems that the proportion of passive users in Germany is similar or higher than Korean users. Ullrich (2011. 6. 26) types the web 2.0 users in Germany with four types of users. The four types and the proportion are as <table 3.4>. This typology indicates that the rate of active users who produce information is very low and the rate of passive users is still very high.

ARD/ZDF-Onlinestudie (Busemann, 2013) shows that social media use and the number of users in Germany have been increasing for the past few years. But the proportion of the active users is still low and about 60 percent of users are categorized as passive users.

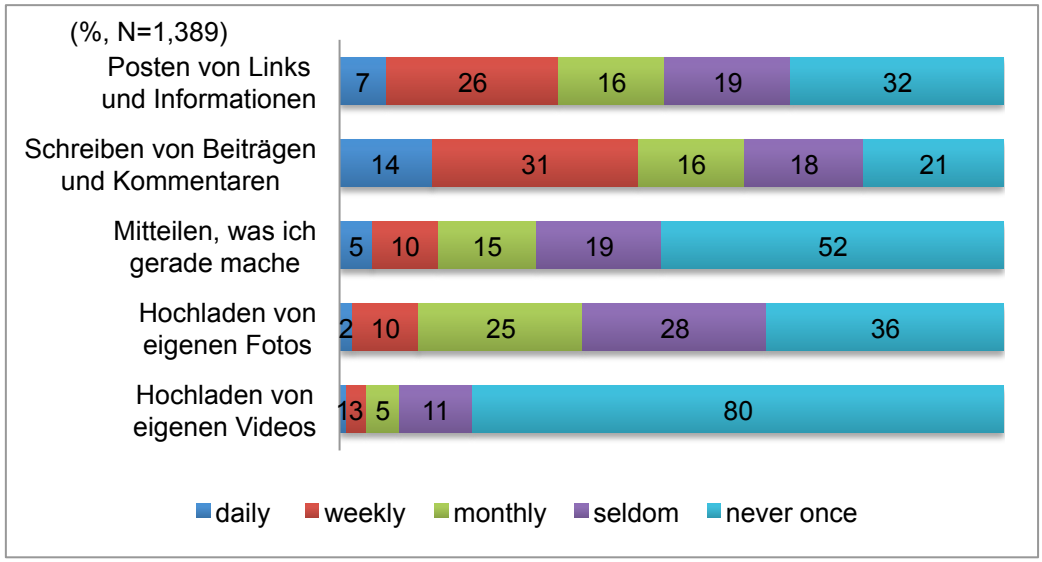


Fig. 3.21 Use rate of private social media users in 2013, Germany

Source: “Ergebnisse der ARD/ZDF-Onlinestudie 2013: Wer nutzt was im Social Web?” by K. Busemann, 2013, Medie Perspektiven, 7-8/2013, p.394.

The users are divided into three user groups: digital avant-garde (1% of online user), digital residents (25%), and digital visitors (60%). The two groups, the digital resident and the digital visitor, tend to use social media mainly to interact, chat or play with friends. Their favorite themes of information activity are mostly the light-hearted and interesting themes or the news about accidents, events, etc. On the other hand, the users who post their own story on social media at least once a week are 15 percent of all users. The users who post their own pictures/videos are each 12 percent and 4 percent. One of the significant trends is that the rate of the users who post their own story has declined by 9 percentage points: from 24 percent in 2012 to 15 percent in 2013.

This change implies that “one-to-one” or “one-to-few” communication is increasing on social media, while “one-to-many” communication decreases. In fact, the use rate of the one-to-many communication has increased steadily for last years, while the use rate of the one-to-one or one-to-few communication has decreased or stagnated. The index, however, indicates that this tendency could be reversed again, though it needs an examination of this tendency over the next few years.

One of the related instances is the recent trend, the popularity of “Enclosed types of SNS” in Korea. It is different from the “Open types of SNS” such as Facebook and Twitter in the aspect that it allows limited networking only with family or close acquaintances. The users who feel concern about privacy breach or the spread of distorted information move from the Open types of SNS to the enclosed types of SNS or they use both type in parallel. These new types of SNS give users a sense of security and a sense of closeness by means of the communication with the close acquaintances. But the activities on that are limited to the private and thematic information activity. On the other hands, it lacks relatively the original features of social media such as openness, sharing, communication and collaboration (Jeon, 2013, 3, 4).

This tendency can be a symptom that the intention and the activeness of users for information producing and sharing are weakening. The following factors could be the causes of this tendency: the privacy breach, data protection, cyber-bullying, commercialization, political suppression, and so on. The participants in the FGI of this study have stated this issue too. If this trend continues, the potential and vitality of social media will decline, and social media will lose the original values as above mentioned. Furthermore, the public meaning and function of social media could become

weak, while the function as a quite private media could strengthen. So there is recently growing concern that the user's excessive individualism on social media are increasing.

3.3.2 New Power Concentration of the Web

It is clear that the development of social media has effect to weaken and change the traditional mass media. Social media has promised to make unmediated, direct connections between people. However, critiques are recently raised that the promise of social media is just myth. The utopian promise "drags us deeper into corporate media arrangements" (Lovink, 2011, 163). Some criticize that social media become now centralized and closed more and more.

But while enthrallment to the gatekeepers is a real problem, disintermediation is as much mythology as fact. Its effect is to make the new mediators- the new gatekeepers- invisible. ... And while power moved toward consumers, in the sense that we have exponentially more choice about what media we consume, the power still isn't held by consumers (Pariser, 2011, 61).

According to Pariser, the development of social media empowered users but it is still limited. On the other hand, a new problem is arising. It is that the media power is being ceded to global social media platforms and this tendency gives rise to the centralization of power. In the same vain, there is discourse of "walled garden" tendency of social media. Walled garden means a closed system that social media platforms provide all useful services that users need. If users accustom themselves to this walled garden, after that it is very difficult to get out of there. It results in undermining the openness of the Internet. ARD/ZDF online study shows that 23 percent of social media users agree that they can find and use what they need in their social media platform, and feel no need to find more things on the outside of the platform (Busemann, 2013).

Große Internetangebote wie Facebook, aber auch Google oder Apple stellen bereits heute Walled Gardens dar, das heißt geschlossene System, die ihren Nutzern-

tatsächlich oder vermeintlich- alles bieten, was diese brauchen. Für Akteure außerhalb der Walled Gardens entspinnt sich ein Teufelskreis, den Nico Lumma wie folgt beschreibt: „Als Anbieter von Inhalten, Produkten oder Dienstleistungen ist man nun darauf angewiesen, dass man über die Ökosystem (d.h. die Walled Gardens) Aufmerksamkeit und Nutzer bekommt, wodurch die Ökosysteme noch attraktiver für die Nutzer werden". Die Diskussion gipfelt in der Befürchtung, dass das freie, offene Internet abseits der großen Akteure zur Bedeutungslosigkeit verkommt (Busemann, 2013, 396).

The walled garden tendency of social media causes the problem of lock-in of users in major social media platforms and it brings about the concentration of information and power. "Lock-in is the point at which users are so invested in their technology that even if competitors might offer better services, it is not worth making the switch (Pariser, 2011, 40)." The big social media platforms provide walled garden and users stay in the platform using various services that they need. For example, Facebook users post private writings and pictures, bring information or news from other websites to their own Facebook pages, build online social network, and communicate with their Facebook friends in the network. All of these information, memories, and activities of the user are kept in the Facebook platform. This makes it difficult for users to switch to another social networking site, even if that has greater features. The walled garden and lock-in strategies enable the platform companies to foster loyal users and keep track of data on the users. The use information of users is gathered during visiting the platforms and even when they do not visit them. "Facebook or Google can provide ads based on these gathered use information on third-party sites. The whole web can become a platform for Google or Facebook (Pariser, 2011, 40~41)". User's behavior is now a commodity, a tiny piece of a market that provides a platform for the personalization of the whole Internet.

What all of this means is that your behavior is now a commodity, a tiny piece of a market that provides a platform for the personalization of the whole Internet. We're used to thinking of the Web as a series of one-to-one relationship: You manage your relationship with Yahoo separately from your relationship with your favorite blog. But behind the scenes, the Web is becoming increasingly integrated. ... The push for

relevance gave rise to today's Internet giants, and it is motivating businesses to accumulate ever more data about us and to invisibly tailor our online experiences on that basis. It is changing the fabric of the Web (Pariser, 2011, 45).

Pariser (2011, 45) asserts that personalization of Web influences on "how we consume news, make political decisions, and even how we think". According to him, the filtering technology for the personalization of Web used by online platforms filter information according to the user's characteristic and interest, so it causes serious problem that users get only filtered and narrow information.

Most personalized filters are based on a three-step model. First, you figure out who people are and what they like. Then, you provide them with content and services that best fit them. Finally, you tune to get the fit just right. Your identity shapes your media. There's just one flaw in this logic: Media also shape identity. And as a result, these services may end up creating a good fit between you and your media by changing ... you (Pariser, 2011, 111~112).

In this information system, users become trapped in a loop of information and me. Pariser (2011) names this tendency as "filter bubble". The filter bubble is a kind of closed system. Pariser concerns that the filter bubble can upset the cognitive balance between strengthening our existing ideas and acquires new ones. On the one hand, filter bubble tends to amplify confirmation bias4. People like to consume information that conforms to their own ideas of the world, and conversely dislike receiving information that challenges their assumption or ideas. The filtering system of the platforms that we usually visit recognizes our preference of information and filter information with this criterion. In this way, the confirmation bias is amplified more and more. On the other hand, filter bubble can block "meaning threats," the confusing, unsettling occurrences that fuel our desire to understand and acquire new ideas.

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4 Confirmation bias, as Psychological term, means a tendency to believe things that reinforce our existing views, to see what we want to see. Once we've acquired schemata, we're predisposed to strengthen them.

Personalization is about building an environment that consists entirely of the adjacent unknown- the sports trivia or political punctuation marks that do not really shake our schemata but feel like new information. The personalized environment is very good at answering the questions we have but not at suggesting questions or problems that are out of our sight altogether. ... Stripped of the surprise of unexpected events and associations, a perfectly filtered world would provoke less learning. And there's another mental balance that personalization can upset: the balance between open-mindedness and focus that makes us creative (Pariser, 2011, 90~91).

According to Pariser, personalization can get in the way of creativity and innovation in three ways. First, the filter bubble artificially limits the size of our "solution horizon"- the mental space in which we search for solutions to problems. Some of the most important creative breakthroughs are spurred by the introduction of the entirely random ideas, but filters are designed to rule out it. Second, filter removes some of the diversity that prompts us to think in new and innovative ways. But the filter bubble isn't tuned for diversity of ideas or of people. It is not designed to introduce us to new cultures. As a result, living inside it, we may miss some of the mental flexibility and openness that contact with differences creates. Third, the filter bubble encourages a more passive approach to acquiring information, which is at odds with the kind of exploration that leads to discovery. The walled garden and its filter for personalization let us easily get the content and information that is interesting and needed to us. We do not need to explore for getting information and discovery (Pariser, 2011, 93~101).

The centralization and personalization of Web has a political significance. The users trapped in filter bubble can be easy to be mostly exposed to the information related to personal interests or self-partiality. They are seldom exposed to the information of important but complex or unpleasant issues. The filter renders them invisible. On the other hand, the filter bubble can destroy the whole political process based on the citizens' discourse. Users can be locked in the information pool that shares similar political awareness. In such information environment, the confirmation bias is easily amplified and people's political opinions become more polarized.

Ultimately, democracy works only if we citizens are capable of thinking beyond our

narrow self-interest. But to do so, we need a shared view of the world we cohabit. We need to come into contact with other peoples' lives and needs and desires. The filter bubble pushes us in the opposite direction- it creates the impression that our narrow self-interest is all that exists. And while this is great for getting people to shop online, it is not great for getting people to make better decisions together. … In the early days of the Internet, this was one of the medium's great hopes- that it would finally offer a medium whereby whole towns- and indeed countries- could co-create their culture through discourse. Personalization has given us something very different: a public sphere sorted and manipulated by algorithms, fragmented by design, and hostile to dialogue (Pariser, 2011, 164)

The more serious threat is that government can access the consolidated huge masses of personal data and manipulate information flow in collusion with a small number of big Internet companies. Many thinks that it is very hard for government to censor and control information in the age of the Internet except some authoritarian nations such as China, Iran, North Korea, etc. But the governments' Internet censorship does not disappear in democratic nations. It becomes so sophisticated that people do not notice it well.

But in the age of the Internet, it is still possible for governments to manipulate the truth. The process has just taken a different shape: Rather than simply banning certain words or opinions outright, it'll increasingly revolve around second-order censorship- the manipulation of curation, context, and the flow of information and attention. And because the filter bubble is primarily controlled by a few centralized companies, it is not as difficult to adjust this flow on an individual- by- individual basis as you might think. Rather than decentralizing power, as its early proponents predicted, in some ways the Internet is concentrating it (Pariser, 2011, 141).

But in practice, a great majority of online content reaches people through a small number of Web sites- Google foremost among them. These big companies represent new loci of power. And while their multinational character makes them resistant to some forms of regulation, they can also offer one-stop shopping for governments seeking to

influence information flows. As long as a database exists, it is potentially accessible by the state (Pariser, 2011, 144).

The fears like this became a reality when the "Prism" program of NSA (National Security Agency) was known to the world in 2013 by the disclosure of Edward Snowden. According to the Snowden's disclosure and follow-up investigations, NSA has run the Prism program as a surveillance system since 2007 in the wake of the passage of the Protect America Act under the Bush Administration. NSA has collected the massive data from major US telecom and Internet companies such as Google, Facebook, Apple, Yahoo and other. The data contained all sort of online communication information including E-mails, chat (video, voice), videos, photos, stored data, VoIP, file transfers, video conferencing, and online social networking details. The Prism slides, NSA's internal documents revealed by Snowden show that the Prism program is only one part of NSA's system for electronic surveillance. The "Upstream" program collects information from the fiber-optic cable networks that carry much of the world's Internet and phone data. The undersea cables connect North America to the rest of the world. In this way, NSA has surveilled and collected both U.S. domestic and world's data (Macaskill & Dance, 2013. 11. 1).

The Guardian also released top-secret documents on the NSA data mining tool, called the "Boundless Informant". The Boundless Informant is used for counting and categorizing the global electronic information. It shows the amount of information it collects from computer and telephone networks all over the world. According to the documents, NSA collected 97 billion pieces of intelligence from computer networks worldwide and even in USA 3 billion pieces of intelligence from US computer networks (Greenwald & MacAskill, 2013. 6. 11).

This issue causes complex problems in the global Internet environment. The users of the Google, Facebook, Apple and other big online services are all over the world. In addition, global communication between regions is rapidly increasing nowadays. The branches and offices of the global Internet companies are located in various regions. Data flows globally and is stored at the servers located in a foreign country. In this context, the users might be surveilled by the foreign information agencies and it is hard to control such risks only with the domestic regulation of a country. On the other hand,

the development of surveillance system beyond national borders increases the danger of domestic surveillance in each country. The information agencies can surveil the domestic territory circumventing the domestic law through the partnership among allied nations.

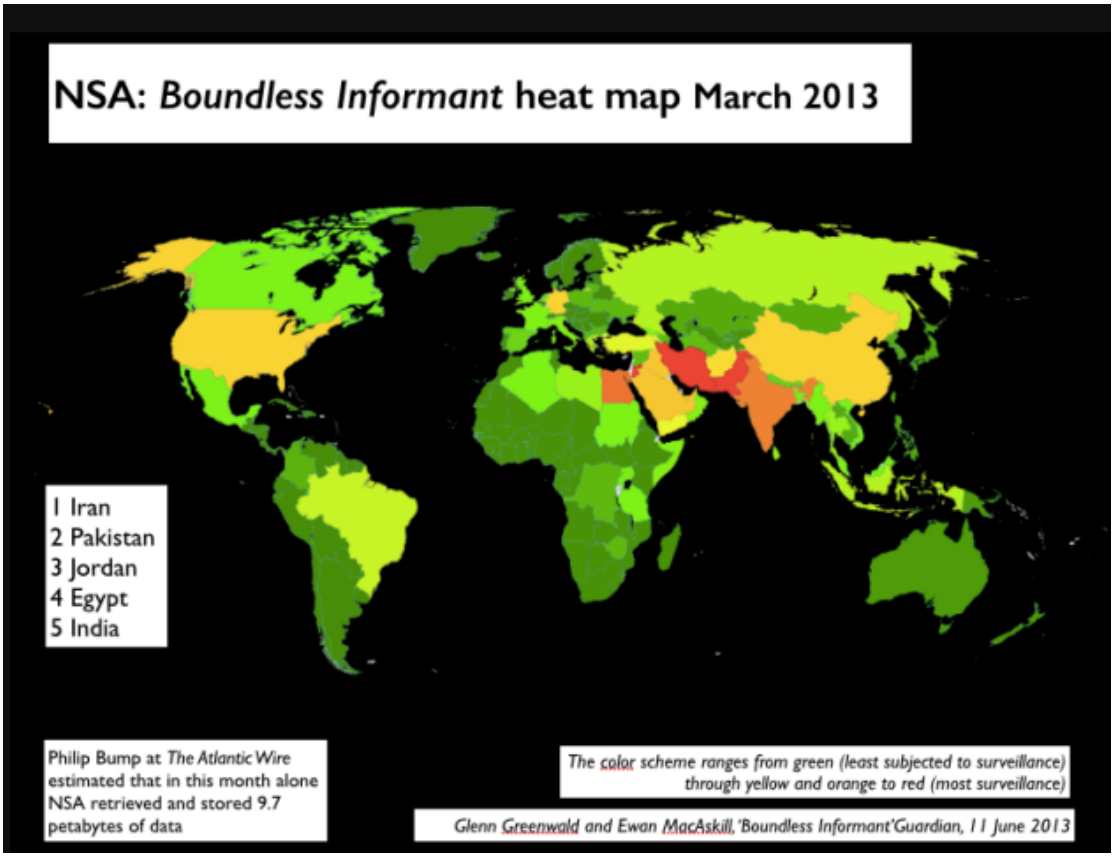

Fig. 3.22 NSA boundless informant hit map in March

Source: Boundless Informant and the everywhere war, by D. Gregory, 2013. 10. 31, Geographical Imaginations.

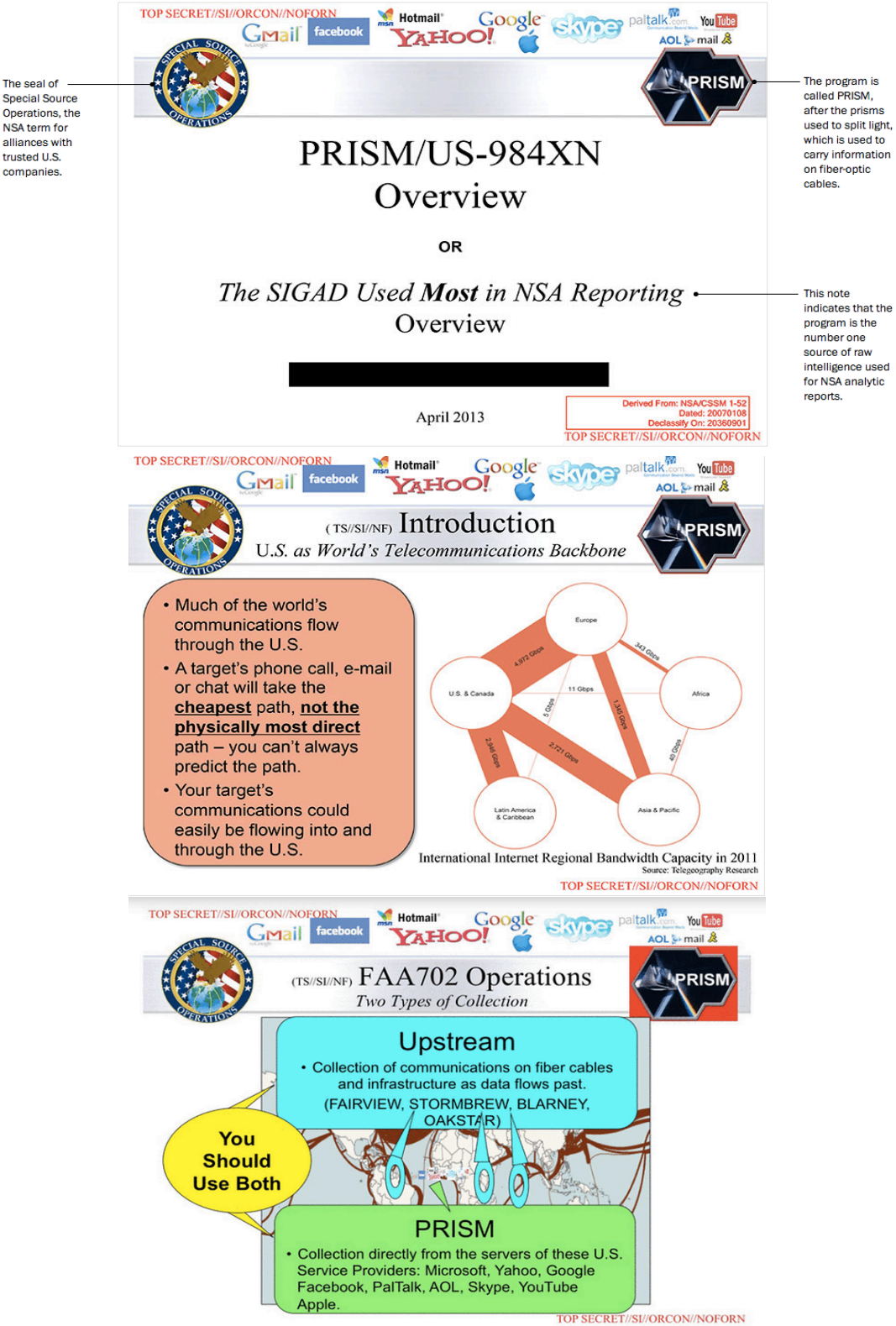

Fig. 3.23 NSA Prism slides leaked by Snowden

Source: NSA slides explain the PRISM data-collection program, by The Washington Post, 2014. 5. 16.

3.3.3 The Rise of National Webs and Danger of State's Control on the Web

After the revelation by Snowden, there were increased attempts to develop national webs to protect private or nationally and commercially sensitive data from the UK and US security services. The moves are now driven by Brazil, Germany, and India. These countries encourage regional online traffic to be routed locally rather than through the US and their moves are likely to be the first steps in a fundamental shift in the way the Internet works. The Brazilian government carries forward plans to promote Brazilian networking technology, encourages regional Internet traffic to be routed locally, and is moving to set up a secure national email service. In Germany, privacy commissioners have called for a review of whether Europe's Internet traffic can be kept within the European Union – and by implication out of the reach of the surveillance of UK and US. In India, the government advised employees not to use Gmail (Taylor, Hopkins & Kiss, 2013. 11. 1). In the report about this issue, The Guardian quotes Professor Ian Brown of Oxford University's Cyber Security Centre:

States may have few other options than to follow in Brazil's path. This would be expensive, and likely to reduce the rapid rate of innovation that has driven the development of the internet to date ... But if states cannot trust that their citizens' personal data – as well as sensitive commercial and government information – will not otherwise be swept up in giant surveillance operations, this may be a price they are willing to pay (Taylor, Hopkins & Kiss, 2013. 11. 1).

The rise of national webs, however, increases the risk of giving the governments more power to control the domestic web. This might undermine the openness of the Internet and right to freedom of opinion and expression in the country. In fact, the development of national webs has mainly been advocated by authoritative regimes before the NSA scandal. Lovink (2011) stated about this tendency in his book.

With a Net user base of 2 billion, focus has shifted from "global governance" to the national and local levels where the action is. People care about what happens in their immediate surroundings, a truism predicted in the 1990s: it just look a while to find a

way to develop the technical implementation. With 42.6 percent of Internet users located in Asia, the transatlantic era is over. In August 2008 it was announced that, for the first time, the Chinese user population surpassed that of US. Now only 25 percent of the Web's content is in English (Lovink, 2011, 20).

Lovink (2011) explains that the technology for national webs has been developing fast. The technical background is the development of tools to oversee and isolate the national IP range (the IP addresses allocated to a country). These geo-sensitive technologies can be used to block or restrict users outside the country from accessing the domestic websites. On the other hand, a country restricts its citizens from accessing foreign sites by means of technology. A well-known example is China's Internet system. The Chinese government has been operating "Golden Shield Project" as a censorship and surveillance project since 2003. The "Great Firewall" is run in parallel with the Golden Shield Project. The information about these two projects varies a little with the sources, but the following explanation seems to be precise.

The Great Firewall is aiming to filter the "unhealthy" information from oversea resources, while the Golden Shield Project is aiming to provide the Chinese police "useful information" for "internal usage". With the Great Firewall, the Chinese are forced to use "kaixin001" or "renren" to replace Facebook, and "Sina Weibo" as Twitter. Then monitored by the "Golden Shield Project", the Government might be able to access personal information very easily and can arrest people for the comments or blogs they published on the Internet. ... The example shows that an incredible number of human resources have been put to this "monitoring task", and the rules are very strict (Cyberteam 2013, 2014. 2. 14).

As the above description, the firewall technology prevents Chinese residents from access major global websites such as YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter. With this block, Chinese government induces Chinese citizens to use Chinese social media platforms like Sina Weibo, Renren, Douban, etc. Chinese government can easily maintain the strict censorship and surveillance system with this strategy, even though the social media platforms open restrictively the channel for expressing opinions. The unique

Chinese Internet policy and the development of Chinese domestic Internet services built a strong national web model, which is distinct from global Internet. In this system, national regimes can control the level of openness of the Internet as necessary. The Great Firewall is remarkably successful in doing this and it is exported to other countries that want to build a similar national web. The case of China and the recent moves driven by Brazil, Germany, and India after the NSA scandal could result a fragmentation of the Internet system, which undermines the original spirit of the Internet, the global network characterized by sharing and openness. With these tendencies, the Internet censorship and surveillance are being strengthened throughout all countries.

According to the report of Freedom House, "Freedom on the net 2013", the global Internet freedom has declined for the last three years and the threats are becoming more widespread. 34 of the 60 countries have experienced a negative trajectory since May 2012. Governments in nearly two-thirds of the countries examined upgraded their technical or legal surveillance powers over the past year. Many democratic countries are increasingly imposing various Internet restrictions due to the security challenges created by the new media. On the other hand, many governments have strengthened the regulations to restrict the speech and activities on social media (Kelly et al., 2013. 10. 3). The Freedom House report explains:

24 countries have passed new laws or implemented new regulations that could restrict free speech online, violate users' privacy, or punish individuals who post certain types of content. ... As more people around the world utilize social media to express their opinions and communicate with others, there has been a dramatic increase in arrests for posts on sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. In at least 26 of the examined countries, users were arrested for politically or socially relevant statements on social-media sites. Although political activists are targeted most frequently, more and more ordinary, apolitical users have found themselves in legal trouble after casually posting their opinions and jokes. Unlike large media companies and professional journalists with an understanding of the legal environment, many users of this kind may be unaware that their writings could land them in jail (Kelly et al., 2013. 10. 3., 9~11).

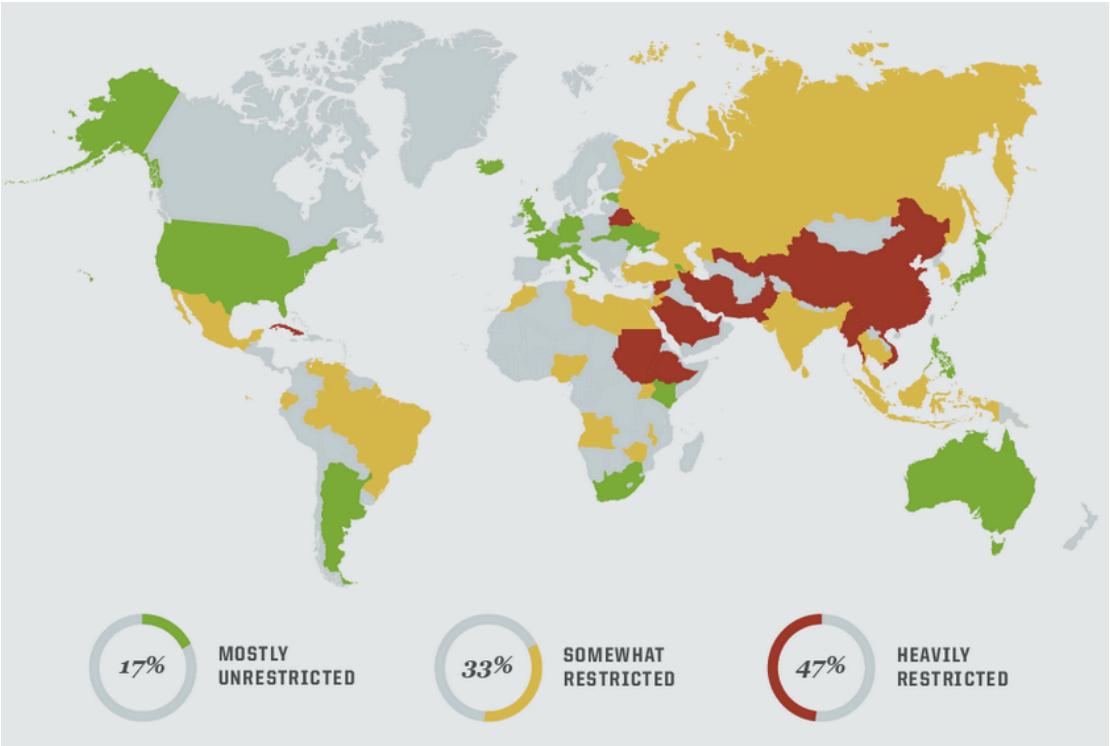

Fig. 3.24 Global status of Internet freedom

Source: The Global Struggle for Internet Freedom, by Golden Frog, 2014. 1. 16.

4. Users' Perception and Practice in the Telematic Society

4.1 Research Method and Analysis

This study chose the focus group interview (FGI) as a research method. Focus group interview is one of qualitative research methods. The qualitative study fits for research topics that are hard to be quantified such as values, perceptions, and attitudes. The qualitative study collects data on these qualitative objects by exchanging individuals' experiences and perspectives (Creswell, 2008). According to Merriam (2014), qualitative researchers share a common perspective of constructivism that views individuals as constructing reality and meaning in interaction with their social world. So reality and meaning constructed by humans cannot be discovered but interpreted. Therefore, qualitative research is concerned to understand meaning of a phenomenon for individuals involved in the process. Regarding this point of view on reality and meaning, Merriam defines three major topics that would interest qualitative researchers:

Thus qualitative researchers conducting a basic qualitative study would be interested in (1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The overall purpose is to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences (Merriam, 2014, 23).

The approach of qualitative research is in accord with the standpoint and goal of this study based on the Flussers' theory. According to Flusser, the mode of media use is dependent on how users perceive the features and potentials of media and practice them. The media use is the activity that individuals make meaning and construct reality. Therefore, this study aims to study people's perception and experience of social media, the meaning of social media use activities, and their perspectives on the communication balance through the qualitative research.

The focus group interview as one of the qualitative methods has some strengths to conduct this study. It is useful to get closer effectively to participants' understandings of the researcher's topic of interest. It can produce useful data about participants' experiences and perspectives on the topic with relatively little direct input from the

researcher. Focus group interview makes full use of the group interaction to produce data that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group. The discussion on a single topic and sharing experiences and opinions in a group can stimulate not only the interaction and responses between participants and but also participants' involvement into the interview. So it is useful to make participants expose their experiences and perspectives that would not come out in either the participants' own casual conversations or in response to the researcher's preconceived questions. In addition, to hear and observe the interaction between participants gives insight into the common and different perspectives on a topic and how they respond to others. In this regards, the focus group interview has strength on exploring relatively new topics or the examination of well-known research questions from the research participants' own perspective (Morgan, 1988). Macnaghten and Myers (2004, 65) states that "Focus groups work best for topics people could talk about to each other in their everyday lives- but do not".

This study is an explorative research that aims to highlight the voices and views of the social media users in interaction with the theoretical framework of Flusser's communication theory. There have been very few earlier studies about this theme. In this reason, the focus group interview as a qualitative research method is suited to this study. On the other hand, the topic of FGI in this study is the one that could be talked about between people, but it seems to be seldom done in daily life or could be done just fragmentarily. It could be, however, experienced or thought at one time or another in their media use. So it was expected that social media use were able to discuss about the topic, though they had seldom talked about it before. In addition, it was also expected to get useful data about the diverse experiences and perspectives of social media users through the discussion and interaction between them.

In particular, this study focused on the Korean social media users as FGI participants. Social media users in South Korea and the social context in which they are placed are regarded as a good case for this study. It is because of the specific context of South Korea. When it comes to the Internet, not many nations are more wired than South Korea. The use rate of smart mobile devices is also very high. It means that South Korea is a good model of the telematic society, when only the technological aspect is considered. However, TV dominates still the media consumption in South Korea and

people's reliability of TV as information channel is very high in comparison with other media. In addition, the degree of freedom of expression and press is relatively low and even has declined in recent years because of the political power's seizure of mass media and surveillance or repression of the expression online and offline. In this context, the role and significance of social media as an alternative information and expression channel is growing. It can be said that the conflict and tension between discursive media complex and dialogical communication media are very acute. In this reason, the media environment of South Korea was regarded as a proper case to study in the frame of Flusser's communication theory. In other words, it was expected to show the possibility and meaning of social media and the users' technical imagination in relation with the matter of communication imbalance.

For the FGI, total 24 Korean social media users were sampled by convenience sampling. The interview participants were Koreans in their 20s and 30s who lived in Seoul and Gyeonggi province. The interviewees were divided into 4 groups and each group participated once in the interview held in March 2013. The FGI was carried out for 2 hours maximum as a semi-structured interview. The interviewees were asked about the research topics to be explored and they freely talked about these topics each other in the group. The topics were daily social media use activity, perception and evaluation of media and opinion about media context of Korea. The questionnaire was designed according to the research questions of this study. The questionnaire was tested through two pilot interviews and examined by research advisors. After interview, interviewees completed an additional questionnaire about demographic information and general media use. All interviews were recorded with audio recorder and transcribed for analysis.

Analysis of the interview content was carried out according to the method of qualitative content analysis (Meyring, 2000). For the analysis, the mixed form of inductive and deductive qualitative content analysis was applied. The development of the analyzing form began with an unconstrained categorization matrix, and then different dimensions and sub-categories were created based on the interview materials within its bound, following the principles of inductive content analysis. The dimensions and categories are described below:

Category 1. Basic data of interviewees and their media use

Category 2. Users' social media use activity

1) Embedment of social media

2) Mode of social media use

productive- / communicative- / passive participative use

Category 3. Users' perception and evaluation of social media

1) Perception of social media (mass media – social media)

2) Evaluation of social media (mass media – social media)

(1) credibility (2) diversity (3) expertise (4) usefulness (5) ripple effect

3) Evaluation of media- and social context

4) The adverse effect of social media

5) Users' competence

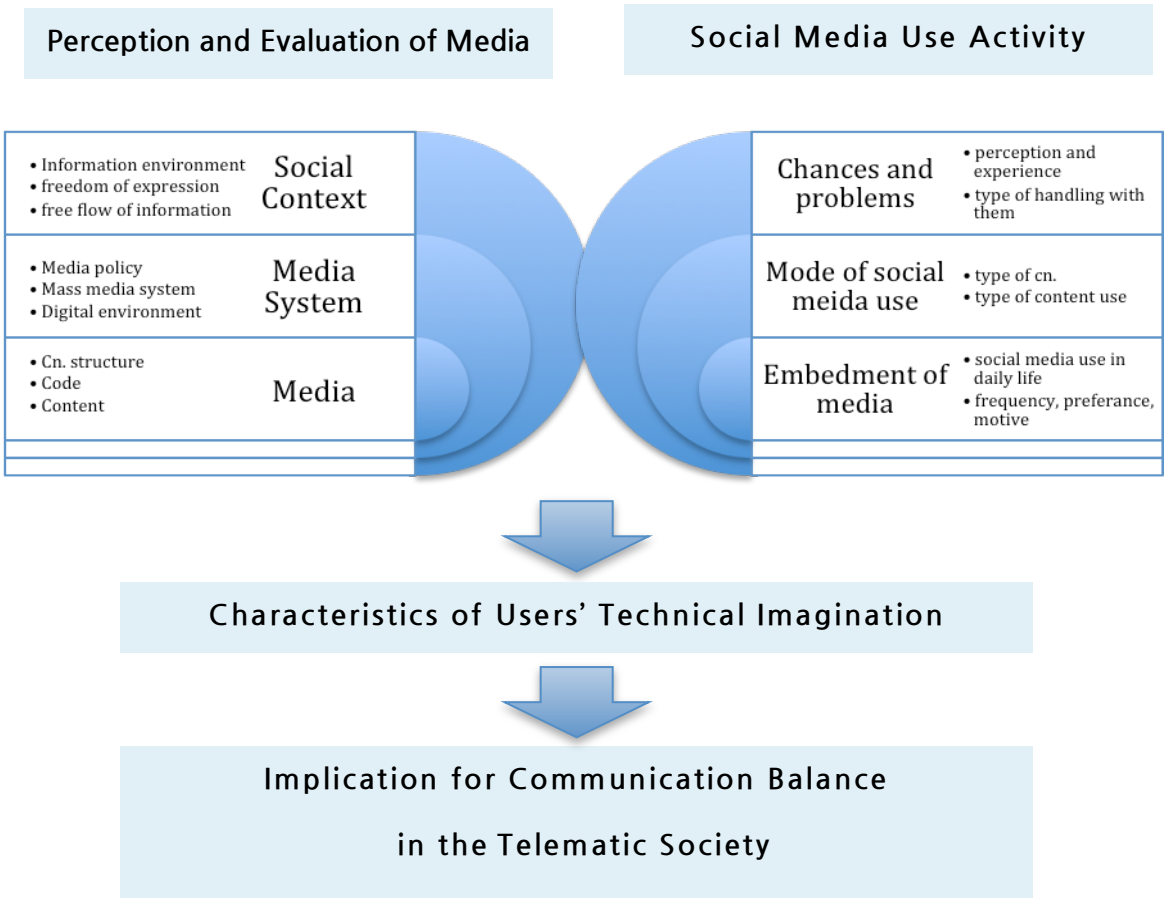

Fig. 4.1 The scheme of research on perception and use activity of social media users

Table 4.1 Basic data of interviewees

Nr.	M/F	Age	Possession of media device	TV	Internet	Social media	Favorite online activity	Favorite online content	Using social media services	Mode of social media use
01	M	25	TV, PC Internet-network, Smartphone MP3	30m	2-3h	30-1h	Information-search Watching video	Entertainment Career	Facebook Cyworld YouTube Online-community	Passive user
02	F	31	TV, PC Internet-network Smartphone	30-1h	3h-	3h-	Communication SNS	News Entertainment	Facebook YouTube Twitter Kakaostory	Productive user
03	F	31	TV, PC Internet-network Smartphone	2-3h	3h-	2-3h	Information-search, SNS Learning Online shopping Community-activity	News Entertainment Hobby	Facebook Cyworld Wikipedia Instagram Online-community	Productive user
04	F	32	TV, PC Internet-network Smartphone MP3	30m	30-1h	30m	Information-search, Communication SNS Online shopping	News Knowledge Education Entertainment Hobby	Facebook YouTube Instagram Kakaostory	Communicative user
05	M	36	PC Internet-network Smartphone	2-3h	2-3h	30-1h	Information-search, Communication Online shopping Community-activity	News Knowledge Career	Kakaostory YouTube Online-community	Passive user
06	M	29	PC Internet-network Cellphone Smartphone MP3	3h-	3h-	2-3h	Information-search Communication Watching video Online shopping Community-activity	Knowledge Entertainment Hobby	Facebook Google+ YouTube Wikipedia	Communicative user

07	F	30	PC Internet-network Smartphone MP3	30m	2-3h	30-1h	Information search Communication Watching video SNS Learning	News Knowledge Entertainment Career	Facebook Google+ Kakaostory LinkedIn YouTube Wikipedia Online-community	Productive user
08	M	43	PC Internet-network Cellphone Smartphone Tablet PC	30m	3h-	30m	Information-search Communication Watching video Community-activity Blogging Learning	News Knowledge Education Entertainment Career Hobby	YouTube Picasa Wikimedia Blog Online-community	Productive user
09	M	21	PC Internet-network Smartphone	30m	3h-	30m	Information-search Watching video	News Knowledge Education Career Hobby	Facebook YouTube Wikipedia	Passive user
10	M	33	PC Internet-network Smartphone	30m	2-3h	30m	Information-search Communication Learning	Education Entertainment Career Hobby	YouTube Wikipedia	Passive user
11	M	37	PC Internet-network Cellphone Smartphone Tablet PC	0	3h-	3h-	Information-search Communication Watching video Online shopping SNS	News Knowledge Education Entertainment Career Hobby	Facebook YouTube Wikipedia Blog	Productive user
12	F	30	YouTube Wikipedia	30m	2-3h	2-3h	Information-search Communication SNS	Career	Facebook YouTube Wikipedia Blog Online-community	Productive user
13	M	38	TV, PC Internet-network Cellphone Smartphone Tablet PC	30m	3h-	30-1h	Information-search Communication SNS	News Knowledge Entertainment	Facebook YouTube Vimeo Flicker Wikipedia	Communicative user

14	F	26	TV, PC Internet-network Smartphone Tablet PC MP3	1-2h	2-3h	3h-	Information-search Communication Community-activity	Knowledge Entertainment	Facebook Kakaostory YouTube Instagram Wikipedia Blog Online-community	Productive user
15	F	29	PC Internet-network Cellphone Smartphone Tablet PC MP3	30m	2-3h	30-1h	Information-search Communication Online shopping	News Knowledge Career Hobby	Facebook YouTube Wikipedia	Passive user
16	F	27	PC Internet-network Cellphone MP3	30m	30-1h	30-1h	Information-search Communication	News Knowledge Entertainment	Facebook Google+ YouTube Wikipedia	Passive user
17	M	31	TV, PC Internet-network Cellphone Smartphone Tablet PC MP3	3h-	2-3h	30-1h	Information-search Communication Online shopping Community-activity Learning	News Knowledge Entertainment Career	Facebook YouTube Vimeo Dailymotion Picasa Wikipedia	Communicative user
18	M	33	TV, PC Internet-network Smartphone MP3	30-1h	1-2h	30-1h	Information-search Communication Community-activity	Career Hobby	Facebook Cyworld YouTube Wikipedia	Communicative user
19	F	26	Internet-network Cellphone Smartphone Tablet PC MP3	0	1-2h	1-2h	Information-search Communication Community-activity, SNS	News, Career Hobby	Facebook YouTube Wikipedia Blog Online-community	Communicative user
20	M	39	PC Internet-network Smartphone	30m	3h-	1-2h	Information-search Communication Watching video, Online shopping	Knowledge, Career	YouTube Wikipedia Blog Online-community	Communicative user

21	M	31	TV, PC Internet-network Cellphone Smartphone Tablet PC	3h-	1-2h	2-3h	Information-search Communication Community-activity, SNS Learning	News Knowledge Education Entertainment Career Hobby	Facebook Cyworld YouTube Twitter Kakaostroy Wikipedia Blog Online-community	Communicative use
22	F	25	TV, PC Internet-network Cellphone Smartphone MP3	1-2h	30-1h	30m	Information-search Communication Community-activity SNS Learning	News Knowledge Career Hobby	Facebook YouTube Wikipedia Online-community	Productive user
23	F	21	PC Internet-network Smartphone MP3	30m	1-2h	30-1h	Information-search Communication Watching video Community-activity SNS, Learning	Knowledge Education Hobby	Facebook YouTube Instagram Blog	Passive user
24	F	22	PC Smartphone MP3	0	3h-	2-3h	Information-search, Communication Online shopping Community-activity SNS, Learning	Knowledge Education Hobby	Facebook Cyworld YouTube Twitter Google+	Productive user

4.2 Analysis of Focus Group Interviews

4.2.1 Use of Social Media

1) Embedment of Social Media

Social media use of the interviewees is embedded in daily life. They constantly plug

into social media with PC or mobile devices in their daily routines. All of the interviewees plug into social media at least more than 30 minutes. The use time of social media is longer than the time of watching TV.

The embedment of social media use in daily life seems to be promoted especially by the use of mobile device such as smartphone, tablet PC and laptop. People can plug into social media with mobile devices at any time and at any place. Facebook and YouTube are the most popular social media services used by the interviewees.

Above all, interviewees are using social media as a medium for human relationship and communication with others. SNS (Social Network Services) such as Facebook are especially preferred for this purpose. Through SNS people document their own lives, share them with friends and communicate each other with pushing the 'Like' button, writing comments, sending messages or chatting online. These activities are practiced online beyond the temporal and spatial limits. It is observed through the FGI that the previous ways for human communication e.g. face-to-face talk, telephone call, E-mail, etc. seem to be replaced by SNS. Users also manage social media effectively by linking the social media services together or by using subscription function.

IP[5] 03: *I'd like to write a diary every day, but it is not easy for me. So I document my own lives on Facebook. It is easier than writing a diary. It is also helpful to have a nice little chat with faraway friends. We can share heart online, although we can hardly meet each other.*

IP 07: *I use Facebook often at any time of day. On Facebook, I usually look around how people are living, check my favorite pages that I subscribe and watch the content linked on Facebook pages. I upload my news or pictures at least once a week.*

IP 11: *I check the updated content in Facebook with smartphone at every morning and visit Facebook constantly. I link Facebook and my blog, thus I can be informed by the alarm function, when someone posts comments on my blog. I have also my own webpage and YouTube page linked with Facebook, and the alarm functions work in the*

[5] IP: Interview Participant, I: Interviewer

same way. I have preferred to use E-mail to communicate with my friends in the past, but I prefer Facebook for it now. It seems that the previous methods for communication such as E-mail and telephone are almost integrated into Facebook.

IP 13: *Many friends of mine are living around the world. I have kept in touch with them through E-mail before, but I do it through Facebook now.*

IP 14: *I plug into social media three hours a day on average and prefer to use Facebook especially. I communicate or share news with friends around world through Facebook. We share also useful information online for study and leisure activities. Facebook is useful for these.*

IP 19: *I use Facebook more often after using smartphone. I plug into Facebook at anytime of day and see the comments, pictures and videos that friends updated. Sometimes I write comments, post pictures or link videos that I'd like to share with them.*

P 21: *I do not have smartphone but an iPad. I use social media very often with iPad. I bring my iPad even when I go to the bathroom at home. I have used various social media services like Facebook, Cyworld, YouTube, online community, blog and so on. I have used Cyworld actively, so the records of my own life are kept there. Recently I use Facebook more actively and document my life on Facebook.*

Some interviewees use social media infrequently and plug into social media mainly just for observing the others' lives and opinions posted on social media. These users may be named as onlooker on social media. They hardly post and share their own content on social media. This group use mainly Facebook or YouTube and rarely use other social media. The time of social media use of this group is generally shorter than other users.

IP 01: *I do not like to write something, so I plug into Facebook just for looking on how people live. I seldom write comments and do not push the 'Like' button too. I just read the articles and see the pictures that friends post on Facebook.*

IP 15: *I usually use Facebook once a day. I'm not an active user. I plug into Facebook, without using alarm function, only when I need to do it. I post pictures or articles about my travel or events sometimes, but mostly I tend to see how friends are doing and what they think about.*

IP 16: *I do not plug into social media often and seldom post my own content. I use mainly Facebook and YouTube and rarely use other social media services. I use Facebook as a messenger to communicate with friends. Sometimes I plug into social media to observe the thoughts or the opinions of others, when there are some big events or issues like the president election.*

Interviewees use YouTube as much as Facebook. Even the one who does not use SNS like Facebook or Twitter tends to use YouTube. People use usually YouTube to enjoy watching funny videos or to search information of their interests such as music, cooking, dance, sports, etc. Some of the YouTube users push 'Like' button, write comments or share videos with friends by linking them to other social media like Facebook, when they like them. Few of users have experience of posting their own videos on YouTube. It seems that it is difficult or not familiar for users to make their own videos and post them on YouTube or other social media.

IP 07: *I plug into YouTube almost everyday and search and watch the videos of my favorite singers or celebrities.*

IP 10: *I watched some comedy videos on YouTube just before coming hear. There are so many funny videos on YouTube. I have signed up for Facebook and Twitter, but rarely plug into them, um… several times a month. I do not post my article on them too. I hardly use social media except YouTube.*

IP 13: *I love to use YouTube and plug into it with PC or iPad. I have interest in various things, so I search videos about my interests in YouTube first. People can find infinite variety of videos linked so many subjects. Sometimes I'm immersed in watching videos on YouTube until 3 or 4 AM. I think that YouTube is awesome.*

Facebook and YouTube are the most popular social media services, but are not used in common by all users. Some interviewees prefer online community, blog or Wikipedia to Facebook and YouTube. They have their own reason for their preference; protecting privacy, preference of the more specialized online community, usefulness, shared value, etc.

Some interviewees like the online community activity. They join online communities that have same interest with theirs. Online community is not so opened like other social media and this characteristic has the virtue of protecting privacy, common interest, sense of closeness between members, etc. Online community does not give users only the chance of getting information, but also the chance of communication and a strong sense of community. Furthermore, the activity and social intercourse are not limited to just online, but extended to offline.

IP 05: *I have joined online communities. These are communities of private investors. I plug into the communities everyday and get useful information about investment. I write comments to the good articles or post my articles. Furthermore, I can make a good human network with other private investors and exchange each other ideas, knowledge and experiences. The activities in these online communities are very helpful to me.*

IP 08: *I always plug into online community of web technology during my work hours and also free time. I check updated posts, post my articles and communicate with other members online. I have my own blog about same theme and post my articles two or three times per week. I do not use the other social media services except online community.*

There is other type of social media that is more focused on the producing and sharing information. The representative services are blog and Wikipedia. The difference between of these two services is that the blog is more personal, while Wikipedia is characterized by collaborative work. Both services have strength of plenty of information. Users can get plenty of information about tremendous themes through them. In daily life interviewees experience the advantage of the services in this aspect.

IP 12: *I usually get information about cooking through blog. There are a lot of blogs about cooking and I can find useful information for cooking there. I use always Wikipedia for my study too. I can find useful information in both Korean and English on Wikipedia. There seems to be plenty of information there. I have to get and digest a lot of information fast for my study. In this regard Wikipedia is very useful for me.*

IP 23: *I use social media not for posting my content but for getting information. My favorite information source is blog. There are various blogs about my favorite themes and I can get useful information from them.*

2) Mode of Social Media Use

It is various how users communicate and handle information on social media. In this study, the participants of FGI are categorized into three types according to the mode of social media use: productive user, communicative user and passive participative user. This categorizing is done at first according to the results from survey of the interviewees. The question and response items are like following:

Q. How do you use social media usually?

① I run professionally blogs, podcasts, online communities, etc.

② I upload my own content (article, picture, video, etc) on social media platforms more than once a month.

③ I upload my own content (article, picture, video, etc) on social media platforms less than once a month, or share other's content on social media or write comments on them more than five times a month.

④ I seldom participate in the social media activities such as uploading or sharing content and writing comments, but use information and content on social media.

Productive users are who produce and share information actively on social media: item 1. On the other hand, passive participative users are who seldom produce and share any information, but just get information on social media: item 3. There are users between these two user groups. It is communicative user, who are not so active to prod-

Table 4.2 Distribution chart of users according to the mode of social media use

Mode of social media use	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Total
Productive user	IP 02, IP 03	IP 07, IP 08	IP 11, IP 12 IP 14	IP 22, IP 24	9
Communicative user	IP 04	IP 06	IP 13, IP 17 IP 18	IP 19, IP 20 P 21	8
Passive participative user	IP 01	IP 05, IP 09 IP 10	IP 15, IP 16	IP 23	7
Total	4	6	8	6	24

uce their own information, but are active to make use of the feature of social media for social networking and communication: item 2. They enjoy communicating with others or sharing information made by others.

The number of participants in each group is like that: productive users: 9 persons, communicative users: 8 persons, passive participative users: 7 persons. The detail stories about the mode of social media use of the three groups are supplemented with the statements of the interviewees in the FGI.

(1) Productive user group

The productive users enjoy producing and sharing their own content such as posting articles, pictures or videos. The themes are various from personal story to social topic. They also like to communicate and intercourse with people on social media. They understand the characteristic of social media, that is the UGC and social networking, and take advantage of it.

IP 02: *I had posted pictures like crazy on Cyworld. Most of the private documents of my past are kept in my Cyworld page. I had the page visited number more that 6,000 at that time. I also posted often the pictures or videos of my church community on the Cyworld Club, the online community site of Cyworld to share them with church members. I do*

not use Cyworld so often after shifting to Facebook. I do the same thing on Facebook as I did on Cyworld. I push 'Like' button about the funny videos or socially meaningful videos, e.g. donation campaign videos or political campaign videos. For example, in the last Korean parliament election in 2013, I participate in the campaign for encouraging people to vote by posting the picture of me at the polling place and sharing pictures or messages of the campaign on social media.

IP 02 documents the personal life or the activity of the community that she belongs to with pictures and videos and posts them on social media. She likes to share the funny or socially meaningful videos. This tendency extends to the political participation through activity on social media. This is a new type of the social movement in the social media era, and it can be regarded as an instance of technical imagination according to the Flusser's theoretical concept.

IP 03: *I have joined a couple of online community whose theme is travel. I obtain useful information and helps for travel from other members. I post my own information and pictures of my travel to share them with other members. It is so nice that I can get various thoughts and experiences about common interest between people by the activity in the online community. (...) I feel free and comfortable to express my feelings or thoughts online than in real life. Sometimes I write my stories on Facebook to share them with friends and to be comforted by friends. The reacts of friends on Facebook make me comfort and relieve my stress.*

IP 22: *I have joined actively online communities. I can get a variety of information and communicate with other members. I usually post my articles there, get feedback of others and I write also comments to the articles posted by others. (...) I have learned how I write or express my thoughts and feelings through the interchanging with other members in online community. I like also to post and share funny pictures or YouTube videos in online communities. It is enjoyable to share interesting content and communicate with people through it.*

IP 03 and IP 22 enjoy the activity in online community. They post and share various

information and content with other members. They take advantage of the online social intercourse and get a useful experience or mental satisfaction besides the information activity.

Some interviewees make good use of social media as an extension or a part of their career. They post their expert information or content and at the same time make a personal connection on social media. The personal connection on social media is also extended to offline. They feel that this activity on social media is meaningful and useful for them.

IP 07: *Recently I use social media more actively than before. In the past, I had just seen content posted by others or sometimes written comments to them on social media. Now I'm active to update my status and post videos of my music performance on Facebook or YouTube. Through such activities, I got to know new people who had interest in my music, and some of them became my fans and some became my colleague for music activity. I interact with them by exchange information and ideas about music. I have got good experiences by using social media.*

IP 08: *In online community, I post news and information of my carrier interest, that is, the web technology. I like to write comments to other posting or answer about the questions of other members. The comments of other members to my articles are helpful for my works too. I have sometimes offline meeting with the members whom I got to know in online community. It is very good experience for me. I think that the activities on social media give me a good chance to make more personal connection.*

Some interviewees like the idea of Wikipedia that aims for the collaborative work to produce and share information and knowledge. They want to contribute to the project of Wikipedia and participate in it actually.

IP 12: *Sometimes I post articles that contain information and knowledge of my field on Wikipedia, because the information written in Korean isn't rich on Wikipedia. I'd like to share useful information that I have with others. I have once read an article that a professor of my field had posted on Wikipedia. Some content of the article were not*

correct. So I wrote comments for pointing out the mistakes. It would be hard for me to do it offline, but it is possible online. It seems a merit of social media.

(2) Communicative user group

The communicative users do not post actively their own information on social media. They, however, make use of the feature of social media for social networking, communication, and getting information. So they enjoy writing comments to the content of others, sharing them, and intercourse with others on social media. For example, relaying funny pictures or videos with friends is a favorite way of having fun with friends on social media. They write comments, push ‚Like' button to the content and have a chat with friend through making them chatting topics.

IP 04: *I usually push 'Like' button or write comments to the videos and pictures which friends posted on Facebook. I watch also the YouTube videos which friends relay to me through the KakaoTalk and sometimes I relay them to my friends too. We like funny pictures and videos, or videos of music and concerts. It is uncomfortable for me to open my privacy online. So I talk about my private things with friends by telephone or SMS.*

IP 19: *I liked the activity in online community before, but not so much now. At that time, I was enthusiastic to join the debates online. The members had heated discussions often in online community. Some topics of discussions were serious, but some were trivial things. I experienced that the thought and perspective of people were so various.*

IP 20 pointed out the advantage of social media for collaborative work. He felt the need of the collaborative work for doing a valuable thing and evaluated that the Wikipedia was the best way to do it. Like this, the dialogical feature of social media gives users a chance to realize their own meaningful things through the communication and collaboration with other users.

IP 20: *I'd like to share valuable information of my field. I think that it is hard work to do it alone and it would be more efficient to do it with other people in the same field*

together. My interest is how to get, share and manage information well. I think that Wikipedia is the most useful method for it, so I actively participate in Wikiproject. On Wikipedia I post my own articles or the articles of others that I translate into Korean.

IP 06 introduced his experience related to social media. He could make a new human network through online community activities and the intercourse carried over into offline. His social media activities had a meaningful effect on his daily life.

IP 06: *I've been no active user on social media, but recently I experienced a meaningful change. I have recently joined a club on Facebook and had more chance to make friendship with people through the activity. I found people who have something in common with me such as hobby and leisure. We talk about leisure activity online and meet offline to do it together. My daily life has become more alive through the club activity on Facebook.*

IP 17 talked about the difficulty of having fellowship on social media. His main motive of social media activity is to gain sympathy of his friends, but he feels that his desire is not fulfilled. On the other hand, he feels the difficulty of producing and sharing videos on social media. The technical trickiness constricts his motive of being productive user. These could be the common obstacles of many social media users.

IP 17: *I have sometimes posted pictures and articles on Facebook. I seemed to do it for expressing my thoughts and feelings, and drawing attention from people through it. But they gave me little attention, thus my interesting has waned. I have once tried to post a video on YouTube, but it was so tricky to do it. It was also hard to delete the posted video. It seems difficult to post and manage videos on social media for the average users like me.*

(3) Passive participative user group

The passive participative users do not use social media so often. They maintain their way of using social media just to gain information or look on what friends updated on

social media. The most favorite social media service for this group is Facebook and other services are rarely used.

IP 01: *I usually plug into Facebook but hardly write comment or push the 'Like' button. I have no experience of producing and posting my own content. I just see what the Facebook friends posted on. The main motive of using Facebook is just looking on how people live.*

IP 10: *I have accounts of Facebook and Twitter, but I do not plug into them often. Just a few times per month. I do not post my article, but just look on what other users post. I hardly use social media except YouTube.*

IP 23: *I use social media not for posting my content but for getting information. My favorite information source is blog. There are various blogs about my favorite themes and I can get useful information from them.*

4.2.2 Users' Perception and Evaluation of Social Media

1) Perception of Social Media

Most of the interviewees perceive the two-way communication structure of social media. They also perceive this as a main distinct characteristic compared to mass media whose communication structure is one-way.

IP 06: *I think that the main similarity of mass media and social media is that the aim of the both media is to transfer information. The main difference between mass media and social media is that mass media is one-way and social media is two-way. The information of mass media is delivered to people in one-way, but in the case of social media is the information shared and people can communicate interactively.*

IP 08: *The one of the characteristics of social media is that the management of information isn't centralized but people can participate. It is similar with the concept of*

collective intelligence.

IP 16: *The flow of information on social media is two-way, while the audience of newspaper and TV just receive the information that experts have made. On social media, users can react to the information immediately and this process can be seen clearly.*

IP 02 perceives that mass media has the very limited channels for people to feedback to the information and content, but social media is a place in which various ideas about some issues and themes are interchanged and discussions can be vitalized through it.

IP 02: *One makes an argument and the other makes a counterargument, and this interaction is circulated on social media. Someone posts articles about some topics and then the reputations against it or various opinions are posted immediately. But in the case of mass media, it sends information to audience and that's the end of it. There are few channels to feedback my opinion to the broadcast, if I do not agree with the news or program of the broadcast.*

Participants perceive social media as a place of dialogue and social intercourse. Social media isn't only an information medium but also a place where people can participate, communicate, play and make a relationship. This is one of the main factors that social media makes differences in the motive and the mode of information production, distribution, and use.

IP 07: *In my opinion, the main purpose and function of mass media is the information use. However, social media looks like a place of social intercourse in company with information use, when I see how my friends use Facebook, YouTube or blogs. To post pictures on Facebook is not an end in itself, but the main motive is that we'd like to share and interact with people by posting, pushing 'Like' button or writing comments. I think that's a key point. The main motive of social media use is not only to use information, but also to interact with one another online, even though we do not do it often offline.*

IP 10: *I can understand the characteristic of social media more easily while listening to what other interviewees talk. I think that social media use seems like a talk with someone. Someone can tell me truth or lie, or good things or bad things. I can interpret what they said differently. I can share our own private things with someone and someone can disclose my secret. We have to have proper etiquettes for dialogue, but we cannot be compelled to keep all of the etiquettes by law. I think that it is same on social media.*

IP 23: *I usually read news online and like to read the readers' comments to the news articles. Sometimes the comments are more interesting than news article. People express their own ideas or reviews and these comments are interchanged in online bulletin board. I can know people's various opinions and perspectives on the issues by reading the comments. Through this, I have chance to think about the issues once more and gather up the threads.*

IP 11 points out one of the differences between mass media and social media. It is the matter of the subject of information. There is the subject of information or content in the case of mass media, but there is no specific subject of information on social media. This characteristic is related with the characteristic of communication structure of both media.

IP 11: *In my opinion, there is a division of producer and audience in the case of mass media, but there is no division of these on social media. Social media provides a platform for distributing information and anyone can post and share own content there. It is even hard to know who made, posted or shared them.*

Some of the interviewees point out that the difference of communication structure between mass media and social media leads to the difference of characteristics of information between them. The perception of the characteristics of information involves the evaluation of information such as credibility, diversity, creativity, etc.

IP 07: *There is not much extreme content in the case of mass media. So people can*

accept most of the mass media content without feeling resistance. On the contrary, the information on social media is so various in the aspect of source of information, content, theme, expression mode, etc. and this information can be spread without filtering. I can be exposed to the harmful information or to the information that I do not want on social media. This is a negative aspect of social media. On the other side, a good thing is creativity of information. Anyone can express and make content with a highly individual style, because there is no format or rule.

I: *Do you see new things on social media that you could not see earlier?*

IP 07: *There's so much. Mass media have to qualify itself, regulate the content and have certain format even for the entertainment. On the contrary, for example, on YouTube is there no format, regulation or limit of content. The quality of UGC on YouTube is not so good, but they are so individual, informal and very various. It seems that the information channel is more opened than earlier.*

IP 13: *People can watch the video that shows the real on-going situation of an accident, while TV news or newspaper reports briefly the facts of the accident. I like this function of YouTube, though it is not easy to judge if it is good or bad.*

IP 15: *If it happens that a chimpanzee kills her young in a zoo, mass media will report this case using video clips or pictures that are not so shocking. However, a visitor could record the accident with smartphone and post it on YouTube. People can watch the accident with the video without any filtering that shows the brutal killing scene. People can get more detailed information, but on the other side might people watch the unwanted video. I think these are two sides of the same coin of social media in which people can make and share information freely.*

As media and ICT (Information Communication Technology) develop, recently an ambiguous territory emerges between mass media and social media. An example is podcast. The word ‚podcast' is a neologism and portmanteau derived from "broadcast" and "pod" from the iPod, the successful portable media player of Apple. Podcast has the

form of broadcast partially, but it is different from the broadcast. It is a platform of broadcast content with which people can listen, watch and create content freely, which departs from a traditional model of "gate-kept" media and production tools. Producers are consumers and consumers become producers and engage in conversations with each other (Berry, 2006). Interviewees wonder too if the podcast is mass media or social media, and have different opinion about this. One regards podcast as mass media, and the other as social media.

IP 08: *I'm not sure if we regard podcast as mass media or social media. It can be social media. However, many of podcast content are produced by traditional broadcasts, institutes or experts. Broadcast and social media are overlapped in the case of podcast.*

IP 09: *There are specific agents in the case of mass media and they produce and distribute content in a one-way. However, social media has no specific agents and interaction between unspecific users. Social media users produce, distribute and consume the content at the same time. I think it is main difference. So I think that podcast is close to social media more than mass media.*

IP 07: *I use podcast every day. I watch TV news or content for language learning with it. The main purpose of using podcast is for me to get information. It isn't for communicating with others. So I think that podcast is close to mass media.*

IP 08: *That point becomes vague more and more. There are various levels and forms of podcast from the one-man broadcast to the content of major broadcasting company.*

IP 16 points out a new phenomenon on social media. According her opinion, the interactivity as a main characteristic of social media becomes weak gradually. She states that the cause of this phenomenon is because the control to social media activities is strengthened both directly and indirectly and some negative phenomena like cyber bulling or privacy breach increase on social media.

IP 16: *The interactivity of social media seems to become weak recently. People like me*

hesitate to express and share their idea on social media, because they worry about being troubled with cyberbullying, privacy breach or potential damage. Because of these problems, the freedom of information activity on social media is shrinking and controlled.

2) Evaluation of Social Media

The perception of the characteristics of media involves the evaluation of media. The evaluation of media means that in the sense of subjective weighting and attribution of significance that are made for media messages and options for activity with regard to his or her own person and perspective and with regard to the positioning in the social environment. The interviewees talked about the personal evaluation of mass media and social media based on their use experiences of both media for information activity. It seems that the three factors, the perception, evaluation and media use are not separated, but correlated in user's experience and thought related to the media use. In the FGI, the most discussed variables of evaluation are five: credibility, diversity, expertise, usefulness, and ripple effect.

(1) Credibility

The credibility of media is related with the question "What do you think of which media between mass media and social media is more credible for getting information?" The condition of comparing between mass media and social media is suggested to limit the field of a discussion according to the theme of study. The interviewees talked about which media they trust more as a source of information when they get information. The opinions of interviewees were divided. Some interviewees trust social media more than mass media, and some interviewees trust mass media more. The former is more than the latter. There was the third group that did not express clearly their opinion or preference. The interviewees who prefer social media tend to be critical of mass media. Especially they point out the problem of manipulation of mass media: Mass media colludes with political- and economic power and does not report the truth. Therefore, mass media reports distorted information or the one that shows just one side of the state of affairs.

People can, on the other hand, get information from various information sources and thus consider various points of view about an issue on social media. Through this people are able to understand and judge an issue with subjectivity.

IP 02: *I think that the political- and economic power exploits mass media for their purpose. The broadcasting is under the control of the power. The political- and economic power can make an issue good or bad according to the own purpose. People could hardly know that in the age when there wasn't social media. They had no choice but to accept what mass media reported.*

IP 05: *I have distrust feeling about mass media. (...) Men in power seem to distribute information through mass media with intention. For example in business- or political news the false or insufficient information is reported instead of the true story to hide the truth.*

IP 08: *I have become more critical to receive the information of mass media after using social media. I accepted uncritically the information of mass media before, but now I respond to it like that: "I got the information online different from the one of mass media". Of course it needs to consider or judge which is correct, but the attitude of getting information becomes more critically.*

The other group of interviewees says that they trust information of mass media more than the one on social media. The reason is that mass media has more expertise, accountability and sourcefulness about information. In contrast to mass media, it is difficult to trust and judge information on social media because there are so much and various information and the source of information is uncertain, so the accountability of information is weak.

IP 01: *I use social media as an information source for trivial matters such as buying trifling stuff. But I do not trust it on a large scale. I trust information of experts. Therefore, I prefer mass media to social media, when I need information of an important thing.*

IP 03: *I think that SNS appeals to the young, but mass media is still more influential. I have interest in tax issue and investment in real estate, and mass media is more credible as an information source of the themes than social media. Especially the broadcast news seems to be credible and influential in financial issues.*

IP 10: *Compared to mass media, social media has a weakness that it lacks a responsibility for information. There is a lot of unclear information on social media such as "someone says…" and users relay such information without checking the source or correctness of it. It is hard to call users to account. Even professional bloggers are not responsible for their content. But users seem to be exposed to this environment without any appropriate safeguard.*

The discussion of interviewee 24 and 19 in the group 4 shows the people's different views on a same thing. They differ in opinion about the pros and cons of the function of mass media as a gatekeeper.

IP 24: *On social media anyone can distribute information easily, but information of mass media is distributed after verifying and editing by professional journalist and institute. So I trust more the information of mass media than the one on social media.*

IP 19: *I trust information on social media than mass media because of that point. The information of mass media is edited by journalists and institutes. It means that the perspective and interests of them are involved in the process of editing. On the other hand, the users are relative free to the matter, so they can make and distribute information without fear or favor on social media. Consequently information on social media contains various perspectives and opinions.*

Following the foregoing discussion, some interviewees in the group 4 pointed out that the quality of journalism became lower. According to the opinion, the low quality and sensationalism of mainstream journalism are also main factors that affect to the credibility of mass media.

IP 20: *Recently the quality of information of mainstream media is quite low. The cycle of making news or information becomes faster than before, therefore, it seems that it is hard to put in a great deal of effort for making information. A lot of online news has no content, but just sensational headline. Recently the sensational TV news goes on the air very often. I think that this tendency is very negative.*

IP 23: *I agree with that. I feel often that I can also make news like that. I like reading users' comments on the news site, when I visit online news sites. Sometimes the comments are even more interesting than news. I can read comments that have different point of view with the news. In this case, I consider the content of news once again and judge it by putting a variety of information together.*

There seems to be an effect that the use of social media gives chance for users to reflect their attitude of information acceptance. They say that they become more active and critical to get and judge information on social media, because there are various or even conflicting information about same issue on social media and users have to compare, consider and judge a variety of information. Furthermore, users can be more critical about mass media by using social media. On social media, users can get information which conflicts with the information of mass media or mass media does not report. By these experiences can users become suspicious of mass media and notice the manipulation of mass media and reflect their erstwhile passive attitude of receiving the information of mass media.

IP 04: *In the past I wasn't critical to the broadcast news, because I had little interest in social issues like politics and economy. After using social media I realized that broadcasts distorted the truth in many ways. The information that I get on social media was often different from the one of mass media. Now I have a critical mind and a consciousness of crisis to the Korean broadcast and also to Korean government that controls the broadcast. I try to have a balanced viewpoint about social issues by receiving information critically from both mass media and social media. I lose confidence more and more in the broadcast.*

IP 22: *I accepted TV news uncritically before I use social media. But my attitude has changed critically after using social media. For example, I believed what TV news reported on a serious matter that popped up in the election period. But now I ask 'why' and search for the behind story of the case, if such a thing occurs. The next day after TV news, users in online community post a variety of information about it and exchange their opinions. A diverse view and interpretation is exchanged there. I can understand the case with diverse aspects by means of the information in online community. The final judgment is what I have to do. I think the diversity of information and opinion is the advantage of social media.*

Some users gave the opinions on credibility of media in a different aspect. It could be said as an ironic aspect of the strength and weakness of media. They state that they tend to have uncritical attitude to information of mass media because of the idea that mass media has professionalism and authority. On the contrary, social media is regarded that it lacks the authority and credibility and it make them more active and critical to get information on social media. In this case, the disadvantage of social media can be an advantage to promote user's active and subjective information activity.

IP 12: *I tend to receive uncritically the news of newspaper or broadcast. It is like that people tend to believe what doctor says about medical issues more than what ordinary people say about it. On the contrary, it is hard to know the information source on social media. So I get information on social media critically. (...) Then again, I can be more active and critical to get information on social media. I gather the related information more and study to judge whether the information is right or not. This seems a positive effect of incredibility of social media.*

IP 14: *My opinion is similar to the one of IP 12. I tend to accept uncritically the information that I get from TV news or TV documentary program. On the contrary, I usually search more related information about the information that I get on social media. It is to verify whether the information is true or not. I accept the information finally after looking through a variety of related information. Not blindly, but more actively. Like this, my attitude to receive information depends on the media. (...) I think*

that the credibility of mass media can be abused too. The audience are liable to receive the message of mass media uncritically, though mass media distorts information by intent and manipulates them. But in the case of social media, people could receive information more critically with subjectivity.

On the other hand, there's the opinion that the credibility of information on social media is being undermined by commercialization of social media sphere. The case is increasing that corporations make use of power blogger or influential users on social media for public relations. Recently there are more attempts to arouse public opinion on social media by political and economic power. The following is what were talked in the group 3.

IP 12: *I cannot believe ads or the information of company, because they inform only the good sides. So I prefer the information that users post. User's review is useful, because they have experienced already what I could experience by using the product.*

IP 17: *Nowadays companies know that. So they promote products by taking advantage of power bloggers or influential users on social media. For example, cooking utensils are introduced on cooking blogs. In fact, it is also a commercial promotion. Companies offer a reward to the bloggers for it. I have no idea what I have to trust. Recently the information of ordinary users isn't credible.*

IP 12: *So I consider mainly negative reviews of users rather than positive reviews.*

(2) Diversity

The opinion of interviewees about the diversity of information on social media was also divided. One group thinks that the information of mass media lacks diversity, whereas the information on social media is diverse and gives users diverse perspectives on issues. Interviewees in this group evaluate that the diversity of information on social media is very helpful to get a balanced view. According to them, they can have good judgment after getting conflicting information and comparing them.

IP 02: *Something covered up socially could be issue on social media. I'm interested in juvenile crime and it is related with my job. I think that TV news about juvenile crime is a big problem. TV news broadcasts the juvenile crime just superficially and sensationally. People who watch the TV news just rail and problematize the youth offenders. But the actual circumstances are more complicated, if we get to know them. The real causes of the juvenile crimes might not be individual, but social structural. But TV news does not cover the real story. I think that it is possible on social media. People can disclose details of the issue and the real story with a different point of view on social media. Recently social media has a positive effect that is showing people both sides of issues.*

I: *Does that mean the effect of keeping people's perspective in balance?*

IP 02: *Right. By the way, people used to the news that mass media put into their hands, seem not to trust the information on social media. It is too bad.*

IP 04: *I agree with that. I think that social media is a medium for freedom of expression. By getting information on social media, people can know various perspectives which mainstream media does not give us. I think it very positive, because we need a variety of information and perspective for understanding our society.*

IP 05: *The old like my parents still prefer mass media to social media. They depend on mainly mass media for getting information, so their information sources are limited. Their opinion could be based on the biased information from mass media. On the contrary, the young who use more various information channels can get a variety of information, interpret them and finally get a conclusion. When I discuss about political issues with my parents, I cannot talk with them well. They know and believe just what TV or newspaper reported. What they know is quite limited.*

IP 06: *It is the biggest role of social media, that there are voices of pro and contra. Some are one-sided and some are balanced, but one evident thing is that there's the*

contrary. The judgment is people's own. It is nothing less than brainwashing, if people can get only one-sided information.

IP 09: *People usually have their own opinion about some topic. It is nice that I can hear of them that are different from mine on social media. It makes me understand that the opinions of other people are not wrong, but different from mine.*

On the other hand, there were the interviewees who disagreed with this opinion. They stated that information on social media wasn't diverse but had bias, particularly in the field of political issue. Therefore, people who have a minority opinion experience difficulty to express their own opinion and communicate freely with other users.

IP 10: *The role of social media becomes bigger and bigger, because mass media does not work well. But I'm not sure that social media is an open place of various opinion. The most active users on social media are young generation and they seem to have a certain political stance. In my experience, they are not so tolerant towards other voices. On twitter, I sometimes write a comment contrary to some article. Then other users condemn my comment very aggressively and even insult my character. People with the minority views on social media cannot express their own ideas freely. Some friends of mine have also experienced like me. They suffer social ostracism on social media, because their thoughts are different from others. On that reason, I have used social media like Twitter less and less.*

IP 07: *In my opinion, it is not the problem of social media itself, but the problem of immaturity of some users. That is a problem occurred in the process of being more mature in the user's behavior and consciousness. It is obvious that social media has positive feature to share a variety of information and perspectives. It is better than mass media. It is our problem to solve, how to use it wisely.*

(3) Expertise

The opinions of participants were divided into two groups. One group thinks that

the information of mass media is more expert than the one of social media. The thought of other group is in contrast with that. The former states that anyone can make and distribute information on social media and it is hard to be verified who produces and distributes information and if the information sources is qualified or not.

IP 01: *I study now car engineering. One of the recent hot issues in automobile fields is the problem of sudden unintended acceleration. This issue is being hotly discussed on social media and heightens public attention. TV news covered this issue too. But I think most of the debates on social media aren't based on proper theory or grounds. It is because most of them aren't professionals in that field, nevertheless they argue something about specialized themes. There is a lot of mistaken information on social media because of this reason. On the other hand, in TV news experts mentioned this issue and it was more accurate.*

IP 09: *I think the information on social media isn't expert as much as the one of mass media. The wrong information is often distributed as true information on social media.*

IP 10: *I will not share for free my high quality information on social media, if I am an expert of a field. It would be below a certain level, even though I share some information. Overall, the free culture is rampant on social media. In this culture, the information on social media could not be of good quality. As a result, the ordinary users could sustain losses for that reason. I worry about it. I think people have to be more careful to use information instead of trusting easily the information that can be gathered for free on social media.*

The other group argues that the users who distribute information on social media have less political or commercial interests; therefore, they can produce more neutrally and with true intent. Furthermore, journalists are not usually the experts of a certain issue and theme, so they can make mistakes in reporting or have less capacity to handle a specific issue than experts. On the other hand, there are many experts who distribute information of their field on social media and the information can be more accurate and expert than journalist.

IP 02: *I see that nowadays the information of mass media is often distorted and the truth is brought to light on social media. Furthermore, many experts participate in producing and distributing information on social media. For example, a journalist posts the inside story of issues on Facebook that are different from what he writes for newspaper. Through the inside story, he explains the reason why he could not write news article rightly. His articles on Facebook seem truer. I like to push 'Like' button to such posting in order to letting people know the truth.*

IP 05: *I sometimes watch the stock news on TV. I think that the news quality is lower than the one of online community. It isn't only the opinion of me, but also of the community members. Experts appear in that stock news, but they seem not to tell the truth. For instance, they present promising stock items, but the true is often that it is the timing to sell those items. It is to manipulate the ordinary personal investors. It seems that they do it for a certain gain. On the contrary, the information that some users post on online community is more expert and credible than the one of stock news on TV.*

IP 08: *On social media, I usually get information of my area of expertise. Based on my experience, the information that I get from blogs or online community is very down to earth and in depth, because the professions post that information. On the contrary, many journalists seem to report news of my field with little understanding. For example, the news articles of The Electronic Times*[6] *are often complete sham.*

There was also the opinion that the information on social media was too plentiful and various to judge the expertise simply. The quality of information on social media is various as much as the number of social media users.

IP 06: *People who produce information on social media might be ordinary users or experts of some field. The information on social media is enormous in the amount and the range. Therefore the quality of information is in infinite variety. So I think it is hard*

6 Korean daily newspaper specializing information technology

to judge assertively the expertise of information on social media.

(4) Usefulness

The interviewees who regard mass media as a more useful tool for getting information think that mass media has the strength to introduce the core content of issues. People can easily understand what major issues are and catch the point. The target audience of mass media is not made up of experts but of the general public; therefore information and content of mass media are comprehensible to the average audience. On the other hand, the interviewees feel that it needs more effort and ability to get information on social media. The information on social media is fragmented, diversified or specialized, thus it is not easy to find and digest information without basic knowledge and understanding on certain theme.

IP 06: *The information and content of mass media are literally focused on the general public. So the high level of intelligence and knowledge isn't needed for audience to understand and enjoy them. But on social media like blog, some information is very specialized and thus needs at least the basic knowledge for understanding that. Furthermore, it takes time and effort to get information exactly on social media. I have to watch for the proper information that I need and check for misinformation from mass amounts of information. In this reason, it is so tricky for people to get information on social media. In this aspect, to get information with mass media is easier than social media.*

IP 13: *Mass media let us know the core content of events or issues briefly and clearly. On the contrary, the information on social media is fragmented and therefore it is difficult to get to point through the information. But the positive thing of social media use is that I can know the various points of view and interpretation about some issue.*

On the other hand, there is the opinion that it is more useful to get information on social media. People can find und use information conveniently on social media, because the information on social media is plenty, easily accessible and low-cost.

People can use the various formats of information like text, image, video and audio.

IP 09: *Users can easily post videos on YouTube. So there are tremendous videos on YouTube that users worldwide have posted. As a result, users can easily learn something through the YouTube videos. For instance, I'm interested in music. In the past people had to pay for a learning course or buy books to learn making music. But recently people can learn it by making use of the free video lectures on YouTube.*

IP 07: *I enjoy watching videos of music concert. It is very useful that I can experience indirectly the live concerts through the videos.*

I: *Which one between mass media and social media do you prefer for watching the videos?*

IP 07: *I prefer social media. The number and variety of content offered by mass media is limited, but I can use more content on social media that I need.*

IP 06: *There are many videos of interesting lectures on YouTube. I can watch lectures worldwide without being present there. I am grateful to the video uploaders for that. I learn computer programming. I did it with books before, but now with YouTube videos. I think learning with videos is more efficient than with books. The one takes less time for learning than the other.*

IP 07: *Recently many online tutorial platforms have emerged. For example, people who are interested in makeup can learn it with online videos on those platforms. They do not need to learn it in professional institute, if they do not need to be experts. The quality of the tutorial videos is good enough to reach a certain level as an amateur. In addition, the learning speed with video is faster than with book.*

Interviewees pointed out that the speed of information distribution is one of the strengths of social media too. People can get or distribute information so fast on social media. An event and the distribution of information about the event can happen almost

simultaneously, because there's no process of censorship or editing. It seems that the fast speed of information is regarded as a virtue in the speed culture of modern society.

IP 06: *One of the differences between mass media and social media is the speed of information distribution. The information of mass media is distributed after editing process. Thus it is hard to make and distribute information in real time. In the case of stock market news, broadcast or newspaper cannot deliver news as fast as people want. So it is sometimes late to make a decision after watching TV news or reading newspaper. The information flow on social media seems faster than mass media, because there's no need of the editing- and filtering process on social media. An event and the distribution of the information about it occur almost simultaneously.*

(5) Ripple Effect

The majority of interviewees thought that the ripple effect of social media is greater than mass media. According to them, information can be distributed very fast on social media. In addition, people can communicate and share information worldwide. This tendency is significant in the aspect of culture and politics. Some cultural trends can be popular in common worldwide. People all over the world can enjoy together the same videos or popular songs. It can promote a bond of global sympathy between them.

IP 02: *The strength of social media is the ripple effect. Todays online buzz seems to be more powerful than broadcast. Furthermore, it is global. It took six years until the Macarena Dance became known to Korea. But it took just one month that Psy's "Gangnam Style" became popular all over the world. It could not be possible without social media. Recently Harlem Shake is very popular between youths. It is very interesting that people all over the world can enjoy together with same video.*

IP 04: *The ripple effect of social media is very great as we see in the case of Psy syndrome. Social media makes it possible to cause a worldwide sensation over the spatial- and temporal constraints. It took much more time and cost in the past to do the same thing. The cultural gap between countries could become narrow more and more. I*

think that this tendency does not have positive effect, but also negative effect. For example, the youth can be exposed easily to the nasty content without any filtering. It is hard to control that online.

The ripple effect of social media is also regarded as a positive feature that users can make use of. Social media can be used for self-promotion at small cost. It is difficult for people to advertise on TV or newspaper because of the immense expense. But people can post their content freely on social media and they could become popular between users. Recently companies have interest on this ripple effect of social media and they try to make use of it for marketing.

IP 01: *I feel that it is a new culture. It is such a culture that the world can enjoy together. And I think that anybody can take advantage of this tendency. People can be famous or promote themselves easily on social media. There are many inspiring cases like that.*

IP 02: *It is right. Social media provides new opportunity for success. Ordinary people cannot advertise on TV or newspaper, but they can make an interesting video and it can be popular on YouTube.*

In the aspect of politics, the public opinion about some issue can be formed easily through social media in the level of a nation or worldwide. It can be shown recently in the case “Arab Spring” and “Occupy Movement”. These movements were known to people at first through social media, because the mainstream media did not cover them. The movements spread fast both inside and outside of the country even though the barriers.

IP 16: *People can communicate in real-time with social media. Therefore, public opinion is formed easily on social media. And social media can be channels for promoting people taking part in campaign, flash mop, event and demonstration. In this aspect, it is one of strengths of social media to form public opinion.*

IP 08: *It is said that social media made a big role to “Arab Spring”. People posted the*

pictures and videos of the demonstration and let people abroad know the present state, although the government blocked the information channels. It could focus world attention on Arab Spring. I think it is very positive role of social media.

On the other hand, some interviewees worried about the negative effect of social media. Social media has a great ripple effect. Therefore, it is irrevocable, when any rumor or misinformation is distributed on social media. This could be a serious factor that scares users and hinders their activity on social media.

IP 02: *I agree with that. It is positive that people all over the world can easily sympathize with social media. On the other hand, it is negative that controversial content like pornography or violent videos can be distributed easily on social media. In fact, Psy's music video or Harlem Shake videos are quite lewd. I worry about that when I see the youth like such videos and mimic what they watched on the videos. It happens and spreads very rapidly. So there's no enough time or method to protect the youth from it.*

IP 06: *There are many negative cases related to the ripple effect of social media. Malicious rumors or misinformation about someone or company are often distributed on social media. It can hardly be reversed after it happens, even though the innocence is proved. The damage of the involved person or company can be hardly compensated. Users have to be more careful on social media. This is a transitional phenomenon of social media. I think that now is yet the early stage of new media culture named social media.*

Some interviewees said that mass media is very influential in our lives. Mass media, especially TV is powerful to create social trends and fashions. The trends made by mass media have influence on people's conversation, relationship, fashion or lifestyle.

IP 15: *I had a meeting with friends at the house of a friend. We had a pleasant chat, but at 9 PM friends suddenly stopped talking and sat around the TV set to watch a TV drama. They just watched the TV drama without talking. They began talking about the*

drama after watching. I did not want to do it, so I was a little upset. Many people usually spend much time on watching TV at home and they spend time on talking about TV program when they meet friends. It seems that our lives are considerably surrounded and influenced by TV. I feel sad, when I think about the reality of our lives.

IP 16: *It is easy for people to accept what they watch on TV as truth. But there are many cases that visuals are fabricated on Korean TV news. It is the reality. Recently product placement in TV programs is increasing. We see that a product becomes a big hit, when TV endorses it. In our media culture, what seems like true and real might be actually something that is fabricated. At this point, mass media seems to be so much influential.*

IP 17: *When we see Korean society, it seems that mass media is very powerful to create social trends. In the city center of Seoul, we can see many people who have similar hairstyles and fashion styles. The celebrities shown on TV or magazines create easily these fashions. When I meet friends, the main topic of our chat is often about the TV programs. So I can be easily isolated from the talk, if I do not know about them. In this reason, I spend much time no to be behind in trend.*

3) Evaluation of Media- and Social Context

Most of the interviewees express negative opinions about the media and information environment of Korea. They state that the freedom of information in Korea is severely restricted by political and economic power. The Korean society lacks transparency, especially the transparency of government, and people cannot access easily the information. Another severe problem is the problem of self-censorship because of the suppressed information environment.

IP 20: *Korean society needs greater transparency. People can trust the government or institutes, when they are transparent. Thus, it is very important to create the environment in which information is more disclosed and people can easily access the information source. I think that Korean society lacks severely the transparency.*

IP 23: *I think that the information environment of Korea is very suppressed. Especially, I worry that people tend to censor themselves and this tendency is serious. Information containing new ideas cannot emerge in the environment that forces people into self-censorship.*

They think the core problem of this matter is that the mass media does not perform well. They evaluate that mass media, especially the broadcast, is subordinated to the power and it manipulates the public through the distortion of information. This is the core issue that Flusser criticized. A positive thing could be that many users become aware of this problem, even though the problem of manipulation by discursive media complex still exists.

IP 02: *I think that the mainstream media in Korea manipulates people severely. So I haven't watched public TV for a long time. ... It seems that the public broadcast fell into a propaganda broadcast. So I do not believe what the public TV broadcasts. The public TV isn't trustworthy anymore. It is loyal to the government and propagates the government policy. For example, the last government instigated people to buy a house with announcing that the house price would rise. The mainstream media propagated it too. People who trusted it and bought house became house-poor now. ... The public broadcast is very influential like this.*

IP 16: *I think the media landscape in Korea is very restrained in the aspect of the freedom of press and the diversity of opinion. The press does not work as a watchdog, but rather as a sycophant to the administration. For instance, the executives of public broadcast are always appointed by orders from the government and then the press reports on the sociopolitical issues are the same in tenor.*

With this critical awareness of media environment in Korea, the users distrust mass media as information channel, and depend on it for getting information less and less. On the contrary, the interviewees evaluate that social media plays a role as an alternative information channel. They state that they can get diverse information on social media that they cannot get from TV news or other mainstream media. So they perceive the

social media as a trustworthy alternative information channel.

IP 07: *A variety of information should be given us for making a good judgment. However, one-sided information is pervasive in our society. I think that the impartiality and credibility of mainstream media are very poor. ... It is a big problem that broadcasts send one-sided news in same tendency and way. It happens now in Korea that the public broadcast hardly reports critical news to the government, but reports just insignificant news. ... So I do not like to use it. On the contrary, I can get little-known information on social media. I often react like this: "What is this? I haven't heard that before". People who do not use properly both mass media and social media and only receive the information of mass media are in danger of being manipulated by it.*

IP 12: *In my opinion, the media environment in Korea is very suppressed. On the other hand, there are many cases of infoganda. For example, the broadcasts and newspapers do not report citizens' demonstration against the government or report it falsely with water-down reporting. The foreign press rather reports it correctly. I have feeling of doubt, if I have to watch the news like this. So I do not watch the TV news more and more. It is very hard to restore trust, when it is lost once. On that reason, I trust social media than mass media as an information source.*

IP 08: *Mass media in Korea seems to be one-sided and biased. But now social media is very popular and people can speak what they want to speak through social media. In this aspect, Korean society is progressed and better than before.*

IP 18: *In the Korean newspaper market, the three major newspapers have about 80 percent of market. Furthermore, the combining of these newspaper companies and broadcasts is launched. People think that it is no more possible to get varied information from TV or newspaper and social media is the alternative for that. I also trust the information on social media than mass media.*

Some interviewees, however, perceive the limits of social media. Some point out

that the freedom of information is shrinking on social media. It is because the political power tries to manipulate the public opinion on social media and restrict the citizen's freedom for expression by accusing the users who criticize the government online. Interviewees say that it compels them to engage in self-censorship. In this reason, the possibility and potential of social media also weaken. On the other hand, some point out that the public opinion or movements on social media has limit to have influence in reality. They seem to feel a gap between social media and the reality.

IP 16: *It happens more and more that the governmental authorities try to manipulate the public opinion or restrict the expression of citizens online by means of accusations and legal regulations. (...) People who post articles about sensitive issues could be charged or disadvantaged. For this reason, the activities on social media shrink more and more. ... This tendency forces me into self-censorship. Now in Korea, the context of building our own opinions and expressing them is being suppressed from the private sector to the public sector.*

IP 02: *At the last president election, the candidates of the opposition parties had superiority on Facebook or Twitter. But the election results were different. So many young people doubted if it was just a party of them in cyberspace. I guess that this unexpected result is because the old have no appreciation of the social media and the move on that.*

IP 16: *It looks like that the public opinions are formed through social media. But in reality, the social media users are limited in number. It seems that the young or people who have a certain political stance are dominant in numbers. We saw that the public opinions between on social media and in reality were different at the last president election. Social media actually has effect on the forming public opinions, but it is unclear how much effect and limit social media has.*

IP 17: *Actually there was a limit of social media at the last president election. I think it gave people a chance to reflect on their activities on social media after the election. I have known that users on social media could not reflect the real world, though they are*

from all walks of life.

IP 11: *I think that there is still a lot of potential and diversity of social media. It is problematic to view social media just only in the political aspect or in the one-sided aspect. We need to focus on the potential and diversity of social media, and make the best use of it.*

4) Adverse Effect of Social Media

The adverse effects of social media are increasing recently. This tendency undermines the advantages of social media and hinders the users' activity on social media. The interview participants experience these problems both directly and indirectly in social media use. As the adverse effect of social media, they refer to the problems of cyber bulling, privacy breach, copyright infringement and distribution of controversial content. Some of the participants say that their activities on social media decrease or cease because of these problems.

(1) Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the use of Information Technology to harm or harass other people in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner. Cyberbullying is defined in legal glossaries as

- actions that use information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm another or others.
- use of communication technologies for the intention of harming another person
- use of internet service and mobile technologies such as web pages and discussion groups as well as instant messaging or SMS text messaging with the intention of harming another person (Cyberbullying, 2014. 3. 9).

The interviewees considered the cyberbullying to be one of the typical adverse effects of social media. They expressed concerns over tendency that cyberbullying increase and hurt severely users on social media. They introduced the direct or indirect

experiences of cyberbullying and said that they reduced or quitted the social media activity because of the experiences.

IP 02: *There are recently certain user groups on social media that distribute misinformation and arouse public sentiment through it. For example, on Twitter they make ill use of the feature of anonymity and bully someone. It is very harmful.*

IP 08: *I think that Korean have a strong inclination of collectivism. People feel safety in a group and feel a sense of achievement through bullying the outsiders. It is done on social media too. This phenomenon shows well the social context of Korea. I do not use SNS, because I dislike that. Instead, I prefer the online community activity that is safer in this matter.*

IP 17: *I see often on my favorite website that users do not express their own opinion, but post just comments to blame the others' comments. It happens often on social media that users offend each other by the comments affronting and despising the other person. The comment on social media has positive functions but recently the dysfunction seems to be more increasing.*

IP 18: *The problem of cyberbullying between social media users seems to be severe. I have experienced the cases that users in online community bullied each other. I did also such a thing. I hurt someone and reversely someone also hurt me. So I quitted the activity in online community. I think now I was so immature at that time. The cyberbullying seems to constrict the users' activities on social media like my case.*

Some of the interviewees referred to the case of Tablo[7], one of the high profile cases.

7 Tablo is a Korean-Canadian musician and actor. In mid-2010, a group of Internet users raised doubts about the academic background of Tablo, who graduated from Stanford University. The users organized fan sites and came into conflict with Tablo over the truth. The membership at the fan sites increased to about 200 thousands. After all, this issue became front-page news in Korea and became known to everybody. The trouble caused severe damage to his reputation and activities as a musician and actor, although he was cleared of suspicions by police investigation.

Peoples' awareness on cyberbullying has risen in Korea, partly with this case. According to the statements of interviewees, the indirect experience of this case has influenced negatively on the users' perception and activity on social media. They think also the cyberbullying issue like Tablo case isn't just the matter of social media itself, but rather it is related with users' consciousness, non-matured behaviors and the context of Korean society. It implies that the users think the first step to solve this problem has to be started from the matter, that is, the maturity of user's consciousness and the development of competence.

IP 01: *I think there are many good sides of social media. But my view about social media had become negative after the scandal of Tablo. In my opinion, the civic consciousness of Korean people isn't mature yet. (...) I think that social media itself isn't problematic, but the users' consciousness is matter.*

IP 07: *IT infrastructure in Korea is well developed. The using rate of smartphone and Internet of Korea seems to be higher than other countries. So news or information can be diffused fast and easily on social media. (...) On the other hand, the Koreans like to gossip others. These characteristics are combined and negative cases are increasing on social media. A representative case is the case of Tablo. People who disliked Tablo spread false information about him on social media. Because of the rumor, he could not keep on his activity as a singer for last years. Through the legal actions, the rumor about him proved to be false and those who spread rumor were punished. Considering this case, I think that negative issues of social media appear more in the context of Korea, even though social media can make a good role for an information channel.*

(2) Privacy Breach

Recently the privacy is a sensitive issue related to social media. Social media is a place where the distinction between the real and the virtual is diminishing, and where offline and online, and private and public are blending (Lovink, 2011). Users post private stories or political opinions, and reveal private relationship, and reversely public relationship enters into private sphere. So it is very easy that the privacy breach occurs

and it is impossible for users to control the risk perfectly. This is a problem just like the two sides of the same coin. Therefore, this is a great concern of social media users that weaken the social media activity.

IP 06: *On Facebook, someone can post pictures in which I am present and tag me in them. Then my Facebook friends can see the pictures, even though I do not want. This matter bothers me to use Facebook. So now I do not use Facebook so much actively as before.*

IP 07: *I hesitated to use Facebook at first, because I also worried about the privacy breach. Now I use Facebook more active than before. I think we have to allow for the risk of privacy breach, if we want to use social media. We cannot use social media at all, if we are overcareful about it. Users can control the level of self-disclosure on Facebook or other social media. But it is true that personal information could be leaked, if someone intends it.*

IP 10: *I joined Facebook four years ago and Facebook friends increased more and more. But a problem arouse soon. It was to becoming friend with someone whom I do not know well. But I could not refuse the friend requests of them. It seems that about 90 percent of Facebook friends were those whom I do not know well or seldom interact with. I disliked that they could see my private articles and pictures. It seemed that I became naked in the presence of others. I worried that someone could access my private information and make ill use of it. So I left Facebook before long. The privacy issue bothers me, when I use social media.*

IP 15: *Social media is a very personalized media, so it contains a lot of personal information. Thus it is a negative aspect of social media that my personal information could easily reach someone, even if I do not want it. On Facebook, I post and share my private things to interact with friends, but I would have disadvantage in a certain situation like job seeking. I worry about it.*

Like the statements of interviewees, users in common worry about the risk of

privacy breach on social media. There is, however, difference in the attitude and practice between users. Some users respond to it with passive attitude such as quitting or reducing the social media activity. On the contrary, some users take positive attitude by accepting the risk. They think the risk of privacy breach follows them always as long as they use social media.

(3) Copyright Infringement

The interviewees pointed out the copyright infringement as the adverse effect of social media. The majority of the opinions about copyright issue were that it needed to protect copyright well to protect the right of information producer and promote the activity of information production. Today social media functions as the platform of UGC, so many users produce their own information and content, and upload them on social media. At the same time, it is also easy that in digital media environment users copy the information and content of others and misuse them. In this reason, social media users seem to think the copyright infringement could weaken the users' activity to produce information. Copyright infringement is also one of the sensitive issues in social media sphere. There was, however, also opposing opinion that advocates the copyleft instead of the copyright. The reason is that the strict protection of copyright cannot promote the users' information production and sharing, but rather restrict the activities.

IP 10: *Lots of videos are uploaded on YouTube that audience took in concerts or events. The posting of those videos possibly violates the copyright. I think ordinary users like the posting, but the performer and the organizers of the event hate it. Most of people who post the videos do not seem to follow regular procedures.*

IP 07: *There are regulations regarding to the copyright. YouTube has also a filtering function for copyright. But it seems to be hard to control all of the copyright infringement cases with them. Self-regulation by users is the key to resolve the copyright issue. But it is also hard to solve the problem just by leaving it to people's conscience.*

IP 18: *I think the copyright issue is important. The awareness of copyright lacks in Korea so the copyright isn't well protected. The creators of information and content could work more enthusiastically, when their efforts can be well rewarded through the copyright.*

IP 19: *I support the copyleft rather than the copyright. It would restrict the people's activities of creating new information through using information freely, if the copyright takes priority over all else.*

IP 22: *I think it is necessary to protect the copyright. Users in Korea can often watch some videos on YouTube that cannot be watched abroad. I think it shows that the copyright in Korea isn't protected well. It might be good for ordinary users, but the efforts for creating them should be rewarded for the creators.*

(4) Distribution of Controversial Content

Social media is an open platform to everyone. So anyone can post anything. There's no filtering. It is the great advantage of social media as the information channel. Users can get plenty of information and the information on social media is very various. This advantage, however, can be conversely disadvantage. The one of the disadvantages is the distribution of controversial content. The interviewees expressed the concern of this adverse effect of social media. They experience this problem in daily use of social media. This is also a problem like the *two sides of the same coin.*

IP 10: *Nowadays people can take videos easily with smartphone and post them on social media such as YouTube. Some of these videos seem to contain controversial content. Watching YouTube videos, I say sometimes "How could this video be posted?" I wondered how those sensational videos could be posted without any filtering. It is good that we can enjoy freely a variety of videos, but it would be better, if there were some regulation.*

IP 12: *On social media, I can watch videos that cannot be broadcasted on TV. I seem to*

be often exposed to the sensational videos unwittingly. I do not know the whole content of the videos before watching, so I am exposed to the shocking scenes unexpectedly. I worry that kids also could be easily exposed to those videos.

IP 15: *If it happens that a chimpanzee kills her young in a zoo, mass media will report this case using video clips or pictures that are not so shocking. However, a visitor could record the accident with smartphone and post it on YouTube. People can watch the accident with the video without any filtering that shows the brutal killing scene. People can get more detailed information, but on the other side might people watch the unwanted video. I think these are two sides of the same coin of social media in which people can make and share information freely.*

5) User's Competence

Although there are a number of problems on social media, many interviewees disagree with the compulsory measures such as the regulation of government on social media that could restrain freedom of information. They prefer the voluntary restraint of users. They also suggest that people have to develop the awareness of media environment and information competence, that is, the ability to accept information critically, produce information actively and respect the other's opinion and privacy. They think these are necessary for the development of social media.

IP 06: *It is easy to make wrong use of social media like mass media, although the purpose of social media was good at the beginning. The possibility of making wrong use of it seems to be growing recently. I think the public awareness should improve to prevent the ill use of social media. If it fails, social media will function badly being controlled by the power.*

IP 08: *I think the responsibility of information receiver is big. They have to filter information by themselves. It is so for using both mass media and social media. (...) Users should have the responsibility also when they create information. Facebook or Twitter is like my other self. So I have to be responsible for the things that I posted on*

Facebook or Twitter. My reputation and status could be harmed not only online, but also in the real world, if I post something wrong on them. So we cannot but be more responsible to our online activity. In this aspect, I think self-regulating on social media is more effective than compulsory regulation.

IP 07: *I do not think the legal regulation can actually solve the problems on social media. More freedom of expression should be given to users. In addition to this, it is needed to encourage users to develop the sense of responsibility.*

IP 09: *The compulsory regulation on social media causes a backlash and cannot work well. So it is better way to give people freedom. I have to be more responsible to my act as much as I have freedom. Eventually, the awareness of us seems to be very important.*

5. Implication of Users' Technical Imagination and Communication Balance

5.1 A Typology of Social Media Users and Technical Imagination

Flusser presented the telematic society as an alternative model in contrast to the totalitarian society dominated by the discursive media complex. Flusser thought that new communication technology and the information revolution through the technology provided the socio-technological condition for the emergence of the telematic society. He stated, however, that consciousness, intention and competence of people to use the telematic media dialogically were more important. It is because humans and media are interdependent to each other in his point of view. People can negotiate their relationship with media. And media can be characterized intersubjectively according to the user's intentionality. The telematic media can be used dialogically, but it can also be used discursively as a part of the discursive media complex, if the users cannot, or do not intend to use it dialogically. Therefore, how users perceive the characteristics and potentials of the telematic media, and how dialogically they intend to use it to project meanings onto the world and to construct the reality are the key factors. In addition, the importance of users' critical perspectives to see through the media manipulation exerted by the discursive media complex should also be underlined. According to the Flusser's theory, the users' competence for doing this is called as technical imagination.

In this study, to be more specific, technical imagination is defined as the users' competence that consists of three dimensions, that is, media perception, media evaluation and media practice. These three dimensions are correlated and are integral parts of users' competence. Therefore, this study attempts to sketch out the main characteristics of the social media users' technical imagination by asking about their media perception, media evaluation and media use.

So how is the technical imagination shown actually in the social media users' perception and media use? Does it show various degree and characteristics of technical imagination? What does it mean and implicate? To answer these questions, I have intercrossed the components of users' technical imagination, that is, the mode of social media use, perception and evaluation of interviewees. Then I tried to type the characteristics of the users' technical imagination.

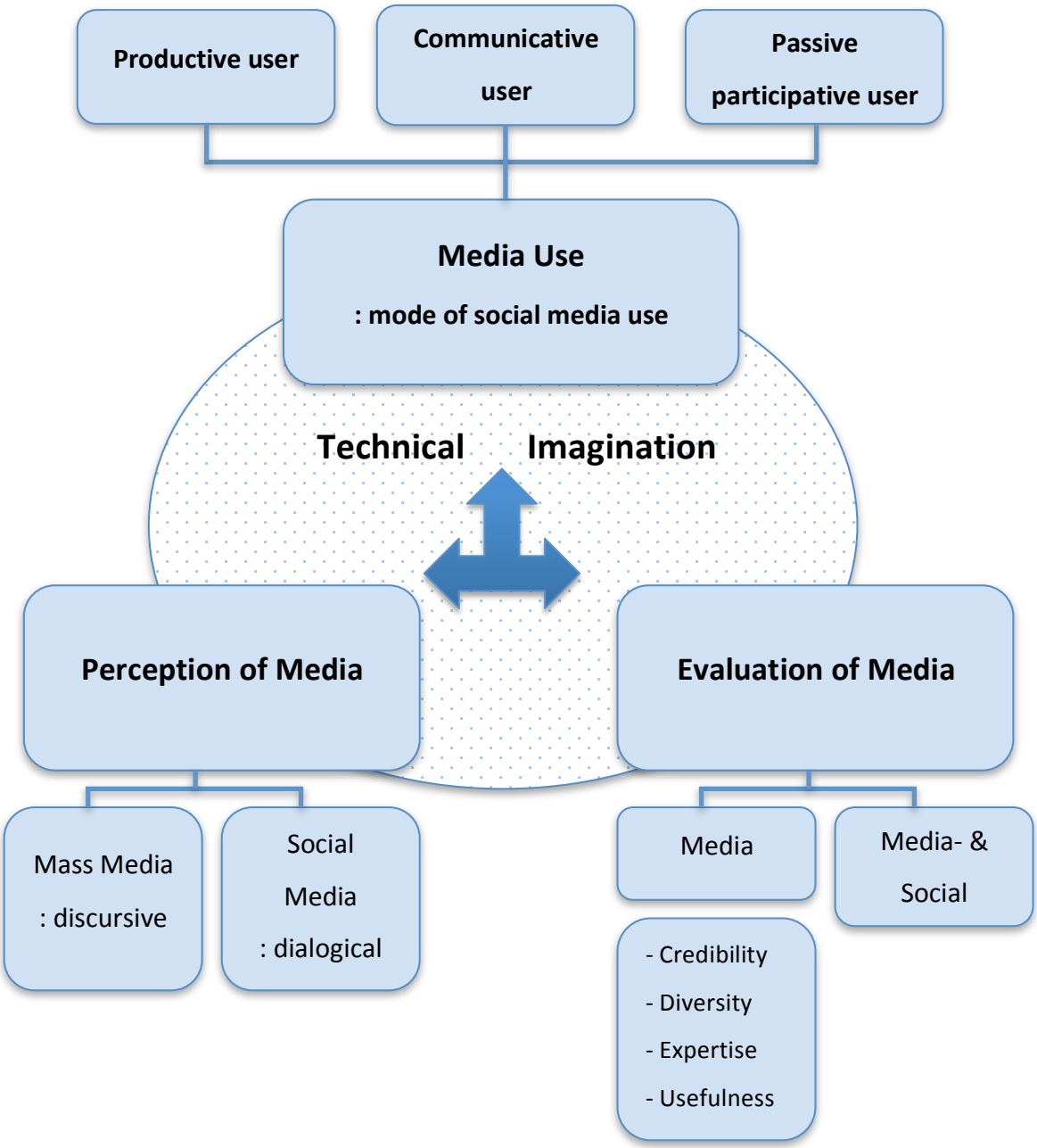

Fig. 5.1. A schema of social media users' technical imagination

Most of the interviewees had understanding of the technological and communicative characteristics of social media compared to mass media. They perceived that social media had a dialogical communication structure (two-way communication) and mass media had a discursive communication structure (one-way communication). The users' perception of media showed little difference among the interviewees. Therefore, the two other factors beside the user's perception, the modes of social media use and the evaluation of media are mainly considered to characterize the various types of social media users.

Table 5.1 Distribution chart of user's evaluation of media

Preference	Social Media	Neutral	Mass Media
Productive User	IP 02, IP 07, IP 08 IP 11, IP 12, IP 22	IP 03, IP 14, IP 24	
Communicative User	IP 04, IP 13 IP 18, IP 19, IP 20	IP 06, IP 17, IP 21	
Passive Participative User	IP 05, IP 09, IP 23	IP 15, IP 16	IP 01, IP 10

The responses on the evaluation of media were different among users. Some interviewees had a positive evaluation on social media and preferred it to mass media, but others were quite the contrary. This difference was revealed even among the group of users who had the same mode of social media use. Many of productive users evaluated social media positively and preferred it to mass media. The statements of the interviews showed that there is a correlation of their evaluation and the mode of social media use. However, some productive users had different opinions. They positively evaluated mass media and preferred it to social media. At first glance, it seems that the mode of social media use and the evaluation of media in this group are a little inconsistent. But this inconsistency was shown also in the group of passive participative users. Some of the passive participative users evaluated social media positively and preferred it to mass media. These differences in the characteristics of social media users

reveal that the technical imagination of users appears in various degrees and types. Furthermore, finding out the various types of users will provide understanding of which factors promote or impede the users' technical imagination. To describe this in a more detailed and strategic way, the typology of social media users and their technical imagination was created based on content of the interviews. The types of users are presented below:

Table 5.2 A typology of social media users

	Characteristics of Users by Types
Type 1	**Critical Active Users** productive & communicative use - positive evaluation to social media
Type 2	**Pragmatic Users** productive & communicative use - neutral evaluation to media
Type 3	**Critical Information Seekers** passive participative use - positive evaluation to social media
Type 4	**Skeptical Users** passive participative use - neutral evaluation to media
Type 5	**Conservative Users** passive participative use - positive evaluation to mass media

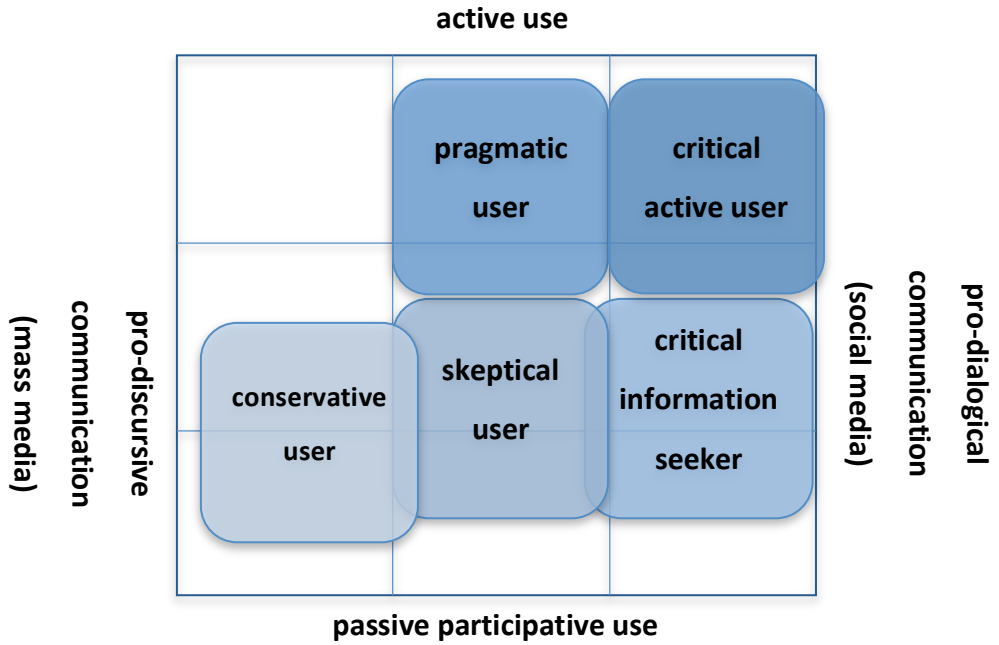

Fig. 5.2 A typology of social media users

5.1.1 Critical Active Users

Productive & communicative use – positive evaluation to social media

First of all, users of this type have the dissatisfaction and the critical attitude to the existing discursive media complex. They point out that the information produced and sent by mainstream media tends to be one-sided and hide the intention to manipulate people. They think this problem is caused by the collusion between mainstream media and political, economic power. Their opinions like this are concretely based on the context of Korean media landscape.

IP 02: *I think that the political- and economic power exploits mass media for their purpose. The broadcasting is under the control of the power. The political- and economic power can make an issue good or bad according to the own purpose. People could hardly know that in the age when there wasn't social media. They had no choice but to accept what mass media reported.*

IP 07: *It is a big problem that broadcasts send one-sided news in same tendency and way. It happens now in Korea that the public broadcast hardly reports critical news to the government, but reports just insignificant news. ... So I do not like to use it. On the contrary, I can get little-known information on social media. I often react like this: "What is this? I haven't heard that before". People who do not use properly both mass media and social media and only receive the information of mass media are in danger of being manipulated by it.*

On the one hand, they criticize that the mainstream media, especially broadcasts controlled by the power distort information and manipulate people. On the other hand, they think social media is an alternative information channel that makes them know the truth or the information that mainstream media does not report. They evaluate social media more positive than mass media in the variables of evaluation, such as credibility, diversity, expertise, usefulness and ripple effect.

Some interviewees said that they became more critical of mass media by using

social media because they could get diverse information that they could not get from mass media. These experiences gave them a chance to reflect their uncritical and passive attitude to receive information of mass media. Furthermore, they could get awareness of the media manipulation by discursive media complex.

IP 04: *In the past I wasn't critical to the broadcast news, because I had little interest in social issues like politics and economy. After using social media I realized that broadcasts distorted the truth in many ways. The information that I get on social media was often different from the one of mass media. Now I have a critical mind and a consciousness of crisis to the Korean broadcast and also to Korean government that controls the broadcast. I try to have a balanced viewpoint about social issues by receiving information critically from both mass media and social media. I lose confidence more and more in the broadcast.*

IP 08: *I have become more critical to receive the information of mass media after using social media. I accepted uncritically the information of mass media before, but now I respond to it like that: "I got the information online different from the one of mass media". Of course it needs to consider or judge which is correct, but the attitude of getting information becomes more critically.*

IP 22: *I accepted TV news uncritically before I use social media. But my attitude has changed critically after using social media. For example, I believed what TV news reported on a serious matter that popped up in the election period. But now I ask 'why' and search for the behind story of the case, if such a thing occurs. The next day after TV news, users in online community post a variety of information about it and exchange their opinions. A diverse view and interpretation is exchanged there. I can understand the case with diverse aspects by means of the information in online community. The final judgment is what I have to do. I think the diversity of information and opinion is the advantage of social media.*

With this critical awareness of discursive media order, the users of this group try to find the alternative possibility. The purpose is actualized by the active participation in

the information- and communication activities on social media. They are active to produce and share information or to communicate with others on social media. They understand well the technical and communicative characteristics of social media and take advantage of it for their communication and information activities. They think the activities on social media very meaningful and worthwhile.

IP 02: *I push 'Like' button about the funny videos or socially meaningful videos, e.g. donation campaign videos or political campaign videos. For example, in the last Korean parliament election in 2013, I participate in the campaign for encouraging people to vote by posting the picture of me at the polling place and sharing pictures or messages of the campaign on social media.*

IP 08: *In online community, I post news and information of my carrier interest, that is, the web technology. I like to write comments to other posting or answer about the questions of other members. The comments of other members to my articles are helpful for my works too. I have sometimes offline meeting with the members whom I got to know in online community. It is very good experience for me. I think that the activities on social media give me a good chance to make more personal connection.*

IP 20: *I'd like to share valuable information of my field. I think that it is hard work to do it alone and it would be more efficient to do it with other people in the same field together. My interest is how to get, share and manage information well. I think that Wikipedia is the most useful method for it, so I actively participate in Wikiproject. On Wikipedia I post my own articles or the articles of others that I translate into Korean.*

The characteristics of these users resemble the ideal users of telematic society whom Flusser had described. They are not the passive and isolated mass any more, but become willingly a node of information network and act as information producer, distributor and receiver. They are the project, as Flusser asserted, who realize the possibilities and project meaning on the world by using telematic media dialogically. These users are a driving force of forming the social media culture and enabling the new information- and media system. It has the potential to weaken the communication structure dominated by the discursive media complex.

5.1.2 Pragmatic Users

Productive & communicative use – neutral evaluation to media

The users of this type are active in information activities on social media like the users of type 1 (progressive users, advocator-user). They take advantage of social media for the information activity and the social intercourse with others. But their evaluation of social media isn't entirely positive. They show the tendency to perceive and evaluate the pros and cons of social media. Their evaluation of mass media is also like that. So they do not favor one of the both media. For this reason, their evaluation of media seems to be incoherent and different according to the variables of evaluation: credibility, diversity, expertise, usefulness and ripple effect.

We could call their attitude toward media neutral and pragmatic. The users of type 1 tend to be very critical of adverse effect of mass media and the discursive communication structure. For this reason, they advocate the core values and the potentials of social media to solve the communication imbalance. On the other hand, the users of this type are not so critical of mass media and the discursive communication structure as much as the former. So their favor and evaluation of media tend to be based on the practical and pragmatic attitude. This characteristic is also shown in the tendency of media use. They have a tendency of personal oriented use of media. The users have a common characteristic in their activities on social media. Their use activities on social media are mostly concentrated on individual and emotional territory. Their activities are mainly composed of updating their personal story of daily life, chatting with people or online community activities related with individual interests like hobby and leisure.

The case of IP 03 shows in the concrete the characteristic of the users above mentioned. She actively participates in online community activities. She exchange useful information and help with users on social media. She perceives the social media as a place of free expression, emotional satisfying and social intercourse. She takes advantage of social media as a dialogical communication media. In this respect, her evaluation of social media seems very positive. But she evaluates social media negative in regard to the issue, the credibility of social media as information channel. She states that she prefers mass media to social media as a source of information. She thinks mass

media has strength to let people understand easily the currently significant issues and their content. But social media lacks this feature.

IP 03: *I have joined a couple of online community whose theme is travel. I obtain useful information and help for travel from other members. I post my own information and pictures of my travel to share them with other members. It is so nice that I can get various thoughts and experiences about common interest between people by the activity in the online community. (...) I feel free and comfortable to express my feelings or thoughts online than in real life. Sometimes I write my stories on Facebook to share them with friends and to be comforted by friends. The reacts of friends on Facebook make me comfort and relieve my stress.*

IP 03: *I think that SNS appeals to the young, but mass media is still more influential. I have interest in tax issue and investment in real estate, and mass media is more credible as an information source of the themes than social media. Especially the broadcast news seems to be credible and influential in financial issues. ... Mass media let me know what the currently significant issues are. On social media, it is just possible to know people's diverse opinions, but it is hard to know which issues are important and what the core content of the issues are. Mass media is better that social media in this respect.*

IP 14 points out an ironic aspect of the strength and weakness of media. She thinks that as information channel is mass media more credible than social media. So she tends to accept uncritically the information of mass media in daily life. On the contrary, she is careful of getting information on social media and tries to verify its credibility. On the other hand, she also interprets this matter from a different point of view. According to her, the authority and credibility of mass media can be easily abused to manipulate people. On the contrary, social media lacks the authority and credibility, but this weakness makes users more active and critical to get and judge information on social media.

IP 14: *The information source of mass media is clear and reliable, but on the contrary,*

a lot of information of social media is from unreliable sources. In this regard, I have difficulty when the information of mass media and social media is different or conflicts. It is difficult for me to judge which information is right. In this situation, I try to compare information from various sources and judge it finally.

IP 14: *(...) I tend to accept uncritically the information that I get from TV news or TV documentary program. On the contrary, I usually search more related information about the information that I get on social media. It is to verify whether the information is true or not. I accept the information finally after looking through a variety of related information. Not blindly, but more actively. Like this, my attitude to receive information depends on the media. (...) I think that the credibility of mass media can be abused too. The audience is liable to receive the message of mass media uncritically, though mass media distorts information by intent and manipulates them. But in the case of social media, people could receive information more critically with subjectivity.*

IP 06 is aware of the two sides of social media. He thinks that on the one hand the fast speed of information distribution on social media has positive effect, but on the other hand it has negative effect. It can be an advantage or a disadvantage comparing to mass media. It depends on the users' intention and consciousness to use social media.

IP 06: *One of the differences between mass media and social media is the speed of information distribution. The information of mass media is distributed after editing process. Thus it is hard to make and distribute information in real time. In the case of stock market news, broadcast or newspaper cannot deliver news as fast as people want. So it is sometimes late to make a decision after watching TV news or reading newspaper. The information flow on social media seems faster than mass media, because there's no need of the editing- and filtering process on social media. An event and the distribution of the information about it occur almost simultaneously.*

IP 06: *There are many negative cases related to the ripple effect of social media. Malicious rumors or misinformation about someone or company are often distributed on social media. It can hardly be reversed after it happens, even though the innocence*

is proved. The damage of the involved person or company can be hardly compensated. Users have to be more careful on social media. This is a transitional phenomenon of social media. I think that now is yet the early stage of new media culture named social media.

The users of this type express concern about the tendency that the distinctive characteristics of social media as a dialogical communication media weakened. They think this tendency is caused from the misuse of social media, which is done by users themselves or political economic force. This tendency can make users' motivation and activeness weak.

IP 06: *It is easy to make wrong use of social media like mass media, although the purpose of social media was good at the beginning. The possibility of making wrong use of it seems to be growing recently. I think the public awareness should improve to prevent the ill use of social media. If it fails, social media will function badly being controlled by the power.*

IP 16: *The interactivity of social media seems to become weak recently. People like me hesitate to express and share their idea on social media, because they worry about being troubled with cyber bullying, privacy breach or potential damage. Because of these problems, the freedom of information activity on social media is shrinking and controlled.*

IP 17: *Nowadays companies know that. So they promote products by taking advantage of power bloggers or influential users on social media. For example, cooking utensils are introduced on cooking blogs. In fact, it is also a commercial promotion. Companies offer a reward to the bloggers for it. I have no idea what I have to trust. Recently the information of ordinary users isn't credible.*

On the other hand, the communicative users were not active in producing information as much as the productive users. The interviewees pointed out the reasons such as technical trickiness, cautiousness of self-disclosure, cyber bulling, copyright

issue and so on. They thought that these reasons constrict their active participation in information production on social media. The opinions of productive users were also same. The users stated that the responsibility and competence of users should be improved to resolve the problems and to make full use of social media.

In the aspect of the technical imagination, the users of this type seem to lack the critical awareness of media environment on grand level. Flusser emphasizes that it is important for users to being aware of the mechanism of the discursive media complex that distort information and manipulate people. This critical awareness is an essential part of the technical imagination. But it is hardly found in the consciousness and practice of the users in this type.

However, the potentials and positive aspects of their social media use can be found. According to Flusser, there is a potential in the users' trivial and purposeless activities such as twaddle and empty chatter with telematic gadgets or play with banal technical images. He thinks that these activities can connect people newly and promote dialogical communication and intercourse between them. He prospects that the discursive media complex will collapse of its own accord, if this change in private sphere is successful. In this aspect, the individualized and personal oriented use of social media also can be positive evaluated as a significant tendency that enriches the dialogical communication- and media culture.

5.1.3 Critical Information Seekers

Passive participative use - positive evaluation to social media

The users of this group use social media mainly for getting information and rarely participate in producing and sharing information. But they experience the strength of social media as information channel such as diversity, plenty, impartiality or credibility of information. Therefore, they prefer social media to mass media for getting information and have little confidence in mass media. They are aware and critical of the media manipulation and its low quality such as sensationalism.

IP 05: *I sometimes watch the stock news on TV. I think that the news quality is lower*

than the one of online community. It isn't only the opinion of me, but also of the community members. Experts appear in that stock news, but they seem not to tell the truth. For instance, they present promising stock items, but the true is often that it is the timing to sell those items. It is to manipulate the ordinary personal investors. It seems that they do it for a certain gain. On the contrary, the information that some users post on online community is more expert and credible than the one of stock news on TV.

IP 09: *Users can easily post videos on YouTube. So there are tremendous videos on YouTube that users worldwide have posted. As a result, users can easily learn something through the YouTube videos. For instance, I'm interested in music. In the past people had to pay for a learning course or buy books to learn making music. But recently people can learn it by making use of the free video lectures on YouTube.*

The users of this group point out the usefulness of information diversity on social media. They said they enjoyed reading users' comments on news articles, when they get news online news site or on social media. The comments of other users are very useful to know people's diverse perspectives on issues. They compare the comments with the information of mass media and this behavior helps them receive information critically. Through this process, they become more aware of the problems of discursive mass media such as media manipulation.

IP 05: *I like to read comments when I use online news sites or social media. Many people write comments to news articles on the online news sites or to articles on social media. It is useful that I can know people's various opinions. On the other hand, it is difficult for me to discern them, because there is so much information. So I feel that I need some competence to get information critically.*

IP 09: *People usually have their own opinion about some topic. It is nice that I can hear of them that are different from mine on social media. It makes me understand that the opinions of other people are not wrong, but different from mine. (...) In Korea, the broadcasting seems to be done according to the tastes of owners. The latest strikes of broadcasters and the dismissal of journalists were also because of this problem. The*

Journalism has to speak for people, but now it speaks for the power. It is very lamentable.

IP 23: *I usually read news online and like to read the readers' comments to the news articles. Sometimes the comments are more interesting than news article. People express their own ideas or reviews and these comments are interchanged in online bulletin board. I can know people's various opinions and perspectives on the issues by reading the comments. Through this, I have chance to think about the issues once more and gather up the threads.*

The users of this type are named passive participative user, but they are different from the model of passive audience in the age of mass media. To getting information on social media need more activeness than getting information by watching TV news. Social media users have to search, collect, compare and judge information because the information on social media is diverse and fragmented in the multiple channels and forms. It is not easy work. So IP 5 stated like that: "… *it is difficult for me to discern them (users' comments), because there is so much information. So I feel that I need some competence to get information critically."*

This is what Flusser expected in his idea of telematic society. It is a transition from the impotent mass scattered and distracted by technical images of media complex to telamatic users who are connected each other and participate in the dialogical information activity. Compared to the model of telematics users described by Flusser, the users of this group do not have enough competence and activeness for the dialogical use of social media. However, the critical attitude for getting information from media is an indication of the significant change from the impotent mass to the ideal telematics users. The users of this group show the potentials for this. As it is shown in the statements of the interviewees, the use of social media and the information activities on it encourage the critical and active attitude to receive information.

5.1.4 Skeptical Users

Passive participative use - neutral evaluation to media

The users of this type tend to be skeptical of both social media and mass media. They perceive the pros and cons of both media like other users who have neutral perspective to both media. At first, they are critical of mass media. They point out that mass media, especially TV influences people's daily lives excessively and furthermore, it is under the control of political economic the power.

IP 15: (...) *Many people usually spend much time on watching TV at home and they spend time on talking about TV program when they meet friends. It seems that our lives are considerably surrounded and influenced by TV. I feel sad, when I think about the reality of our lives.*

IP 16: *It is easy for people to accept what they watch on TV as truth. But there are many cases that visuals are fabricated on Korean TV news. It is the reality. Recently product placement in TV programs is increasing. We see that a product becomes a big hit, when TV endorses it. In our media culture, what seems like true and real might be actually something that is fabricated. At this point, mass media seems to be so much influential.*

IP 16: *I think the media landscape in Korea is very restrained in the aspect of the freedom of press and the diversity of opinion. The press does not work as a watchdog, but rather as a sycophant to the administration. For instance, the executives of public broadcast are always appointed by orders from the government and then the press reports on the sociopolitical issues are the same in tenor.*

To the users of this type, however, social media cannot be an appealing alternative. They have also the skeptical perspective to social media. They perceive the advantage of social media, but they tend to pay more attention to the negative aspect or risk of social media use such as the privacy breach, the exposure to controversial content or potential damages. It seems that this skeptical perspective correlates with being reluctant to use social media.

IP 15: *Social media is a very personalized media, so it contains a lot of personal information. Thus it is a negative aspect of social media that my personal information*

could easily reach someone, even if I do not want it. On Facebook, I post and share my private things to interact with friends, but I would have disadvantage in a certain situation like job seeking. I worry about it.

IP 16: *The interactivity of social media seems to become weak recently. People like me hesitate to express and share their idea on social media, because they worry about being troubled with cyber bullying, privacy breach or potential damage. Because of these problems, the freedom of information activity on social media is shrinking and controlled.*

IP 16: *It happens more and more that the governmental authorities try to manipulate the public opinion or restrict the expression of citizens online by means of accusations and legal regulations. (...) People who post articles about sensitive issues could be charged or disadvantaged. For this reason, the activities on social media shrink more and more. ... This tendency forces me into self-censorship. Now in Korea, the context of building our own opinions and expressing them is being suppressed from the private sector to the public sector.*

In particular, IP 16 points out the negative changes on social media sphere. According to her, the interactivity, one of the main characteristics of social media, becomes weak gradually. She states that the cause of this phenomenon is because the control of social media activity is strengthened both directly and indirectly. In addition, the adverse effects like cyber bulling, and privacy breach. increase on social media. These factors pose serious obstacles for the development of users' technical imagination. It is necessary for people to have a space for making meaning and realizing possibilities through the dialogical communication and the human interaction. It is also necessary for solving the problem of communication imbalance caused by the dominance of the discursive media complex. Social media has been viewed as a space of possibility. But this notion of the space of possibility seems to be shrinking, if users' skeptical evaluation of social media is taken into account. The strength and the potential of social media will weaken, if the users become skeptical about the potential of social media and their information activities decrease. So this phenomenon gives us a meaningful task,

how to remove the obstacles and to promote and improve the user's active participation into the information activity on social media. As Flusser emphasizes, the improvement of the users' consciousness and competence, the telematic imagination, can play an important role in resolving the communication imbalance and realize the ideal of the telematic society. But it is not sufficient. In addition to such effort, analyses on the contextual factors that shrink the sphere of social media by hindering the users' motivation and activity should take place. It will be the task left in the institutional and political dimensions.

5.1.5 Conservative Users

Passive participative use – positive evaluation to mass media

The users of this type are passive in the activity on social media such as information producing and sharing or interacting with other users. Their main use of social media is getting information or looking on what friends have updated on social media. This tendency of media use seems to correlate with their evaluation of media.

They are critical of social media and its culture. They think the information on social media is not credible. It is from the facts that anybody can easily distribute information on social media and therefore the verification of information on social media is very difficult. In addition, the information on social media cannot be of good quality because of the free culture that is rampant on social media, and this inflicts losses upon users. On the contrary, they put confidence in mass media as information channel. It is because the information of mass media is verified and the information source is clear.

IP 01: *I study now car engineering. One of the recent hot issues in automobile fields is the problem of sudden unintended acceleration. This issue is being hotly discussed on social media and heightens public attention. TV news covered this issue too. But I think most of the debates on social media aren't based on proper theory or grounds. It is because most of them aren't professionals in that field, nevertheless they argue something about specialized themes. There is a lot of mistaken information on social media because of this reason. On the other hand, in TV news experts mentioned this*

issue and it was more accurate.

IP 10: *Compared to mass media, social media has a weakness that it lacks a responsibility for information. There is a lot of unclear information on social media such as "someone says…" and users relay such information without checking the source or correctness of it. It is hard to call users to account. Even professional bloggers are not responsible for their content. But users seem to be exposed to this environment without any appropriate safeguard.*

It could be said that the users of this type have conservative attitude regarded with media use. They seem to prefer the existing discursive communication media to the new dialogical communication media and its culture. They prefer the safety and the credibility that discursive media can provide, to the diversity and openness of dialogical media. With regard to the technical imagination, they have little technical imagination.

On the other hand, the negative evaluation of social media, however, does not seem to result only from their conservative attitude. When their statements are considered, the negative evaluation is also based on their negative experiences on social media such as user's exclusivity, social ostracism, cyber-bulling and privacy breach. It seems that the negative experiences on social media have accumulated and they affect their evaluation and use of social media. They state that they have reduced or quitted the social media activity after experiencing these negative cases. In addition, it seems that these negative experiences reinforce their conservative attitude that prefer discursive communication media. They think that the adverse effects of social media greater outweigh the advantages.

IP 01: *I think there are many good sides of social media. But my view about social media had become negative after the scandal of Tablo. In my opinion, the civic consciousness of Korean people isn't mature yet. (...) I think that social media itself isn't problematic, but the users' consciousness is matter.*

IP 10: *But I'm not sure that social media is an open place of various opinion. The most active users on social media are young generation and they seem to have a certain*

political stance. In my experience, they are not so tolerant towards other voices. On twitter, I sometimes write a comment contrary to some article. Then other users condemn my comment very aggressively and even insult my character. People with the minority views on social media cannot express their own ideas freely. Some friends of mine have also experienced like me. They suffer social ostracism on social media, because their thoughts are different from others. On that reason, I have used social media like Twitter less and less.

IP 10: *I joined Facebook four years ago and Facebook friends increased more and more. But a problem arouse soon. It was to becoming friend with someone whom I do not know well. But I could not refuse the friend requests of them. It seems that about 90percent of Facebook friends were those whom I do not know well or seldom interact with. I disliked that they could see my private articles and pictures. It seemed that I became naked in the presence of others. I worried that someone could access my private information and make ill use of it. So I left Facebook before long. The privacy issue bothers me, when I use social media.*

This study explored the characteristics of social media users' technical imagination by presenting a typology of users' perception and practice. It was able to figure out the fact that the technical imagination of social media users were various by the extent of users' perception and practice. Social media users engage in social media activity in relation with their perception and evaluation of media. The technical imagination of users is revealed in various types according to the combination of these factors. It ranges from the critical active users who use well the technical imagination to the uncritical passive users who lack the technical imagination as the above typology of users.

5.2 Implication for Communication Balance

5.2.1 Possibility of the Growth of Telematic Users

Above mentioned, the users practice the technical imagination with varying degrees. Evidently, the more social media users practice the technical imagination, the more the potential of social media as dialogical media is realized. The characteristics of social media are not static but changeable. Social media is not simply a media or a device but a network of people. So its characteristics depend on the perception and activities of users. The users' activities and interaction between them form the network of social media. We can imagine the ways forward of social media and communication environment. There can be two probable scenarios. The one is a positive scenario. People's dialogical communication and activity on social media become more vitalized. Along with the development of users' technical imagination, social media and its culture as dialogical media develop enough to counterbalance the discursive media complex. On the contrary, the negative scenario is also probable. According to this scenario, the users' technical imagination does not develop well and the vital activities of users on social media weaken because of the adverse effects of social media. As a result, social media will lose the primary values and become just an information path dominated by discursive media complex. Then the communication imbalance will be more aggravated.

Kim, Shin, Lim, and Lee (2013) state that the social media usage in Korea is at a relatively primary stage, and present two scenarios forward of social media from a typology of Korean social media users. The one, the use of social media is more vitalized and the active users increase. In this condition, social media has great social effects and influences. They suggest that the social media environment, in which the active users can increase, has to be improved for this scenario. The other, the influence of social media would weaken very fast, when a small number of active users lose the motivation and enthusiasm of social media activity.

The potential and the risk for these two scenarios were also found in this study through the interviews of social media users and the user typology. The users', in particular the active users' technical imagination and its practice indicate the potential for the positive scenario. The critical active users have critical awareness of discursive media order and use actively social media with the understanding of its technical and communicative characteristics. The users of this type perceive and evaluate social media as an alternative communication- and information media to mass media. Social media provides them a new space in which they make a meaning and realize possibilities by

networking and interaction with other users. It is not just a virtual space separated form the reality, but this space correlates with the reality and has actual influence on that.

On the other hand, the social media culture found from the statements and practices of the interviewees resembles the characteristics of telematics society. Flusser likens the telematic society to the global brain and society of Homo Ludens. People in telematic society are networked like nervous pathways and nerve cells join together. The networked people generate and transmit information through the telematic network like a brain. This information activity becomes a dialogical social play. Flusser states that the playful activities with technical images on the network connect distracted people and promote the dialogue between them. According Flusser, this phenomenon, that is, the growth of dialogical media and communication has potential to counter and weaken the dominance of discursive media complex and recover the balance of communication environment. The positive evaluation and prospects of social media culture are found in the statements of the interview participants.

IP 02: *The strength of social media is the ripple effect. Today's online buzz seems to be more powerful than broadcast. Furthermore it is global. It took six years until the Macarena Dance became known to Korea. But it took just one month that Psy's "Gangnam Style" became popular all over the world. It could not be possible without social media. Recently Harlem Shake is very popular between youths. It is very interesting that people all over the world can enjoy together with same video.*

IP 08: *It is said that social media made a big role to "Arab Spring". People posted the pictures and videos of the demonstration and let people abroad know the present state, although the government blocked the information channels. It could focus world attention on Arab Spring. I think it is very positive role of social media.*

IP 16: *People can communicate in real-time with social media. Therefore, public opinion is formed easily on social media. And social media can be channels for promoting people taking part in campaign, flash mop, event and demonstration. In this aspect, it is one of strengths of social media to form public opinion.*

This positive possibility is also found in the types of passive users. The passive users who have critical attitude in getting information are different from the traditional passive recipient. They are not active in producing and sharing information on social media, but are active and critical in getting information. They have little confidence in mass media and prefer social media to mass media as information channel. They compare the information of mass media and social media, and hear diverse points of view. This practices promotes users' competence of getting information. In this new information environment, the authority of mass media as gatekeeper that has appealed to audience is weakening more and more. In this aspect, social media as an alternative information platform seems to show the possibility to counterbalance the information environment.

However, there is also opposite side that keeps us from taking simply the optimistic view. It is because there are, on the other side, also a lot of users who have passive attitude in using social media with negative or skeptical view about social media. The users of this type perceive sensitively the negative aspects of social media and also of dialogical communication. Some of them prefer authoritative mass media to social media and some of them just stay in the status of passive user like onlooker. There are also pragmatic users who evaluate the both media neutrally and pragmatically. The pragmatic users are not strong advocates of the value of social media and dialogical communication structure. In addition, the users of this type have a tendency of personal oriented use of media. Their use activities on social media are mostly concentrated on individual and emotional territory. So their evaluation and preference of media is flexible. Their activity on social media can be easily reduced depending on the use environment of social media. In this aspect, the characteristics of this user type are very suggestive. Their perception and practice of media are positive about the point that they can perceive and compare each characteristic of social media and mass media, and use them for their needs and purposes. They have, however, a strong probability to lose easily the motivation and the activeness of participating in information activity and dialogical communication on social media, if they cannot find the advantages of social media use any more, or experience disadvantages more and more. The quantitative studies of the typology of social media users show commonalities that the groups of the passive or pragmatic users are still the majority of social media users, while the

proportion of the active users is still relatively low as seen in the <Table 5.3> (Busemann, 2013, Hutton, & Fosdick, 2011 December, Jeon, 2013, Kim, Shin, Lim, & Lee, 2013, Sorenson, 2014, Ullrich, 2011. 6. 26).

Table 5.3 Types and distribution of social media users

	South Korea	USA	Germany
Active User Group	Intense user (23.4%)	Sparks (3%)	Die Macher (12.1%)
	Experimental user (28.4%)	Mix-n-Minglers (19%)	Die Partizipativen (11.2%)
Passive User Group	Specialized user (10.9%)	Cliquers (6%)	Die Sozialen (19.6%)
	Limited user (37.3%)	Onlookers (16%)	Die passiven Zuschauer (67.7%)
		Newcomers (15%)	
		No Shows (41%)	

In the FGI of this study, the participants stated the risks and problems that could weaken the user's motivation and activeness of participating in information and communication activities on social media such as information distortion, privacy breach, cyber-bullying, commercialization, political suppression, and so on. The potential of social media for the counterbalance to discursive media power will not be realized, if the active and critical users do not increase but rather the passivity of users is intensified.

After all, it reminds us that the consciousness and the competence of users how to use social media are very important. In addition, it is important to figure out which factors promote or weaken the users' motivation and activities. With this understanding, it will be possible to find the way to develop the users' technical imagination and solve the communication imbalance.

5.2.2 Promotion of Users' Competences for Communication Balance

As it is above discussed, the technical imagination of telematic users is the core factor to improve the dialogical communication by using telematic media and to solve the communication imbalance. How can we develop the users' technical imagination? Flusser did not suggest the sophisticated theoretical framework or practical methods. So it is needed to elaborate the Flusser's concept and discourse of the technical imagination and put it into practice. For this, it would be useful to connect the concept the technical imagination with other theoretical or practical works.

Bröckling (2013) did theoretical work to make a more comprehensive concept framework by crossing the concept "technical imagination" with the other concepts of competence developed in the field of media education. Through this work, he identifies the ideal type of telematic users as the "kommunikologisch handlungsfähiger Subjekte" that have the competence.

Eine kommunikologische und am Dialogisieren orientierte Kompetenz muss im Bezug zum Wissen und den Bedürfnissen der handelnden Subjektes konzeptualisiert sein- als sozio- und medienkulturelle Kompetenz und unter Berücksichtigung medientechnischer Fertigkeiten. Medienkompetenz, kommunikative, dialogische oder soziale Kompetenz sind dann Spezialfälle einer allgemeinen Kompetenz der Selbstreflexion und mediatisierten Weltaneignung. Sie bedeuten das Bewusstsein der Konstruktion von Wirklichkeiten und der Mediatisierung der Weltbezüge (Bröckling, 2013, 227).

According to Bröckling, the competence, "sozio- und medienkulturellen Handlungs-fähigkeit" consists of four dimensions like following:

- *Medienwissen als Orientierungs-, Funktions- und Strukturwissen*, mit dem sich Menschen in komplexen Medienkulturwelten orientieren

- *Ethisch-kritische Reflexivität*, mit der Menschen die Vielfalt von Information, Normen und Werten ebenso bewerten, wie Unterhaltung

- *Handlungsfähigkeiten und –fertigkeiten*, die Ziele und Zwecke der Medienentwicklung und den Einsatz von Medientechnik mitzugestalten

- *Soziale und kreative Interaktion*, um die Kompetenz zur Kommunikation als symbolischem Austauschhandeln zum Zwecke der Gestaltung von Gemeinschaft zu erkennen und Handeln danach auszurichten (Bröckling, 2013, 234).

With this competence, "kommunikologisch handlungsfähiger Subjekte", the ideal telematic users are able to integrate the dialogical and discursive media, and use them active and with reflective for handling information, communicating with others, making meaning, realizing the possibility and constructing the reality.

Das Subjekt zwischen TV-Diskurs und Netz-Dialog ist sozio- und medienkulturell handlungsfähig, wenn dieses sich der sozialen und medialen Konstruiertheit seines Selbst und seiner Wirklichkeiten bewusst wird. Das Subjekt ist dann handlungsfähig, wenn es zudem die Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten erlernt hat, in Medienaneignung und sozialer Interaktion Wirklichkeiten auszuhandeln sowie diskursive und dialogische Medientechniken und Kommunikationsstrukuren sinnvoll in den Prozess zu integrieren. (Bröckling, 2013, 247)

On the other hand, this competence is not the innate ability, but the conscious decision and negotiation in/with media. Therefore, the users have to learn and acquire the competence. Users could develop the competence naturally to some degree in process of using media. However, it will be more efficient, if some learning program is provided for users. The recent studies about social media users show that the adolescent user called "Generation Net" are very heavy users of social media, but their social media activities are in real characterized by the passive use. Their activities on social media are focused on the personal contact, chat or play with friends, while they hardly participate in the active information activities such as information producing and sharing (Busemann, 2013, Eimeren & Frees, 2012, Kim, et al, 2013, Paus-Hasebrink & Hasebrink, 2011). It implies that the competence for active user has to be learned and acquired. In this respect, Bröckling emphasizes the necessity of media education/literac-

y for it.

Wir dürfen uns der Kommunikation in/mit diskursiven und dialogischen Medien nicht entziehen, sondern müssen uns ihrer kreativen und politischen Möglichkeiten und Bedeutungen annehmen. Medienbildung muss vermitteln, wie handlungsfähige Subjekte Medienapparate und - techniken aktive nach eigenen Interessen im Bewusstsein des eigenen Handelns sinnvoll aneignen, reflektieren und strukturieren. Wir müssen lernen, uns die Medienangebote der Massenmedien in ethisch-kritischer Reflexion bewusst zu machen, damit die Spaltung der Gesellschaft in Elite und Masse, Programmierende und Programmierte nicht vorangetrieben wird (Bröckling, 2013, 245).

Bröckling states that purpose of the media literacy is to promote the people's competence to attain the creative and political possibility and meaning of the both dialogical and discursive media. It aims also to reduce the social disparity between elite and mass. So it is necessary to promote the competence of users and enlarge the active and critical users. Considering the above-mentioned significance, it seems urgent to develop media literacy appropriate for new media environment.

There are some significant efforts made to develop the new concept and program of media literacy. The representative projects are The GoodPlay Project (Harvard Graduate School of Education) and Project New Media Literacies (USC Annenberg School for Communications and Journalism). The two project groups have co-developed a casebook "The Our Space" in 2011 to provide the program and resources for media literacy to the high school students. It aims to foster ethical thinking, and conduct, among young people when they exercise their new media skills. For this aim, the core content of the both projects is integrated into this program: The five competence themes of The GoodPlay Project and eleven skills for participatory online engagement of Project New Media Literacies (The GoodPlay Project & Project New Media Literacies, 2011, 1).

The GoodPlay Project is a study of how young people think about ethical issues in online space. It focuses on the ways young people think about and manage moral and ethical issues as they interact with the new media, including online social networks, blogs, games, and content sharing sites. In the name of the project, the "good play" is

defined as „*online conduct that is both meaningful and engaging to the participant and responsible to others in the community and society in which it is carried out*" (James, et al., 2009, 15). In this regard, the project has a core question, what kinds of competence are necessary for a responsible-minded usage in a new media environment. This question is dealt with the core themes of the project as following: participation, identity, privacy, credibility, and ownership and authorship (The GoodPlay Project & Project New Media Literacies, 2011, 3~5).

- Participation

  - It is defined as the ways in which people conduct themselves online

  - It aims to provide young people with positive opportunities to assume new roles, learn new skills, and collaborate with others to address urgent social problems. At the same time, opportunities to participate in harmful or counterproductive ways abound, such as through hate speech, griefing, trolling, cyberbullying, and other forms of misconduct that can harm both individuals and whole communities

  - Key questions
    - Where can (online) communities rapidly form, and just as rapidly disintegrate?
    - How should norms of behavior be established, maintained, and respected?
    - What are your roles and responsibilities in the online communities in which you participate?
    - How can a person's conduct in an online community affect other participants and the community as a whole?

- Identity

  - The Internet provides new contexts for young people to express, explore, and develop their identities. They can use photos, interests and "favorites" lists, and other content to play up- or hide- different aspects of their identities

- Online self-expressions and forms of "identity play" can also affect others in various ways. Youth who celebrate gay, lesbian, or other kinds of identities through blogs and/or profiles may uplift others who feel marginalized and unable to express themselves. On the other hand, some forms of online identity exploration can be deceptive and can undermine relationships

- Key questions
  - How do different forms of self-expression online affect others?
  - What are the potential benefits and harms to others?
  - When does "identity play" cross the line and become identity deception?

o Privacy

- Traditional notions of privacy are being challenged by new media that offer rich opportunities to network, communicate, and share information with vast audience. By creating social network profiles and sharing at least some personal information online, young people can reach out to others, share their ideas and experiences, and form support networks around various struggles

- At the same time, disclosing too much online can be harmful, given that information can persist indefinitely and can be shared with unintended audience. Deception intended to protect one's privacy can also have unintended negative effects on relationships with others

- Key questions
  - What are the boundaries of sharing information about yourself and others online?
  - What are the potential benefits of being able to share information online?
  - What are the potential harms to yourself and to others?
  - In what circumstances can concealment of personal information- and anonymity- be beneficial vs. harmful?

o Credibility

- It refers to the trustworthiness of people- especially their credentials, skills, and motivations- and of information. The volume of information available online creates both opportunities and risks- for learning, for making informed choices, and for connecting with other people

- On the opportunities side, anyone can contribute information to knowledge communities like Wikipedia. On the risks side, it is relatively easy to post misinformation or to misrepresent one's credentials and expertise in online forums, and risk doing harm to people who turn to such forums for advice

- Certain properties of the Internet make it difficult to assess whether information can be trusted- including the potential for anonymity in many online spaces; the asynchronous nature of communication; and the absence of cues (such as tone and facial expression) that help us assess what people say offline

- Key questions
  - What are the benefits and risks associated with the volume of information available online?
  - How do you know if you can trust the sources of online information?
  - How do you present a credible self-online?
  - What are your responsibilities when posting information about yourself, about other people, or information in different online spaces?
  - How can you assess the credibility of other people based on their online profiles, blogs, and other content about them?
  - What are your ethical responsibilities when you are an information seeker?

o Authorship and Ownership

- Traditional notions of authorship and ownership are being rethought in response to collective authorship on sites like Wikipedia, by the capacity to distribute amateur and professional videos to mass audience through sites like YouTube, and by the technologies that allow remixing of content. Both promises and risks are apparent

- New media afford unprecedented access to information, which may inspire new forms of learning; they also afford budding authors and other creators of new avenues to participate in creative life. On the other hand, the Internet offers opportunities to abuse the free flow of information and content through illegal downloading, plagiarism, and failure to cite sources properly or consider the intentions of original creators and owners of online content

- Key questions
  - How has the act of creation been altered by new media?
  - What does it mean to be an author or a creator today?
  - What is the difference between being "inspired by" someone else's work and plagiarism?
  - How can you remix, or otherwise "appropriate" the work of others in a responsible, ethical way?
  - How do legal aspects of ownership, such as copyright, public domain, fair use and creative commons limit or enable some forms of appropriation?

Project New Media Literacies (Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton & Robison, 2009) is a project focused on promoting the social skills and cultural competencies required to meaningfully engage with participatory culture. In this project, Jenkins, the project director engages with traditional media literacy frameworks. In addition to this, he also emphasizes that the focus of media literacy has to shift from individual competence for media usage to social competence for community involvement, networking and collaboration, the feature of social media culture. He suggests eleven skills of participatory online engagement including play, performance, simulation, multitasking, networking, negotiation and so on.

The new literacies almost all involve social skills developed through collaboration and networking. These skills build on the foundation of traditional literacy, research skills, technical skills, and critical-analysis skills taught in the classroom (Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton, and Robison, 2009, 29).

The new skills of the new media literacies (Jenkins, et al., 2009, 105~106):

- Play: The capacity to experiment with the surroundings as a form of problem solving
- Performance: The ability to adopt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery
- Simulation: The ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-world processes
- Appropriation: The ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content
- Multitasking: The ability to scan the environment and shift focus onto salient details
- Distributed cognition: The ability to interact meaningfully with tools that expand mental capacities
- Collective intelligence: The ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal
- Judgment: The ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources
- Trans-media navigation: The ability to follow the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities
- Networking: The ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information
- Negotiation: The ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative norms

Rheingold who has advocated the social and cultural possibilities of digital technology like the Internet and mobile media emphasizes the new media literacy in the social media era. According to Rheingold, social media enables people to socialize, organize, learn, play, and engage in commerce. The part that makes social media social is technical skills that need to be exercised in cooperation: encoding, decoding, and community. He argues that for doing this, we must move beyond skills and technologies and explore also the social media literacies of attention, participation, cooperation, network awareness, and critical consumption. He emphasizes that these literacies are interconnected, so it is important to be able to put all of these literacies together into a way of being in digital culture (Rheingold, 2010, 16~24).

Livevrouw (2012) suggests the "network literacy" is supplementing the existing concepts and discourses of media literacy in the new media environment. She argues that network literacies and pedagogies that prepare individuals to be full and effective participants in society, politics, and culture must be developed and implemented. The core competences of network literacy are like that:

- Competence to evaluate information sources and content

  The judgment and evaluation in the network context may not simply be a matter of comparing new or untested information against established standards or truth claims. The ways that information is generated and organized are fundamentally ontological, and network-literate individuals should be ready to question that ontology as well as their own epistemic values about how useful or valid information and knowledge are gained and understood

- Competence of network imaginary

  It is defined as the ability to imagine and visualize networks of social and technical relations and links, including the extension, possible breakdown, and consequences of these relations. The network imaginary shapes people's perceptions of the range of action open to them, in material/physical and virtual/mediated places alike. Cultivating this sense of situatedness and options for action, as well as the skills for mapping and analyzing networks, might be expected to be a fundamental part of any network or new media pedagogy

- Competence of navigation and search (interpersonal, informational, and political)
  It has not usually been counted as major aspects of communicative competence. But this ability is one of the primary skills of today's technology and culture

- Competence of visualization
  It is the ability to conceptualize and render/depict complex or abstract concepts in creative ways in a variety of formats and media. This ability is especially valuable as communication technologies become less and less tied to text. It is a powerful way to think about making the invisible visible in the digital media age

The various theoretical and practical works to promote users' competence in new media environment represented by social media are discussed. These works have difference in the terms and the details, but they share common ground on the purpose and the core principle. It is to support people to develop the competence urgently needed in the new media environment. The various studies and projects have same opinion that the competence has to be learned and trained. It enables users to be the active and competent users who evaluate critically and ethically the information, activities, possibilities and risks on the network. It promotes also users to participate actively in the social media activities and negotiate their identities and social intercourse with others. Through these activities, users can make meanings and realize possibilities. The growth of the active and competent users is essential to the vitalization of dialogical communication culture and the solving the communication imbalance. This is the portrait of the telematic users and telematic society that Flusser has imagined and described.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Study

6.1 Conclusion

This study aims to explore the possibility of communication balance between the discursive communication media and dialogical communication media in today's media environment with Flusser's communication theory. To be more concrete, this study regards social media as a representative dialogical communication media that has the potential to counterbalance the dominance of mass media, which represents the discursive communication media. For this purpose, this study grasps the emergence, development and socio-cultural impacts of social media through a literature review. In addition, this study empirically examines how social media users perceive and use social media in comparison to the mass media. For research method, this study has conducted focus group interviews of Korean social media users with three main research questions as follows.

1. How do users perceive and evaluate the characteristics of social media?
2. How do users practice and experience the technical imagination in social media use?
3. What are the social- and cultural implications of the social media users' perception and use activity?

The various characteristics of social media users' perception and practice are categorized by degree of technical imagination. In addition, internal and external factors that promoted or weakened users' technical imagination are also explored. The research on the users' perception and use activities made us understand that the technological potentials of social media could be realized depending on users' perception and competences in using the media, but also the social and cultural contexts in which users are situated. The findings on the three research questions are described in the following.

First. How do users perceive and evaluate the characteristics of social media?

The interviewees perceived the dialogical communication structure as the distinct

feature of social media that was different from mass media. They perceived that social media as something, through which people could interchange ideas and information, communicate, play, and build relationships with others, while viewing the mass media as media for one-way information distribution. In other words, the interviewees perceived that social media had dialogical communication structure (two-way communication) and mass media had discursive communication structure (one-way communication). There was little difference of the perception between interviewees.

The interviewees pointed out that this dialogical communication structure of social media led to form unique characteristics of motives and the mode of information production, distribution and use on social media. One of the characteristics pointed out by the interviewees is the matter of the subject of information. There is no specific subject of information on social media, while there is the subject of information or content in the case of mass media. In other words, a sharp line of distinction existed between information producer and audience in the age of mass media, but the line is blurring as social media provides an opened platform where anyone can produce and distribute information, and also participate in the collaborative information activities. The interviewees also perceived the ambiguous territories emerged between mass media and social media such as podcast as the convergence of media becomes active. The users' perception of the characteristics of social media and mass media involved the evaluation of both media and the content of them.

The interviewees talked about the personal evaluation of mass media and social media based on their use experiences of both media for information activity. The analysis of the interview results revealed five criteria of respondents' evaluation of media and content. The five evaluation criteria are credibility, diversity, expertise, usefulness, and ripple effect. The interviewees showed differences of viewpoint on the evaluation of social media and mass media at each criterion. The majority of the interviewees evaluated social media more positive than mass media at all criteria or evaluated differently depending on the criteria. The interviewees who preferred mass media to social media at all criteria were the minority. Overall, the characteristic of social media that anyone can produce and distribute information had a crucial role in the evaluation of the interviewees on the media at all criteria. The majority of the interviewees had opinion that this feature of social media facilitates the diversity of

information on social media, and this enables people to use information with subjectivity: getting, comparing, and judging of a variety of information. Based on this awareness, the majority of the respondents thought that the information on social media was more credible, diverse, expertise, useful, and had greater ripple effect than mass media. On the other hand, this group of interviewees tended to be critical about mass media. According to their opinions, mass media that has monopolized the information production and distribution has shown serious problems such as information manipulation, collusion with political- and economic power, and the weakness in credibility, diversity, expertise, usefulness, and ripple effect.

On the contrary, the respondents who evaluated mass media more positive than social media regarded the richness and variety of information on social media negative in the aspect of credibility, diversity, expertise, usefulness, and ripple effect. According to them, the information on social media has a various information sources and most of them are not verified, so it is hard to ensure the quality of information such as credibility, expertise, and usefulness. They also pointed out that adverse effects of social media were increasing such as cyber bulling, privacy breach, copyright infringement and distribution of controversial content, so social media was losing the strength as an information channel. These matters make the impression of social media negative and weaken a motive for usage and activity on social media. In this reason, they tended to prefer mass media as a verified and authoritative information channel. Some of the interviewees who preferred social media to mass media agreed also to this opinion.

Most of the interviewees negatively evaluated the media and information context, that is, the media environment of South Korea. They stated that freedom of information in South Korea was severely restricted by political and economic power. According to their view, it is a very serious problem that mass media, especially the broadcast, is subordinated to the power and it manipulates the public through the distortion of information. On the contrary, the interviewees evaluated that social media played an important role as an alternative information channel in South Korea. They stated that they could get information on social media that they could not get from TV news or other mainstream media. So they perceived the social media as an alternative information channel that is trustworthy. On the other hand, some interviewees argued that the social context restricted and weakened the role and strength of social media.

They had concern that the freedom of information was shrinking on social media, because the political power tried to manipulate the public opinion on social media and restricted the citizen's freedom for expression by accusing the users who criticized the government on social media platforms. The interviewees said that these repressive measures compelled people to engage in self-censorship and this shrinking of users' expression and activity could result in the weakening of the possibility and potential of social media.

Second. How do users practice and experience the technical imagination in social media use?

The interviews revealed that social media use of the interviewees was embedded in their daily life. They tended to plug into social media services with mobile devices constantly. The interview participants were using social media as a medium for human relationship and communication with others. SNS (Social Network Services) such as Facebook are especially preferred for this purpose. The users document their own lives, share articles with friends, write comments, recommend useful content, and communicate with other users on their social media. It seems that previous ways for human communication are replaced by the communication through social media.

The interviewees showed various degrees of usage and modes. Some users widely used various social media services, while other users' use of social media was limited to one or two social media services. Overall, Facebook and YouTube were the most popular social media services used by the interviewees. However, some interviewees preferred online community, blog or Wikipedia to Facebook and YouTube with their own reason such as the privacy issues, preference of the more specialized online community, usefulness, and shared value.

The usage modes of users range from passive participative use to active use. The interviewees were categorized into three types according to their usage mode of social media: productive user, communicative user and passive participative user.

The productive users enjoyed producing and sharing their own content and also enjoyed to communicate and intercourse with people on social media. They were familiar with the use of social media and took advantage of the feature of social media

for a range of purposes such as just fun, play, career, or political participation. In addition, the users of this type participated in collaborative projects on social media such as Wikipedia. They thought that the dialogical feature of social media facilitated the communication and collaborative work between users and they could do meaningful and useful projects with others with making use of this feature. The users of this group said that through the social media activities, they could make new meanings and possibilities that they could not have in reality. The communicative users tended to make use of social media mainly for social networking, communication, and getting information, but they did not produce and post actively their own information on social media. The users of this group enjoyed writing comments to others' posting, spreading content, and communicating with others on social media. The passive participative users infrequently used social media mainly just for getting information or observing as onlooker the others' lives and opinions posted on social media. They hardly participate in the information production such as posting and sharing their own content on social media.

The diversity in the degrees of usage and modes of social media depending on the interviewees implies that the possibility of dialogical communication inherent in the telematic technology, as Flusser stated, can be realized, when users have intention and competence to use it correctly. The interviewees also asserted that people have to develop the competence to accept information critically, produce information actively and respect the other's opinion and privacy. They thought these were necessary for the development of social media and its media culture.

Third. What are the social- and cultural implications of the social media users' perception and use activity?

Social media is in the spotlight as the potential media of counterbalancing to the dominance of discursive media complex. The potentiality of social media, however, will not be realized without the intention and competence of the users to use social media dialogically, that is, the technical imagination with the term of Flusser. In this study, the technical imagination is redefined as the user's competence that consists of three dimensions: media perception, media evaluation and media practice. It was assumed

that the technical imagination of social media users would be grasped in various characteristics depending on the combination of the three components. With this assumption, I tried to type the characteristics of the users' technical imagination intercrossing the components of users' technical imagination. Furthermore, this typology of social media user was expected to help us figure out which factors promote or impede the users' technical imagination.

The social media users were grouped with five types: critical active user (productive and communicative use - positive evaluation to social media), pragmatic user (productive and communicative use - neutral evaluation to media), critical information seeker (passive participative use - positive evaluation to social media), skeptical user (passive participative use - neutral evaluation to media), and conservative user (passive participative use - positive evaluation to mass media). It shows that social media users have varying degrees of the technical imagination. The users of the types of critical active user possess a high level of the technical imagination. They can get information with a critical attitude and participate actively in the meaningful information activities by using social media. The characteristics of these users resemble the ideal users of the telematic society whom Flusser had described. These users are a driving force of forming the social media culture and enabling the new information- and media system. On the contrary, the users of skeptical user type or conservative user type use little technical imagination in their media use. They do not take advantage of social media as dialogical communication media, because of various reasons such as their personal preference of authoritative mass media and some risks of using social media. In this regard, a further concern is raised how the component ratio between the active users and passive participative users is. In this study, an additional research about this matter wasn't conducted. In other quantitative studies of the typology of social media users, the results also showed that the groups of the passive participative users are still the majority of social media users, while the proportion of the active users is still relatively low (Busemann, 2013, Hutton, & Fosdick, 2011 December, Jeon, 2013, Kim, Shin, Lim, & Lee, 2013, Sorenson, 2014, Ullrich, 2011. 6. 26).

It implies that social media should be, and can be more developed and vitalized through the growth of active users. The roles of social media users are crucial for the development of social media, because social media is an agglomeration of social media

users and their activity. It can be said that the more social media users practice the technical imagination, the more the potential of social media as dialogical media is realized. Social media and its culture will develop enough to counterbalance the discursive media complex, if the users who are competent to use the technical imagination more grow. This is the scenario that Flusser foresaw with the discourse of telematic society. The opposite direction is also probable: the users' technical imagination does not develop well, so the potentials of social as dialogical communication media weaken. In this case, the imbalance of communication will not be solved and even intensify. This negative probability is more being realized when we consider the recent symptoms such as the increase of adverse effects of social media, e.g. information distortion, privacy breach, cyber-bullying, commercialization, or the intensification of surveillance and suppression on the user's activities on social media by political power. This circumstance might weaken the user's motivation and activeness of information activity on social media. In this regards, the future of our society is open either to the telematic society in which the discursive and dialogical communication are balanced or to the totalitarianism dominated by the discursive media complex as Flusser stated. It implies that it is urgent as well as important to develop the users' telematic imagination, that is, the consciousness and the competence of users to use social media correctly.

In this study, some latest theoretical discussions and projects on the promotion of users' competence in new media environment were reviewed: Bröckling's "kommunikologisch handlungsfähiger Subjekte", Rheingold's "digital literacy", Livevrouw's "network literacy", and the projects, "The GoodPlay Project" (Harvard Graduate School of Education) and "Project New Media Literacies" (USC Annenberg School for Communications and Journalism). These projects and theoretical works share the same view that the users need to learn and train the competence to critically and ethically evaluate the information, activities, possibilities and risks on the network. It also promotes users to participate actively in the social media activities and negotiate their identities and social intercourse with others. Users can make meanings and realize possibilities through the competent activities on social media. Furthermore, the growth of the active and competent users is essential to vitalize of dialogical communication culture and to solve the communication imbalance. This is the portrait of telematic users

and telematic society that Flusser has imagined and described.

6.2 Recommendations

There remain some limitations along with the fruition of research. First, this study tried to grasp the current state of media environment with the light of the Flusser's communication theory. I think it is a meaningful study to apply the Flusser's prospects of telematic society to the contemporary media landscape. His discourse provides us some insights to take a close look at it and raises significant issues to be considered and solved. However, there would be problematic aspects in this work despite of the good points. Flusser's communication theory is characterized by a philosophic discourse with a macroscopic and diachronic level. Therefore, it was not easy to apply Flusser's theoretical concept and frame to the empirical communication study of a microscopic and synchronic level, e.g. the concept "technical imagination". It also seems to be short of the methodological sophistication because of the lack of existing studies and research methodologies in the same line with this study. It awaits further refinement in the theoretical and methodological aspect for the connecting Flusser's theoretical concept and frame with the field of contemporary communication and media study in the light of further research.

Second, this study examined the user's perception and use behavior through the focus group interview, the qualitative methodology. The qualitative study like this seems to have some significance and limitation as the primary study for the further empirical studies. In particular, this study chose the case of Korean social media users with consideration of the specific media context of South Korea. So it is hard to say that the interview participants and the interview results represent the whole. Therefore, more qualitative and quantitative analyses should be done with consideration of users' demographic data, socio-cultural capital, and living conditions: also, there should be studies that examine the users' perception and experience, more in-depth and specifically, using the large-sample method or the participant observation method. In addition, the result of this study also needs to be discussed in comparison with the research conducted in other countries with other social and media context.

Third, this study has set a dichotomy between mass media and social media by applying Flusser's theoretical frame of the dichotomy between the discursive communication structure and dialogical communication structure. It was for the convenience of the study, but still had a limitation to grasp not only the diversity of the social media platforms and the usage of them, but also the tendency of media convergence. Social media is being divided into more specific specialties and continues to change fast, so it becomes hard to grasp various types of social media and the use patterns only with a single concept or definition. On the other hand, mass media is also changing in digital media environment. The feature of dialogical communication is being embedded in broadcasts or newspaper more and more. It brings changes in the ways of production, distribution, and receipt. In addition, the convergence of social media and mass media is also emerging. Therefore, further detailed approaches for the study of the diversity and change in the media environment are needed.

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Appendix

Focus Group Interview Questions

- **Questions on the demographic information and media use in daily life**

1. What is your gender? ① male ( ) ② female ( )

2. What is your age? ( ) years old

3. What kind of media devices do you possess? (You can choose more than one)

TV, PC, Internet network, Cellphone, Smartphone, Tablet PC, MP3 player Others: ( )

4. What is your average daily media use?

(1) I watch TV every day for an average of

① less than 30 minutes

② 30 minutes -1 hour

③ 1-2 hours

④ 2-3 hours

⑤ more than 3 hours

(2) I use the Internet every day for an average of

① less than 30 minutes

② 30 minutes -1 hour

③ 1-2 hours

④ 2-3 hours

⑤ more than 3 hours

(3) I use social media every day for an average of

① less than 30 minutes

② 30 minutes -1 hour

③ 1-2 hours

④ 2-3 hours

⑤ more than 3 hours

5. What is your favorite online activity when you are on the Internet?
(You can choose more than one)

Information search, Communication (email, messenger), Watching video, Online shopping, Community activity, SNS, Blogging, Learning The rest ( )

6. What kind of information do you prefer to have while you are on the Internet?
(You can choose more than one)

News, Knowledge, Education, Entertainment, Career, Hobby The rest ( )

7. Which social media service do you prefer to use? (You can choose more than one)

○ SNS (social networking services)

Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Cyworld, Kakaostory, Hi5, MySpace, LinkedIn The rest ( )

○ Content communities

Video : YouTube, Vimeo, Dailymotion, Metacafe The rest ( ) Picture : Flicker, Instagram, Pinterest, Picasa The rest ( )

○ Collaborative projects

Wikipedia, Wikimedia, Wikispaces, Wikinews The rest ( )

○ Blogs

The blog theme :

○ Online communities

The community theme:

9. How do you use social media?

⊖ I run professional blogs, podcasts, online communities, etc.

⊜ I upload my own content (article, picture, video, etc.) on social media platforms more than once a month.

⊛ I upload my own content (article, picture, video, etc.) on social media platforms less than once a month, or share other's content on social media or write comments on them more than five times a month.

④ I seldom participate in the social media activities such as uploading or sharing content and writing comments, but use information and content on social media.

- **Group Interview questions**

1. What is your favorite social media service?
   Can you describe how you use them in your daily life?
   (when, where, what kind of content, with which devices, why)

2. Have you ever uploaded and shared your own content on social media? Or have you ever communicated with other users (chat, writing comments, recommending, pushing "Like" button, etc.) on social media?

   What do these activities mean in your lives, if the answer is yes?
   What is the reason for that, if the answer is no?

3. What do you think of the characteristics social media have in terms of the information on social media and the way people use information on social media?
   Are there some similarities and differences in comparison with mass media (TV, radio, newspaper, etc.)?

4. What do you think of the media and information environment in South Korea in terms of freedom of information both online and offline?

5. What are the factors that promote or weaken the usage motivation of social media? Have you felt or experienced them in your social media use?

Abstract

This study aims to explore the feasibility of communication balance in the technological and cultural development of social media. It focuses on the social media user's perception and activities that play significant roles in making communication balance feasible. In particular, this paper studies how users use social media in their daily life and how they perceive social media in terms of the potentials and limitations. Furthermore, implications of communication balance are presented. In this respect, this study posed following three core questions:

Question 1. How do users perceive and evaluate the characteristics of social media?
Question 2. How do users practice the technical imagination during social media use?
Question 3. What are social and cultural implications of users' perception of social media and their activities?

To examine these research questions, this study conducts a literature review and the qualitative interview research of the social media users. First, Flusser's communication theory and other theoretical discourses on communication balance are introduced. It moves on to discuss Flusser's analysis of the crisis of modern media systems and human communication, which attributes such crisis to communication imbalance. Furthermore, it deals with Flusser's argument of the telematic society that seeks ways to resolve the problem of communication imbalance through the development of telematic technology.

Second, this study takes a look at the current status of telematic technology and the telematic society. More concretely, it explains the emergence, development, and socio-cultural impacts of social media as an example of the current technological condition for the telematic society. Along with the bright sides of the current state, existing problems, which could hinder the development of the telematic society, are discussed as well. Third, the qualitative research interview conducted for this study is presented in the next section. The focus group interviews reveal that users practice various degrees of technical imagination in their perception of social media as well as their social media activities. In addition, it is argued that the technological characteristics potentially

inherent in social media can be realized in different forms depending on users' technical imagination. Findings and results of this research are outlined below.

First, the interviewees perceived that social media had a dialogical communication structure and it was a representative feature that makes social media distinct from mass media. They also pointed out that this feature formed the unique characteristics of motives and patterns of use on social media that empower ordinary users. Furthermore, their perception of social media played a crucial role in their positive evaluation of social media. A majority of the interviewees evaluated social media more positively than mass media across all evaluation criteria: credibility, diversity, expertise, usefulness, and ripple effects. They responded that social media played an important role in providing an alternative information channel in South Korea where freedom of information was severely restricted by political and economic power and mass media. In Korea, especially broadcasting companies were subordinated to power and they served to manipulate the public through the distortion of information. On the other hand, the interviewees concerned that adverse effects of social media such as cyber bulling, privacy breach, copyright infringement and distribution of controversial content were increasing, posting serious threats on the strength of social media and users' motives and activities.

Second, the interviewees revealed that their use of social media was embedded in their daily life. They were using social media as a medium of human relationships and communication with others such as by documenting their own lives, sharing articles with friends, writing comments, recommending useful content, and participating in common projects with other users. On the other hand, various degrees of usage and modes of users were shown in the interviews. The interviewees were categorized into three types according to their use of social media: productive user, communicative user and passive participative user. The diversity in degrees of usage and modes of social media found in interviewees implies that Flusser's argument on the potential of dialogical communications that are inherent in telematic technology can be realized when users have intentions and competences.

Third, this study categorized the characteristics of users' technical imagination intercrossing the components of users' technical imagination: users' perception and activities. The social media users were divided into five different types: 1) critical active

users, 2) pragmatic users, 3) critical information seekers, 4) skeptical users, and 5) conservative users. It showed that social media users had various degrees of technical imagination. The users who possessed a higher level of technical imagination actively responded to the information environment by using the potential of social media. On the contrary, people who had little technical imagination could not utilize social media features and therefore showed passive attitudes towards information activities. According to them, negative experiences relating to social media such as cyber bulling, privacy breach, copyright infringement, distribution of controversial content, or political suppression played a role in forming their passive attitudes. This results show that users' perception and competences are very important in realizing the possibility given from the technological development.

In sum, this study argues that the development of social media provides us the possibility for the growth of dialogical communication to counterbalance the dominance of the discursive media complex. However, there is still too much left towards realization of the ideal. It seems urgent to develop users' technical imagination for the development of social media especially when the results of this study are considered. The research on the social media users' perception and activities has shown that the potential of social media can be fully realized by facilitating users' technical imagination. At the same time, the need to respond proactively to adverse effects should be underlined to prevent negative consequences such as weakening of users' motives and activities. The two ways are awaiting us for our choice: either to the telematic society in which the discursive and dialogical communication are balanced, or to the totalitarian society dominated by the discursive media complex. The success or failure of the path we take depends on efforts to develop active social media users with technical imagination.

Versicherung

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit ohne unzulässige Hilfe Dritter und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe; die aus fremden Quellen direkt oder indirekt übernommenen Gedanken sind als solche kenntlich gemacht.

Bei der Auswahl und Auswertung des Materials sowie bei der Herstellung des Manuskripts habe ich Unterstützungsleistungen von folgenden Personen erhalten:

- Choi, InHye.

Weitere Personen waren an der geistigen Herstellung der Arbeit nicht beteiligt. Insbesondere habe ich nicht die Hilfe eines Promotionsberaters in Anspruch genommen. Dritte haben von mir weder unmittelbar noch mittelbar geldwerte Leistungen für Arbeiten erhalten, die im Zusammenhang mit dem Inhalt der vorgelegten Dissertation stehen. Die Arbeit wurde bisher weder im In- noch im Ausland in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form einer anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegt und ist auch noch nicht veröffentlicht worden.

Leipzig, 07.10. 2014

JungTaeg Oah