

ATTRACTED TO THE MEDIUM: AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL BEHAVIORS,
ADVERTISING, AND YOUTH CULTURE IN THE EMERGING MOBILE ERA

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This thesis is a reception study that examines potential reasons why the adolescent to college aged demographic of youth culture is embracing communicative and informational mobility. The project attests that the move to mobility is motivated by two major factors, the attraction of being an early adopter of technology and the way social behaviors are made attractive in mobile marketing. Chapter 1 explores the importance of these social behaviors, as they are very much intertwined and contribute to how youth acclimate into society. Chapter 2 demonstrates that creating social distinction and cultural capital is linked to being an early adopter of technology. The remaining portion of the document examines recent mobile advertisements and why youth would be attracted to the aesthetic and thematic elements contained in the advertisements. Chapter 3 examines how Blackberry utilizes the behavior of creating and expressing identity in their advertisements. Chapter 4 focuses on how Apple has worked to create a community centered around their brand. Finally, Chapter 5 looks at how Google/Android has highlighted the acquisition, sharing, and utilization of content through the phenomenon of applications. With this project, I hope to illustrate the rationale why youth would be attracted to communicative and informational mobility.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With technological developments constantly emerging, it is imperative to understand how these innovations influence the social environments in which they are introduced—particularly because these advancements in technology, in conjunction with attitudes and desires, contribute to how individuals in society engage and practice social norms. Marshall McLuhan’s popular phrase “the medium is the message” definitely applies when one examines mobile media devices in contemporary youth culture. This iconic phrase, coined by McLuhan in the book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, refers to the form in which information is received based on the medium. For instance, with a twenty-first century mobile device, the technology is rooted in the exchange of information, meaning that the abilities of a mobile device hold more significance than the content being transferred. Over time, as technology helps influence how we communicate, understanding such technology and its relationship to social behaviors is significant because it allows us to better comprehend the relationship between technology and the populace who utilizes it.

For example, the exchange of information and methods of communication greatly differ when comparing the telegraph, telephone, radio, television and digital technologies utilized in the twenty-first century. In the digital era, with society’s increased reliance on information technologies, devices such as the computer have evolved into the portable laptop. However, due to societies desire to integrate their communicative devices, laptops have merged with cellular telephones, forming

smartphones. The significant fact here is that technological developments have increased the mobile device's functionality and have made information and communication mobile. This mobility is attractive to youth culture, specifically the adolescent to college aged demographic, for several reasons. My research shows that explicit reasons youth are attracted to mobility is because of the potential virtue of being an early adopter capable of vehicular, communal, and informational utility.

This project aims to explore youth culture's transition to communicational and informational mobility. To demonstrate this, the project analyzed young people's attraction to mobility by focusing on the social distinction associated with being an early adopter of technology, accessing identity arenas, creating communal relationships, and the accessing, utilizing, and spreading of content. The second chapter sets the stage for this dynamic by examining the significance of these four social behaviors with regards to young people in the digital era. The first part of the chapter demonstrates the ways in which cultural capital creates social distinction by being an early adopter of technology. The second part details the importance of creating an identity, and how identity works in a digital environment, particularly through visuals, as visuals are perhaps the most effective manner in which youth portray their identity in the digital world. The third portion of the chapter discusses the importance of social communities due to the way in which they permit individuals to interact, learn from one another, and come together to accomplish collective goals. Lastly, accessing content in the digital environment is explored, as this practice is an indispensable behavior in advancing within cultural spheres.

The third chapter focuses specifically on social distinction. In the chapter, I assert that one of the primary reasons youth are attracted to mobility is the social distinction awarded when one is early adopter of desired technology. In order to illustrate this, I examined numerous online communities, places where I have found people speaking about their relationship to their device and why it is an important part of their existence with regards to social distinction. Additionally, I looked at secondary research that demonstrates the social distinction and cultural capital associated with being an early adopter.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters explore how identity, community, and using content are displayed through current mobile advertisements. In Chapter 4, Blackberry is the principle company under examination, as they promote their product as a vehicular mechanism to transport users to sites of identity. Aside from simply looking at the aesthetics of the particular advertising campaign, I also drew upon press releases that demonstrate how the makers of Blackberry are targeting users who explicitly desire to have access to communal and identity-related websites. To show the youth attraction to the mobile's vehicular qualities, I focused on information from message boards where youth expressed desires to actively participate in the online identity arenas that Blackberry has placed within their advertisements.

Chapter 5 focuses on the branding techniques implemented by the Apple Corporation and how Apple's different marketing strategies have created an aura of exclusivity. This advertised exclusivity has helped foster communities attractive to youth culture because, within these communities, youth individuals have their Apple

identity confirmed. In addition, they are permitted to establish relationships with other Apple users, a dynamic that allows them to solve problems and obtain advice from the group. As a methodology, I examined the exclusiveness promoted in Apple's advertisements, beginning with the "1984" advertisement and concluding with the "Get a Mac" campaign. To show youth attraction towards Apple, I looked at message boards where youth discuss Apple's brand, ask for advice, and converse about social issues, creating relationships in the process.

In Chapter 6, I show how Google's Android service is promoted as a convenient apparatus for acquiring and utilizing content by examining the aesthetics and thematic messages exhibited in their television commercials. Specifically, this chapter looks at the phenomenon surrounding applications, mobile tools that permit users to easily access and use content at any given moment. While the commercials do promote their product as a vehicle for access, as with the Blackberry, the bulk of these advertisements concentrate on "getting things accomplished" wherever you are in the world. For my methodology, I examined the messages put forth in the advertisements. To show youth attraction, I explored message boards where youth discuss the desire to use applications to acquire and utilize content. Through the message board respondents, they discuss how they can utilize applications to accomplish tasks.

With these chapters, I hope to demonstrate the overarching theme of this project: youth culture's transition to communicative and informational mobility, a dynamic which is made attractive by mobile marketing companies' focus on behavioral practices explicitly attractive to the adolescent to early college aged demographic.

While these organizations may not necessarily be targeting the youth demographic, their marketing campaign focuses on mobile qualities attractive to young individuals.

The reason I have chosen to focus on advertisements concerns a point made by Douglas Kellner, who states that “all ads are social texts that correspond to key developments during the period in which they appear” (334). This means that ads advocating communicative and informational mobility simultaneously reflect and drive the growing desire for individuals to possess such abilities. Kellner also describes that products and services are typically marketed as the fulfillment of human needs for social acceptance, desirability, and achievement (Kellner). My research, through the message board comments, shows that the attractiveness of these advertisements and the marketing of social behaviors are linked to youth’s needs for social acceptance, desirability, and achievement.

The reason I have chosen to focus on youth culture is because these social behaviors, once adopted by youth, will with enough practice over time, become established and expected norms for the bulk of society, as youth are typically seen as the trendsetters for modern culture (Smith-Janias and Heppner). However, first, context is required to understand why social distinction, identity, community, and the utilization and spreading of content is necessary for the adolescent to college aged youth demographic.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

For youth culture, particularly in the digital era, four specific behaviors are occurring that assist in acclimating youth into their social surroundings. However, what about these four behaviors, in particular, are important for youth development?

Creating social distinction, formulating identity, engaging communities, and utilizing content are very much intertwined; social distinction assists in forming identity, identity is negotiated and confirmed in a community, content is utilized and shared within a community, which, in turn, potentially creates social distinction for an individual. I assert that these intertwined behaviors are necessary for youth in that they contribute to youth acclimation into contemporary society and the adoption of social norms. This chapter explores the necessity of such behaviors for youth culture, and shows how by not engaging in such behaviors, one potentially faces being banished to social peripheries.

Creating Social Distinction

The term social distinction refers to a process that creates cultural differences between individuals and social classes. These differences are usually defined by the ruling class and create social hierarchies that are typically witnessed through aesthetic choices. In *Distinction*, Pierre Bourdieu states that people's choices are the result of how they wish to be perceived by society, and the range of choices are vast. According to Bourdieu, they can range from the type of furniture someone prefers, meal preferences, clothing style, or purchases relating to social trends. When someone

makes these choices, they are making a statement about what they value and how they wish to be perceived. Cultural groups engage in social distinction to separate themselves from other classes or demographics, in addition to fitting into their own.

For young people, musical preferences stand as one of the most illustrative practices to distinguish themselves. Dan Laughey discusses youth preferences in music as it relates to social distinction. He states, "young people's age and dress distinguished certain individuals from others in specific music practices" (162). Here, Laughey is showcasing how youth choose particular music and clothing styles to differentiate themselves. He utilizes the term "clubbers" to deliberately distinguish music intensive media listeners who engage in exclusive public practices. He states that "being a clubber refers to more of a sense of membership in a specific music taste group" (178). Through his research, Laughey declared that "clubbers developed a sense of alternative self-identities that were clearly distinct from the mainstream sensibilities of [other groups]. Unlike [other groups], these clubbers tended to exchange and display knowledge of resources only within clubbing practices which excluded those without the eclecticism to try out such practices" (178). What Laughey's research demonstrates are the practices put forth by youth, through musical preferences, to actively create social distinction and separate themselves from other youth individuals.

Social distinction is an important social dynamic for youth because they can potentially grant someone a higher standing on a vertical social ladder, and, for adolescents, the social ladder is a common barometer for how one perceives

themselves. For youth culture, this vertical social ladder is a common dynamic that they face on a daily basis, whether at school, through extracurricular activities, or at a part-time job. Eileen England and Kristen Petro demonstrate that peer statuses are of great concern to youth, as several youth interviewees discussed that labels are attached to individuals based on a number of parameters, such as social class, attention to academics, style of dress, etcetera (351). According to Donna Eder and David Kinney, extra curricular activities, such as sports and cheerleading, heavily contribute to one's peer status and popularity. Some labels, such as "preppy" and "populars", when compared to "burnouts" or "druggies", are perceived very differently and carry significant social weight. Such labels, when affixed to individuals, are significant because they impact how one's identity is perceived in addition to their value system.

However, social distinction shares a relationship with cultural capital as well, as someone may possess the means to differentiate themselves with valued traits not shared by the bulk of society. The basis for Pierre Bourdieu's cultural capital theory concerns exclusivity: those who possess desired information or technology that is not available to the bulk of society, depending on the social setting, receive higher standing in society because of their knowledge or skills. In a society that values such ability, this exclusivity grants the distinguished individual with cultural capital due to their possession of valued items or knowledge.

Using Bordieu's framework, Cushla Kapitzke explains that cultural capital is granted to early adopters—those who integrate technologies into their everyday lifestyle before the bulk of society. By analyzing information technologies in schools and the

students who utilized them, Kapitzke was able to demonstrate that students with technical cultural capital move from the social margins and towards the center of their social environments. For the purposes of this project, mobile devices that can access social-networking sites, utilize on-the-go content, and create brand communities act as the technological vehicle to grant social distinction and provide cultural capital.

Establishing and Expressing Identity

Identity refers to the perception of oneself, in addition to how one is perceived. Examples of identity can refer to cultural identity, such as a social class, or a regional identity, which is composed of qualities unique to a geographic area. According to David Buckingham, "identity is something we uniquely possess; it is what distinguishes us from other people" (1). Additionally, according to Wegner, "the concept of identity serves as a pivot between the social and the individual" (145). Identity is important for two purposes. First, identity allows one to perceive oneself as an individual with multiple, defining characteristics, a dynamic that provides a personal stability to adolescents, an age bracket typically characterized by incredible self-uncertainty. Second, one's identity serves as an introduction to others when approaching communities and social environments.

Throughout a young person's life, the period of adolescence is a time when identity must develop. As a young person develops, concepts of adolescence and identity become linked due to parental and institutional pressures. Mass media, legal obligations, and educational institutions all coalesce to create an image of the ideal adolescent (Stern). According to Buckingham, a youth who faces "continued confusion

about one's identity is [seen] as a mark of incompleteness, and may result in anti-social behavior" (3). Therefore, throughout the adolescent years, youth are encouraged by social institutions to experiment with, and ultimately adopt an identity to represent themselves. This is important because throughout the adolescent years, youth find themselves on a path of self-discovery that impacts how they perceive and present themselves to the world. Without such stability, as stated by Buckingham, youth are ultimately left in a transient and incomplete state.

However, experimentation with identity is not a simple process and can be difficult due to preconceived notions associated with various identities. For instance, identities relating to gender, nationality, religious affiliation, race and sexuality all have social implications. Due to such social meanings, the identity someone "chooses" will surely shape their communal relationships, interests, and how they are perceived by the society around them. According to Susannah Stern, "young people move through adolescence with an increasing preoccupation with how they appear to others" (97). Also, Erikson states, "the process of identity formation depends on the interplay of what young persons at the end of childhood have come to mean to themselves and what they now appear to mean to those who become significant to them" (106). According to Stern and Erickson, youth are active in the process of identity formation with concern for their own well being and interests in addition to how they may potentially be perceived by others.

Participating in digital forums of identity expression stands as one of the most prolific youth practices occurring today. Social-networking websites, such as Facebook,

MySpace and Flickr, are crucial to youth primarily due to a young person's ability to construct and advertise different facets of their identity in a digital manner. In *Born Digital*, Palfrey and Gasser discuss identity on social networking sites by stating,

identity formation among digital natives is different from identity formation among pre-digital generations in the sense that there is more experimentation and reinvention of identities, and there are different modes of expression...If the digital native has created multiple identities, those identities might be connected to create a much fuller picture of the individual than was possible before, spanning a greater period of time. Because of the use of digital technologies over the years, the result is more than a snapshot; instead it is more of a record of an individual's life that continues to accumulate over time (35).

According to Palfrey and Gasser, such an evolution shows that technology has helped influence how we broadcast information about ourselves. Unlike the past, current networked society has permitted youths to present themselves in a diverse, advertisement style fashion, creating personal records of themselves for others to access (as in a digital public profile). These behaviors, according to Manuel Castells, are transforming human relationships at their most fundamental level because, as members of the networked society, we are constantly broadcasting information about ourselves to others, creating visible histories in the process.

While digital profiles contain copious amounts of text, typically the first noticeable feature in a person's digital profile are the visuals, as they are usually more prominently displayed on the webpage. In *Digitizing Race*, Lisa Nakamura discusses how one presents their identity through visuals in the form of avatars. Avatars represent a great deal more than a simple digital image, they epitomize a myriad of extensions pertaining to an individual's identity. For example, a pictorial icon of a favorite band or restaurant demonstrates that the user wishes to display that the

images and associated meanings are a reflection of their interests. Nakamura states: "AIM buddies and other user-chosen IM images are the product of a user's desire to create a desktop mis-en-scene that signifies the self" (41). Angela Thomas reiterates Nakamura's ideas by stating, "These texts are multiple layers through which we mediate the self and include the words we speak, the graphical images we adopt as avatars to represent us, and the codes other linguistic variations on language we use to create a full digital presence" (5). In other words, the avatar exists as a visual depiction of who we wish to be in the digital world, and such visuals speak at great lengths about that individual's identity and what they value.

In closing, identity is important because a person's identity, whether showcased through attitude, clothing, vehicle, hair style, or a digital avatar, serves as their introduction to other people. The process is in constant negotiation and youth will continue to engage in such negotiation until they find a level of comfort and stability within their chosen identity. This is a long and arduous process that remains in flux throughout an individual's entire life.

Participating in a Community

Since identity is the first point of contact when approaching others, it clearly serves as a connection when one engages a community. The term community is a broad, complex term; however, in order to narrow down the term, community in this document will align itself to what Jay Mancini and Gary Bowen call "social groups" (245). According to Mancini and Bowen, "human beings are innately social. They organize themselves into social groups that range in size from dyads to large collectives

of individuals that interact to accomplish individual and collective results" (245). In communities, people gather to accomplish such goals because of shared set of attitudes and belief systems. Additionally, community shares a relationship with identity because it is through crucial communal interactions that one's identity is ultimately reinforced and accepted.

In Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, he describes subcultures as a form of community within society. Speaking on the "hipster" culture, Hebdige describes how subcultures give "formal expressions to an experienced bond, [they] share a certain amount of communal space, a common language, and revolve around similar focal concerns " (48). Hebdige's statements demonstrate that adolescents seek acceptance through their communal negotiations while still possessing a sense of heightened individualism. This means that in order to achieve this acceptance, one must engage in a process of recognizing and adhering to a strict set of social ordinances within various social groups. Of course, while each group is not necessarily the same with regards to their value systems, approach to style, and interests, they still possess very similar motives with regards to the communicative process.

In *Youth Online*, Angela Thomas also discusses the relationship between identity and communal relations; she writes "children and young people are forming communities of practice which develop their identities with respect to their roles in those communities" (111). Thomas is describing the correlation between identity and community, and she ultimately argues that the most important characteristic of performing identity is through one's relationship to a community and the sense of

belonging within that community. Susannah Stern echoes this idea, stating that “This self-inquiry is not conducted in isolation, but rather in the context of, and through feedback from, meaningful others” (96). In other words, in order to maintain and solidify one’s identity, one must adhere to a process of acknowledgement, acceptance, and interaction within a community.

This phenomenon is especially relevant in the digital world, as “youth authors use their personal sites to engage with their culture and to practice ways of being within it” (Stern 113). By engaging these websites, youth are introduced to social learning through interactions with others. By interacting with others, youth experiment with and learn normative behavior acceptable to society. Falk states that “learning occurs when the set of interactions utilizes existing knowledge and identity resources and simultaneously adds to them...learning occurs in the interactions” (5). Kristen Drotner reiterates this idea, stating that “recent learning theories rightly stress that we learn on an individual basis, but that the learning process needs others to materialize” (171). According to these authors, identity and community are related in how one learns norms through collective interaction. The social norms of society are revealed, negotiated and practiced through these communal interactions, paving the way for acclimation into society.

According to these authors, the importance of community concerns the acceptance of one’s identity and the learning social norms. Through the emergence of digital technology, people are provided the opportunity to engage in communities via email, social-networks, text based chat forums, and message boards, and each of these

contributes to the negotiation of identity and formation of communal relationships, which is absolutely imperative for adolescents with regards to social learning and acceptance.

Using Content

The final behavior concerns using content; individuals need content in order to perform tasks, communicate within their community, and create social distinction.

Content is a term that refers to actual substance contained within a medium, such as the dialogue of speech, the text within a book, or the coding of a computer program.

In *Convergence Culture*, Henry Jenkins discusses content in the form of media, and describes that consumers create their “own mythology from bits and fragments of information extracted from the media flow and transformed into resources through which we make sense of our everyday lives” (4). Having the ability to access and utilize content also is important because it facilitates individual empowerment. Jenkins discusses that media technologies are crucial in facilitating this empowerment. He states,

Consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies to bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact with other consumers. The promises of this new media environment raise expectations of a freer flow of ideas and content. Inspired by those ideals, consumers are fighting for the right to participate more fully in their culture (18).

Jenkins offers examples of empowerment by discussing a problematic situation for a young Harry Potter fan named Heather Lawver. Although the goal of this chapter is to ultimately demonstrate the tension between fan cultures and owners of intellectual property, Lawver’s fandom of Harry Potter, in conjunction with her technological

proWess, encouraged her to start a website built around the Potter mythology. Additional fans, do to their desire to contribute to the website, began submitting their own pieces, and even began the process of role-playing. According to Jenkins, "role-playing was providing an inspiration for them" (185). Although the basis for Jenkins' book discusses the cultural and industrial implications occurring with convergence, many of his case studies illustrate how content encourages people to engage in the creation, sharing, and utilization of content with others.

Similar to Jenkins, Kristen Luschen and Lesley Bogad describe young people, with regards to content, as both consumers and producers of popular culture. In a 2007 project, Luschen had her students create a digital story telling project where they shared drafts online to generate feedback. According to Luschen,

in the end, many students became more familiar with relevant technologies than they had been before and [they] all came to know, listen, and speak to one another with more respect and engagement than many of us had witnessed in other courses (453).

According to Luschen, the students who participated and broadcasted their projects were greatly inspired by their learned abilities and the feedback they received from interested strangers. The students felt empowered that their content allowed them the ability to "create knowledge, connect knowledge, and combine knowledge in ways static paper drafts never did" (453). Through this study, Luschen was able to demonstrate a correlation between having content and the positive feelings youth possess when able to utilize it in a productive, communal manner.

Content also relates to social distinction. According to Roger Saul, for youth, having the ability to create content, and the tools to broadcast such content, is very

empowering. A place like YouTube, where individuals are permitted to video blog, access news stories, and watch music videos, is an important element for youth culture because it, according to Roger Saul, is a “pedagogical space from which young people can play participatory roles as theorists in their own constructions as popular cultural subjects” (457). According to Saul, these places act as arenas where youth engage in the creation and exchange of digital content, where they ultimately contribute to what is relevant in their environment.

Saul explains that youth are even capable of utilizing these spaces to make themselves into significant cultural beings. For instance, a young person may be an active YouTube blogger and generate thousands of followers. When a youth possesses such a large following, the potential for celebrity within a small environment, such as a high school, demonstrates the distinctive power of content and the ability to broadcast. Environments such as YouTube provide youth with the opportunities to be active participants in the transfer of content on a mass scale, a dynamic unheard of prior to the rise of digital media.

In closing, content is a useful tool for youth because it provides substantive material to discuss in their social groups. Content can be created and shared within members of communities, which, as illustrated by Jenkins, Luschen, Bogad, and Saul, is an empowering activity for youth. The potential for social distinction, depending on the type of content utilized, in addition to how it is delivered, is also an important factor because, as discussed in previous sections, social distinction shares a relationship with the formation of identity.

Conclusion

I believe youth actively perform these social behaviors because they provide youth with the mechanisms to assimilate to social norms and create a comfortable position within a social environment. By creating social distinction one is able to establish an identity, then utilize that identity to form relationships and participate in communities. Within these communities, users are permitted to learn and adopt the social norms of the society they in which they live. Also, communities are where youth create and exchange content, which, based on the method of delivery and type of content, creates social distinction. All of these behaviors are performed in a flexible manner which facilitates social learning and acclimation.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL DISTINCTION, CULTURAL CAPITAL, AND MOBILITY

Creating social distinction is historically a common practice; however, as cultural evolves and new technologies become available, how one acquires social distinction evolves as well. Therefore, in the emerging mobile era how can youth create cultural capital and social distinction? I have concluded that one of the primary reasons youth find mobile devices so attractive concerns the benefits associated with being an early adopter of technology, benefits related to how one is socially perceived by others due to the exclusive abilities granted to them by their mobile device. Specifically, this chapter argues that social distinction and cultural capital is granted to young people who can exclusively access communicative websites (such as e-mail servers or social-networking websites) and store valuable content because of their possession of mobile technology.

Exclusivity is Key

In a 2000 study, Cushla Kapitzke demonstrated the relationship between social distinction, cultural capital and being an early adopter of technology. Kapitzke discussed Bourdieu's three states of capital, but primarily focused on the embodied state, which focuses on "self-improvement" (51). Social distinction through self-improvement refers to an individual's attempt to elevate their social status by acquiring knowledge and skills that will inherently increase their cultural value to those around them. Kapitzke writes that cultural capital, as it pertains to being an early adopter of technology, can be understood as a form of language in which "utterances are not only

to be understood and deciphered; they are also signs of wealth intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and signs of authority, intended to be believed and obeyed” (51). Once acquired or granted, those with cultural capital are granted precedence, power, and social authority over others in their society due to the abilities and knowledge they possess. Kapitzke explains how one student, an early adopter of information technologies, was awarded special benefits by his authority figures due to his exclusive knowledge about information technologies (Kapitzke). Because of his knowledge and abilities, this student was assigned duties in which he could implement his knowledge to help improve the understanding of new technologies for both the educators and fellow students. As such, this student was able to garner praise and special privileges, such as excusing himself from undesirable physical activities, due to the cultural capital granted to him by his instructors. This study illustrates that, in an atmosphere when such abilities and comprehensions are sought, cultural capital is awarded to early adopters, because of their technological ability and comprehension.

Why the Attraction?

As early adopters of mobile devices, individuals are permitted to perform behaviors in an exclusive, mobile fashion, free from spatial and temporal limitations. This is attractive because, in most cases, members of youth culture operate in a largely structured environment. This notion is reiterated by danah boyd, who describes these restrictions by stating that,

regardless of whether teens in the United States have the time to engage in public life, there are huge structural and social barriers in their doing so. First, there is an issue of mobility...Most of the United States lacks adequate transportation options for those who are unable to drive...There is a minimum

age for drivers in every state [and] having access to a car is an entirely separate barrier to mobility. This means that, for many teens, even if they want to go somewhere they are unable to do so (134).

In this quote, boyd stresses the lack of physical mobility, a burden that traditionally plagues (non-driving) adolescents, and sometimes college students depending on a city or university's transportation system. However, with the mobile device, some of these spatial and temporal barriers are reduced.

While the mobile does not possess the capacity to transport the owner to a new location, the mobile does allow for instantaneous connectivity with regards to content and communication. Gitte Stald, echoes boyd's argument by describing the difference between stationary computers and the mobile. Stald states,

the significance of the mobile phone lies in empowering people to engage in communication, which at the same time [frees them] from the constraints of physical proximity and spatial immobility...the portability of the mobile phone makes it possible for the user to access and exchange information independent of place, of physical location, while being on the move. We are mobile, the device is mobile with us, but above all information is mobile, meaning that is available independent of time and space, accessible from wherever you are with your mobile transmitter and receiver (145).

With the spatial and temporal restrictions removed, individuals are free to communicate with each other or gather content on a whim, and because these exclusive devices offer a variety of communicative methods, privileged users are capable of utilizing such communicative abilities and knowledge in their everyday social environment, garnering cultural capital through social distinction.

Due to the mobile's abilities, spatial restrictions for accessing sites of social behavior (Facebook, Flickr, etcetera) have also eroded. These websites are crucial for youth in how they assist in recognition of one's identity through communal interaction. Placing spatial mobility into this dynamic has the potential to temporally change how this communicative phenomenon occurs, because youth are provided the opportunity to stay connected and contribute to the ongoing dialogue, which youth are encouraged to remain up-to-date and active with at all times (Gasser and Palfrey). If changes to the temporal nature of communication begin, then those who are early adopters of technology will ultimately garner cultural capital due to their perceived abilities.

In an effort to discover youth's perceptions about the cultural capital attached to being an early adopter, I explored numerous online forums sponsored by makers of mobile devices, such as Apple Communities, and independently run forums such as MacRumors. Throughout my search, I specifically sought youth that identified themselves as such through their age on their profile or by verbiage in their posts that indicated they were a high school or college student. After identifying someone as a youth, I specifically searched their posts for verbiage discussing how his/her mobile device brought social distinction and cultural capital. While the term "cultural capital" wasn't likely to be found, I did seek out terminology that related to social authority, trendsetting, and anything that the posters stated that concerned them being granted value based on their early possession of a mobile device.

While on the MacRumors forum, a seventeen-year old poster (as stated in his profile) named 'nateo200', shared a story with the community about how someone

openly chastised his decision to purchase the iPad by calling it an oversized iPod Touch (Nateo200—1). A collection of posters, composed of several age demographics all responded with verbiage that clearly demonstrated they believe the iPad grants them social superiority based on the device's abilities. Examples of suggested come-backs (specifically from other youth) include "You misunderstand it, I feel for you" (CristobalHuet) and "I feel as when people criticize what you spend your money on is just because they are jealous. All my friends say that about my iPhone 4 but they are stuck with cheap flip phones" (bigbro1946). In a separate post, 'nateo200' also inquires about whether he can sync his Google contacts with his iPad, as he claims his "life is connected via Google" (Nateo200—2). Two things immediately stand out when looking at these collections of posts. First, as evidenced by second response from 'nateo200', there exists a belief that the iPad is a valuable tool in how it provides numerous communicative abilities, such as staying connected to Google's e-mail service. Secondly, the posts by the other message board participants demonstrate how they believe early possession of the iPad brings cultural capital. As expressed by nateo2000's response, "I've noticed that for every hater I have 2-3 who love it. Interesting, I had three teachers in school today hovering over me to see its coolness. I almost have to hide it, it attracts attention" (Nateo200—1). I was able to conclude that, through these multiple message board posts, these youth feel more involved and culturally elite than those who lack the means to participate. Because being an early owner of these devices is relatively exclusive, what these many posters hinted at

concerns excitement about being an early adopter with regards to Apple's iPad and how they possessed the exclusive ability to utilize the device for communicative purposes.

School Work and Mobile Exclusivity

Additionally, it is important to note that being an early adopter has other attractive benefits unrelated to direct communication. While social communicative practices are undoubtedly important to youth culture, having the ability to access other types of desired content is important as well. Examples include the opening of saved files from the device's hard drive, looking up phone numbers or directions, or accessing streaming video. If one needs sports scores, a current events story, or access to a map, access to these is relatively simple and not difficult to accomplish based on the type of mobile device owned by the user. The fact that creators of mobile software have begun implementing "applications", tools which provide quickly accessed, specific content, have only augmented this process (discussed in Chapter 6). These abilities are particularly advantageous in a school environment because the mobile offers abilities that are unique in that they can assist a student in a variety of methods, methods that include electronically submitting homework, acquiring content to utilize in class, or saving and filing notes.

In a post on Apple's technical support board, a high school user, using the name 'Flipit54', inquired about whether or not to purchase Apple's iPad (a smaller, more compact and combined version of Apple's computer and mobile media line). In this student's post, he inquires of the Apple community about whether the iPad is a good

investment for his desired needs. He states that he would like a device that permits him to better perform school related functions, such as note taking, compose power points, and write essays all in an “on-the-go” fashion. In his post, he lauds its portability and larger screen, characteristics he believes will allow him to perform his desired behaviors (Flipit54). Another student, during his first semester in college, praised the iPad and its note-taking applications by stating,

I've been using the iPad for school this semester. It is my first semester in college, so I never got used to a pen and paper. Coursenotes is perfect for taking notes. I've had someone ask me what the lesson was about, since they missed it. I just emailed them my coursenotes session, and they are caught up. Best. App. Ever. Keep up the great work! (Ryan Sandberg).

Essentially, this poster is seeking the abilities associated with the mobile iPad device in order to better perform his school related functions, relating to individual self-improvement. The relationship to cultural capital in this post concerns the exclusive conveniences brought by being an early adopter of technology, and as proclaimed by ‘Ryan Sandberg’, the college student, he was sought out and became a crucial contact for another student in the class. These students clearly believe that having this device will allow them to improve not only the efficiency of their school behaviors, but their social distinction, particularly when compared to their classmates.

This perception of technological superiority, as illustrated in Kapitzke’s study, demonstrates the accumulation of cultural capital due to the capabilities these users will possess over those around them (following the purchase of the iPad device). After all, the iPad can perform many other functions outside of simply doing schoolwork. It is an organizational tool that permits many of the same functions as Apple’s iPhone, with the

exception of text and verbal communication, so the students will also be permitted to access a variety of content due to the available Internet browser. Therefore, as an early adopter, these users will be granted social distinction and cultural capital by their peers, and even perhaps their educators, due to their perceived abilities to perform multiple behaviors in a more advantageous fashion than those around them.

Conclusion

Through the message board participants, it becomes clear that one of the primary reasons youth find mobile devices attractive concerns the social distinction and cultural capital associated with being an early adopter. As expressed by Janas-Smith and Heppner, youth are the predominant trendsetters in our society, so those youth who possess technology prior to their peers, will acquire social distinction and cultural capital. As an early adopter, one is privileged to desired abilities typically not possessed by the bulk of one's peers, which, as demonstrated in the case studies, grants the owner of such abilities social distinction and cultural capital.

The remaining portions of this document will entail how these evolving social behaviors have been utilized in the selling of mobile media products. Specially, devices issued by Blackberry, Apple, and Google are the most suitable for discussion, as their products, at least from a perspective of recognition and visibility, are currently dominating the American mobile market. In their advertisements, I aim to showcase how they are using the previously discussed social behaviors of identity, community, and the ability to utilize content as promotional mechanisms and why their products,

when combined with the social distinction and cultural capital attached to being an early adopter, ultimately encourages youth to embrace the idea of mobility.

CHAPTER 4

IDENTITY AND THE MOBILE AS A VEHICLE

Mobile devices can perform many functions, and many of these functions are showcased in advertisements to drive the society's urge towards mobility. However, advertisements for mobile devices frequently focus on one particular function to reel in an audience. Therefore, in what way is Blackberry advertising their product that makes mobility attractive to youth culture? While Blackberry may not be tailoring their marketing specifically to the youth market, I argue that Blackberry utilizes imagery in their marketing that youth find attractive due to the vehicular ability of the product to access social-networking websites. Despite having the distinction of being primarily a business-oriented device, Blackberry actually has stumbled into the youth market in dramatic fashion. In an article published in *Marketing Week*, the author details how "Blackberry's accidental youth phenomenon could become a strategic web changer" (Costa). The author states that BBM, a messaging service exclusively offered by Blackberry, has quickly become a heavily utilized sought out feature, so much in fact that its very much a deciding "purchasing factor for many young people" (Costa). On the MacRumors forum, a user named 'prodigee' stated "I am 16, and I do 3-4 thousand texts a month so yeah texting and BBM is a big one to me". This accidental youth boon for Blackberry comes as no surprise however, as the company has positioned itself as an appealing option to the youth market due to the vehicular ability of its product to transport users to sites of identity. In 2008, Research In Motion, the company who designs and distributes the Blackberry mobile device, introduced two thirty second

advertisements entitled “Feel Your Passion” and “I Hope You’re Thinking of Me”. These advertisements prompt the user to live “Life on the Blackberry” and stay connected to the things they “love in life”. Specifically, the advertisements show that when using the Blackberry device, users are privileged to access a number of social-networking services, sites highly valued by the youth demographic for their identity expressing attributes. After analyzing the aesthetics and themes in this commercial, in addition to Blackberry’s press releases, it becomes clear that Blackberry is attempting to promote its product as a mobile vehicle that can transport users to digital arenas. This makes Blackberry an attractive device for youth culture because these arenas are major hubs for identity formation and expression.

Corporate Intent

In a 2008 press release regarding the Blackberry Storm’s pending release, RIM states that the device is designed to satisfy the needs of their clientele, whether they are using it for business or personal use. The press release touts the product’s ability to combine “communications features, global connectivity, and personal productivity” (RIM Website). Under the subheading of “Staying Connected”, the press release states,

The BlackBerry Storm smart phone brings the full power of the industry’s leading mobile e-mail and messaging solution without compromise. It supports personal and corporate e-mail and text (SMS), picture (MMS) and instant (IM) messaging on the most prevalent consumer and enterprise platforms, as well as easy access to popular social networking sites (RIM Website).

In the same press release, two high-ranking officials from Verizon and Vodafone describe their love of the product by touting its ability to deliver the ultimate wireless experience. They praise the smart phone’s capacity to “give access to all the desirable

multimedia features and services such as browsing, music and video, turn-by-turn satellite navigation, messaging and social-networking" (RIM Website). Although the Blackberry can be a tool to use in a variety of settings, such as a business office, these executives are raving about the device's ability to access social-networking websites, arenas highly valued by youth culture.

The Advertisement

As the "Feel Your Passion" advertisement begins, the audience is introduced to a young female dressed in casual attire, a choice that clearly distinguishes her from being a working professional. Her relaxed, informal demeanor and clothing suggest that she is young, hip, and trendy—making her, at least from an aesthetic perspective, a relatable figure for the adolescent to college aged demographic. Essentially, she looks like them. As it begins, she stands facing the camera, staring blankly at it. A second into the advertisement, a transparent rectangle forms around her upper body and the young female curiously touches the new object in front of her. Immediately, the entire screen is immersed with a plethora of digital imagery, ranging from logos of participatory websites, silhouettes of bands performing, calendars, message boards and chat messages. Throughout the entire sequence, the young female is completely mesmerized by the images unfold before her. Finally, near the conclusion of the commercial, all of the images reappear on screen and unify around the girl. This shape eventually morphs into a Blackberry mobile device framing the young female. As the Blackberry frames itself around the young girl, the imagery speaks to the relationship between the phone and the user. With the girl inside the Blackberry, she can utilize its

power to, according to the commercial, "Stay connected to the things you love with the Blackberry Storm." As evidenced by the imagery, the Blackberry is a vehicle for transportation; with the young girl inside the Blackberry, she is capable of transporting herself to any of the previously illustrated images. Similar to how one would sit inside the confines of a car, the girl inside the Blackberry remains inside its parameters, but, like a vehicle, is capable of controlling her destination.

This is where the notion of identity comes into play. As outlined in Chapter 2, social-networking websites exist as extensions of one's social atmosphere, and within these websites exist frequent exchanges of content, identity formulations and expressions. In staying connected, individuals are capable of updating personal information that contributes to their sense of individual and social perception. Throughout this advertisement, Blackberry pushes the idea that by purchasing their product, one will have constant access to all of these identity arenas, and the personal and communicative benefits associated with them at any given moment. Plus, the Blackberry advertisement claims the attractiveness of this dynamic in how the young female in the advertisement is positively mesmerized and entranced by the barrage of digital imagery.

The first identifiable logo that emerges from the advertisement is the photo sharing website, Flickr. Flickr is owned by the Yahoo! Corporation and is (as of March 13, 2011) the twenty-third ranked website traffic-wise (Alexa.com). Also, in 2006, it was the seventh most visited site by 16-25 year old females (eMarketer). Flickr allows for the uploading and sharing of digital photographs, an act that enables users to

deliver information about them based on the photos they upload. In the Blackberry Storm advertisement, prior to the emergence of the Flickr logo, the character on the screen stands watching a series of photographs that link to tell a story. This visual dynamic underscores one of the main motives for using the website; the uploaded photos on the website showcase a user's desire to share photographic evidence of their lives, which allows other users of the service to discover and learn numerous things about the host's life. For instance, in the commercial, the photograph utilized contains visual documentation of a high school aged couple embracing and running around a park. This event might be an experience that the user finds worthy of documentation and the act of sharing these visuals within this dynamic creates a communicative language spoken through visual cues. By placing photographs of these events online, one not only showcases the actual event, but also what the user finds pertinent, which in turn helps formulate an identity for others to see. Flickr represents a budding visual dynamic currently operating on the Internet—the ability for individuals to broadcast their information and feelings in a pictorial method on a mass scale for others to see.

Flickr is not the only logo utilized in the advertisement that promotes identity-related services. MySpace is another identity arena given premium space within the commercial; however, whereas Flickr is linked with photography, MySpace is linked with musical expression. It is no secret that in order to compete with the Facebook, MySpace partnered with the music organization, Fuse, to create distinction for itself (Crupi). Unlike the Facebook profile page, MySpace pages grant users opportunities to create play lists based on various artists they enjoy. Similar to how the photos illustrate

a small part of someone's identity, a person's identity is also reflected in the musical tunes attached to their profile. However, MySpace is not merely limited to music. The service also includes profiles, bulletins, groups, forums, a karaoke feature, and a news feed where individuals can rank the stories based on their interest—all designed to encourage user expression and interaction.

This marketing strategy does not necessarily stop with the single advertisement. In another advertisement for the Blackberry Storm entitled "I Hope You're Thinking of Me", a collage of photographs, chat messages, speakers, and a plethora of other images come together to resemble the outline of the Blackberry Storm. As the advertisement concludes, the collage of images morphs into the Blackberry Storm with another young girl inside the screen. At this junction, the voiceover from the previous advertisement returns and states again to "stay connected to the things you love in life" with the Blackberry Storm. The closing text on the screen then reads, "Life on Blackberry". This "Life on Blackberry" slogan seems to represent a metaphor for the vehicular nature of the product. Similar to how a vehicle can transport someone to a desired location, the Blackberry transports users to the aforementioned arenas of identity. Even ads for newer models, such as the Blackberry Bold, utilize similar visuals and nearly keep the slogan the same, "stay connected to the things you love in life (in a bold new way)". As evidenced by these two advertisements, in conjunction with the press release, Blackberry clearly wants their product to be seen as a device capable of delivering people to identity arenas such as photo-sharing organizations and social-networking websites.

Attraction for Youth?

When the Blackberry advertisement showcases digital havens such as Flickr, and MySpace, they are focusing on well-known images and identity services attractive to the youth demographic. A survey taken in 2006 by eMarketer revealed that MySpace was among the top five websites visited by males aged 16-25. For females in the same age bracket, MySpace finished among the top three, only trailing Google and Facebook (Alexa.com). Even today, although MySpace membership has dropped off some, website membership predominantly skews to the population that is twenty-four and under (Alexa.com). In these advertisements, Blackberry is choosing to focus not on accessing programs pertinent to a business professional; instead, the company shapes its product as a vehicular tool to access social-networking websites such as MySpace and Flickr.

These identity arenas are attractive to young people in that they are granted the opportunity to broadcast their identity, and, according to danah boyd, the dynamics of identity play out visibly on MySpace for others to see and interpret. As evidenced by the amount of traffic occurring on these websites, youth are definitely interested in the activity that is transpiring there, and is exactly why youth would find the Blackberry's advertisements attractive. YouthVoices.net, a website that advertises itself as a "meeting place where students share, distribute, and discuss their digital work online", contains numerous posts by students discussing their attachment to social-networking websites. One user, named 'AlliNaka', states that she is constantly using Facebook, so much that it is actually causing detriment to other parts of her life, like schoolwork;

however, she cannot break away from it. In addition, several other users on the message board service include links to their Flickr accounts and openly encourage other users to make comments and write opinions on what they have posted (Zoe27, madisons, Abby_B, Sylvia09). While Blackberry might not be targeting youth directly, the company appears to understand that people are utilizing these websites for identity related purposes, and this understanding is thus reflected in their advertising campaign with regards to how they focus on accessing identity arenas in a mobile fashion.

Conclusion

Ultimately, this chapter demonstrates how the advertisements promoting the Blackberry Storm, and subsequently, the Blackberry Bold, appeal to youth culture because of the way Blackberry focus on the device's vehicular qualities. According to Blackberry's advertisements, with a Blackberry device, a user's ability to engage identity arenas is never an issue, and you are permitted to stay connected and participate at any time (provided that one has ample coverage!). Interestingly, the Blackberry, as a device, is quite similar to its primary competitors; however, Blackberry has attempted to distinguish itself by promoting the device's abilities to stay connected to the arenas of digital communication and identity, a method which is attractive due to youth's desire to engage identity arenas.

CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITIES THROUGH BRANDING: AN EXAMINATION OF APPLE

As outlined in the previous chapter, advertisements frequently focus on a product feature to reel in potential audiences. However, sometimes companies focus less on their actual products, and instead focus on creating a brand image that might be attractive to customers. What about the Apple brand is attractive to youth culture? Like Blackberry, the Apple Corporation also possesses many youth fans, as evidenced by the number of Apple related posts on youth message boards (YouthVoices.net). On many of these boards, the bulk of Apple conversation specifically focuses on the quality of the Apple brand. An example includes 'nrobinson's' positive comments about the iPod and how "Apple knows what they're doing. It has something for everyone: touch screens, large memory space, sleek and easy to carry around, video capabilities, etc. What's not to love about the iPod?" However, despite the many conversations aimed at the quality of the brand, I argue that one of the primary reasons youth find interest in Apple concerns being a member of a community. One of the more effective methods implemented by advertisers is to make a product attractive by creating a positive image for the brand. For Apple, this strategy appears quite frequently, particularly since the company began expanding their product line. The computer giant has expanded their product line and now includes the iPad, iPhone, iPod and the iTouch, a collection of small, handheld mobile devices. Whereas Blackberry focused on promoting their device as a tool to access arenas of identity, Apple has implemented a branding strategy that revolves around creating an exclusive community for users of

their products. These communities are attractive to youth culture in that they allow for youth to come together and discuss topics pertinent to their interests, particularly interests relating to their identity. While many topics exist, I have found that many conversations concern issues relating to being an Apple user, student life, and popular culture. However, the important fact here concerns that these users are all converging based on their collective interest in being a part of the Apple community.

Building A Brand

In order to generate some semblance of success, a company must generate positive associations between their brand and potential clientele. In *Building Brand Identity*, Lynn Upshaw states how a customer perceives a brand is based on a "configuration of words, images, ideas, and associations" (12). Fisherkeller echoes this sentiment, stating that companies rely "heavily on a variety of images and sounds to convey meaning in ways that audiences and consumers will find appealing, meaningful, persuasive, instrumental, and moving" (129). A marketing strategy such as this is crucial for a brand because it helps raise consumer interest and attraction towards a company or organization.

These strategies are commonplace for many brands, and the Apple Corporation is no different. In 1998, Apple abandoned its rainbow colored Apple and introduced the subtle image of a silver apple, a design by Rob Janoff, which, for the last several years, has been a staple on every Apple product released. With each portable iPad, iPod, and iPhone product released, the silver Apple logo graces each one to initiate brand recognition with the product. While product recognition is essential, the logo, and

corresponding brand must generate positive feelings in order to be considered a success. As such, the Apple Corporation has engineered their advertisements to create a brand image aimed at creativity and exclusivity, qualities that users can develop a positive emotional attachment towards.

For youth culture, attaching your identity to a brand label is an effective way to join a community. Being a member of a brand community permits users to not only have their identity recognized, but also form relationships with other users. In

Emotional Branding, Marc Gobe writes,

consumers are in the driver's seat, they will experience brands in a different way. People today feel empowered; they are more connected to each other and global events, and feel capable of influencing the world with their beliefs and shaping part of the future. We will see people seek and redefine for themselves the quality level of their life. They will fulfill their desires for themselves and for everyone around them by bringing on an unprecedented personal and emotional dimension in their choices and decisions" (xxiv).

For youth culture, becoming part of a brand community is an investment in oneself, and these choices are not impulsive decisions. Through advertisements, youth understand the social perceptions attached to brands, and choose brands not only based on personal needs, the community that surrounds it. Perception aside, by being a member of a brand community, one may provide oneself with stability by connecting with like-minded individuals capable of solving problems and discussing interests.

In an effort to encourage the exclusive communal Apple experience, the Apple Corporation holds annual conferences to promote their products and brand philosophy in a variety of culturally significant, urban areas such as Tokyo, Japan and San Francisco, California. Similar to fan based gatherings such as Star Trek conventions

and Comic-Con, these conferences allow for fans and users of Apple products to congregate, discuss, and test new Apple-related products. Additionally, the Apple Corporation also contributes promos for, but does not financially sponsor, independently run organizations called Macintosh user groups (MUGs) across the continental United States. Even on their corporate website, Apple lists location guides to encourage users find their local MUGs.

Additionally, on the Apple website, the company has a small section entitled “communities” where Apple fans are permitted to collectively gather and discuss concerns, products, and anything of interest. Apple could simply focus on selling their individual products by highlighting the specific intricacies; however, they have instead focused on building a positive brand community that encourages users to become emotionally invested into the product because they feel a part of something special, something exclusive.

Such emotional attachments and devotion to the brand has led to the emergence of several fan created online communities, and although they are not affiliated with Apple directly, the fact that they have emerged demonstrates the communal atmosphere that has stemmed from the Apple brand. An example of such digital communities would be the popular website, MacWorld, which also publishes an accompanying magazine. On this website, as well as other Apple oriented communal sites, users are permitted to discuss all-things Apple in forums. Additional communities consist of The Unofficial Apple Weblog, MacNN, MacRumors, HackinT0sh, and the website LifeHackers has their own Apple section. These communities concentrate on

learning about up-and-coming Apple products, troubleshooting, and sharing information about how to build a better Apple experience through brand products. However, what these developing communities ultimately demonstrate are Apple's successful attempts to create an attractive, exclusive mystique surrounding their products for consumers to build communities around.

Textual Analysis: Apple, Inc.

Stretching back to the landmark "1984" advertisement, Apple has continued to press the notion to consumers that being part of Apple is similar to being a member of an exclusive, niche community. The "1984" advertisement played on notions of conformity by utilizing intense imagery from Orwell's novel, *1984*. It showcases one individual, a metaphor for the Mac, breaking through a dull and complacent society dominated by IBM. The ad's creator, Lee Clow, was quoted in a *Macworld* article, stating "the original concept was to show the fight for the control of computer technology as a struggle of the few against the many. Apple wanted the Mac to symbolize the idea of empowerment, with the ad showcasing the Mac as a tool for combating conformity and asserting originality" (Cellini 18). Also, according to Kevin Maney, "the drones in the "1984" ad (symbolize) the very business people that would soon determine the future of the PC industry...from the start, Apple alienated them". As stated in the same *Macworld* article, the 1984 advertisement "was the beginning of a message, a brand philosophy that Apple has stayed with to this day" (Cellini 18). Based on the aesthetics, in addition to the commentary, this ad attempted to persuade a

small, niche group of consumers to break away from the IBM dominated market and make the switch to Apple, essentially saying, "be different, be with us".

This idea continued throughout the 1990s with Apple's "Think Different" campaign. At this juncture, Apple especially illustrated the exclusivity of their products; however, it was not by showcasing how their products were superior, instead the company continued to focus on building an aura around their newly released merchandise. The advertisements for the "Think Different" campaign utilized verbiage such as "Here's to the crazy ones. The Misfits. The Rebels. The Troublemakers. The Round Pegs in Square Holes." Other slogans claimed "We make tools for these kinds of people." By focusing on a counter culture appeal, Apple continued to promote its exclusive nature. In 2002, Apple began the "Switch" campaign, and the company hired critically acclaimed documentary filmmaker Errol Morris. In these advertisements, Apple showed how eclectic individuals, ranging from entrepreneurs to celebrities such as Tony Hawk and Will Ferrell, had begun switching from the Windows platform to the newly released iMac. In utilizing relatively fringe celebrities, Apple continued to focus on the exclusive quality attached to their brand.

In some of their newer advertisements, particularly the 2007 "Get a Mac" campaign, the company has blatantly chastised their competitors by labeling them as boring, stagnant, and unimaginative. Specifically, the "Get a Mac" campaign features two male actors (one portraying a Mac user and one portraying a PC user). In the advertisements, the man acting as the PC user wears a plain suit and exhibits an uptight attitude when compared to the laid back Mac counterpart. Throughout this

campaign, the Mac figure always seems to have the upper hand when compared to the PC figure greatly expresses frustration with the Mac user's witty and nonchalant attitude. With this campaign, Apple's strategy appears to focus on inflicting damage on their competitors by associating PC users with boring and stagnant imagery and behavior; however, I see Apple trying to build an image by focusing on qualities important to the brand perception they established in the "1984" ad. After all, in neither of these campaigns does Apple at all describe the intricacies of their product, and instead focuses on building an aura about the company.

The Apple Brand & Youth Culture

Clearly the Apple Corporation has successfully built a positive brand image by focusing on creativity, sleek design, and an overall sense of a desired communal culture, and youth recognize this distinction. According to the Research Solutions Group, this product is still mainly a male object of desire at this stage with thirty-one percent of users being in the 15-24 aged demographic (Malley). Additionally, a 2010 article published on CNNMoney.com showed that among iPhone users, twenty-five percent were twenty-four and younger, with thirteen percent being seventeen or younger. The article also showed that seventy-eight percent of iPod Touch users are younger than twenty-five (Elmer-DeWitt), a statistic that demonstrates the active youth phenomenon surrounding Apple, especially for the iPod Touch.

However, the point here concerns community and why youth feel a desire to participate in the Apple community. Similar to the aforementioned 'nateo200', there exist many young people who participate in the Apple community because being a

member brings them closer with other people who share similar interests that relate to their personal identity. As such, because Apple has sparked the rise of so many devout communities, whenever a young person has an issue with their Apple product, they are quickly able to collaborate with others in their community to solve the problem. This communal dynamic shares many similarities to what Aswin Punathambekar calls mobile publics. Punathambekar discusses mobile publics as tools capable of fostering new possibilities between unrelated factions not typically attainable in an otherwise formal setting. Punathambekar states that mobile publics allow for the capacity to “circulate and share ideas, images and information in ways that were not possible earlier” (17). While these communities are not necessarily mobile publics, they do share similar motives. People come together, under the Apple brand, to collectively help others who share their interests. This dynamic is particularly attractive to youth because discussing Apple related issues in a community not only helps solve potential problems, but also affirms their identity as an Apple user.

As evidenced by his admission of being a student and a young Apple user, ‘LaFro88’ is an example of this phenomenon. On the official Apple community webpage, he openly questioned the Apple forum what to do about his defective iPhone. By the end of conversation, ‘LaFro88’ proclaims: “Thanks so much for all the responses and optimism...I definitely will be going to the Apple store and will be politely asking for a new phone”. Although this seems relatively simple, these exchanges demonstrate ‘LaFro88’ engaging and participating within the Apple community. His presence shows that that he sought out other users in this community who can relate to his dilemma

and interests. When these users reply and offer advice to 'LaFro88' they are acknowledging his presence and reinforcing his own belief that he is a member of the Apple community. Also, because of their own participation, due to their perceived experience with Apple, 'LaFro88' grants them credibility. As such, he trusts the communal input and decides to take their advice, an exchange that demonstrates the success of the Apple brand.

In an unrelated post, 'nateo200', who is now nearing graduation, also inquires to the Apple community about what computer may best suit his needs for college. He begins by stating, "Ok so I currently own an iPad and of course some iPods" (nateo200—3), a quote that introduces his brand awareness and Apple identity to the community. As members of the community respond, similar to 'LaFro88', they confirm 'nateo200's' identity as an Apple user and offer answers to his concern. Similar to 'LaFro88', this post demonstrates that 'nateo200' trusts the other users in the Apple community and openly seeks their advice for product knowledge.

Despite being a community of Apple users, there is evidence to support the discussion of many topics unrelated to the source of convergence. On AppleNova Forums, a poster named 'Ryan' asks the forum whether they believe pursuing a graduate degree is a worthy endeavor. Considering the significance of this question, it demonstrates how much faith 'Ryan' places in the answers this community can provide. 'Ryan's' question alludes to the notion that because he believes Apple has created such a worthwhile brand, he trusts other Apple users for input regarding his own future.

Although advice and trouble-shooting questions are common, other conversations often revolve around simple banter. On the same forum, a group of recent high school graduates engaged in conversation about MTV, which then morphed into a discussion about high school social hierarchies and how much perspectives change once one leaves such an atmosphere (RowdyScot). While they may not necessarily be discussing Apple, these users find the brand attractive enough that they are choosing to engage with like-minded individuals. Essentially, these users trust the Apple Corporation and the brand that they have created, and they trust other individuals because they trust Apple. Whether it concerns personal advice or simple discussions about products, these users trust, communicate, and rely on each other for a variety of topics. They want to be there.

Conclusion

In conclusion, youth value being part of the Apple community for many factors. Although identity and social distinction is surely part of being an Apple user, the essence of communal relationships formed through the brand is without question an attractive asset. As a member of the Apple community, one is able to participate, build friendships, and learn through communal activities. As expressed in Chapter 2, being a member of a community is an important behavioral practice in youth culture with regards to identity being reinforced and recognized, in addition to how social norms develop and become learned by participants. Apple has cleverly worked hard to build a brand image that carries social distinction, and as demonstrated in this chapter, has taken steps to promote such distinction in the form of conferences and digital

communities. Because the brand is so attractive, it is no surprise that, in an effort to participate in communal activities, young people have generated a large presence in Apple's own communities, in addition to the other grassroots communities that have emerged to celebrate the Apple brand.

CHAPTER 6

ANDROID AND CONVENIENT CONTENT IN THE MOBILITY ERA

Android, like Blackberry, focuses more on the functionality of their product in order to attract potential consumers. However, unlike Blackberry, Android focuses on applications that permit users to access and utilize content. As such, what do youth find so attractive about mobile applications, specifically Android applications? With an application, youth are permitted the ability to quickly access bits of content in a convenient and mobile way to utilize in their immediate setting. A survey taken by the Nielson Company demonstrated that among a survey of four thousand people with smart phones, fifty-nine percent of the respondents claimed to have downloaded an application within the last month (Bolton), a study that illustrates the highly established utilization of applications amongst smart phone owners. Regarding youth specifically, a Pew study on mobile applications discovered that among application users, youth are more like to utilize these functions (Kiesow). I assert that rationale behind youth culture's attraction to Android's applications concerns not only the feeling of empowerment associated with the sharing and utilization of content, but the fact that youth enjoy the ability to perform tasks and access content instantaneously without spatial or temporal limitations. As evident in their advertisements, Android definitely focuses on how applications are a pertinent tool with regards to accessing content and getting things accomplished.

The Power of Content and Mobility

This dynamic of empowerment via content is most evident when examining the Egyptian uprisings in January 2011 against the president, Hosni Mubarak. Throughout the revolution, the ability for people to share content helped bring attention to the situation faced by the populace. Similar to the Iranian Twitter Revolution, the populace became empowered by their ability to not only mobilize, but also share news about what was occurring inside the country. In an article published on the Miller-McCune website, Philip N. Howard writes,

During the heady days of protests in Cairo, one activist succinctly tweeted about why digital media was so important to the organization of political unrest. "We use Facebook to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to tell the world," she said. The protesters openly acknowledge the role of digital media as a fundamental infrastructure for their work.

According to this article, many of the people enduring this revolution participated because of the empowerment they felt due to their participation. Because the technology easily allowed people to share content pertaining to their scenario, they never felt as though their efforts were in vain. In fact, the Egyptian president became so concerned over how enthusiastically the populace utilized social-networking to report content pertaining to the revolution that he shut down the Internet! (Hudson).

However, despite the recent success of such revolutions, the sharing of content is nothing new to this particular scenario. In an article on Wired.com, David Kravets writes that the sharing of content, by technological means, has actually played a large part in many of the revolutions of the last fifty years. An example would be the text-messaging revolution in the Philippines. Kravetz writes, "After television broadcasts of

President Estrada being acquitted of corruption, residents took to their mobile phones texting their outrage. The streets of Manila quickly filled, forcing the president to resign.” Therefore, from a historical perspective, content, in conjunction with technology, has frequently shown the capacity to empower people who seek social change.

By understanding how content encourages empowerment, one can see how mobile applications are attractive to youth culture, as the mobile device is an efficient tool for accessing, distributing, and utilizing content. In “Mobile Identity”, Gitte Stald states,

Within a decade, the typical mobile available on the popular market went from being a portable telephone to being a handheld computer with enough data and speed capacity to facilitate mobile Internet access, MP3 music, photography, video, graphically advanced games, and tools such as a calculator, diary, notebook, alarm, clock, GPS, and more (145).

In this quote, Stald equates the mobile with a “Swiss Army knife in how it possesses a number of useful tools” (148), demonstrating its ability to perform multiple behaviors, such as easily accessing and distributing content. With a singular mobile device, individuals are capable of recording and uploading videos to YouTube, contacting others, or finding directions to desired locations; this is by no means an exhaustive list either. This dynamic specifically concerns youth culture because, according to Stald,

[youth] are processing, digesting, and exchanging information, deliberating what to do, what to choose, what to think...we are the mobile, the device is mobile with us, but above all information is mobile, meaning that [information] is available independent of time and space (145).

This quote explains that the mobile, and its abilities to access bits of content, are affixed to the individual who possesses it. As such, because content is so easily accessible, a mobile helps influence the spatial and temporal nature of the owner how

accesses and utilizes content. Utilizing content, particularly in a quick and convenient fashion, is rapidly becoming youth culture feels they must possess. As outlined in several of Stald's case studies, youth feel then need to have the mobile for such abilities because they enjoy being able to send content, whether through it takes the form of photos or messages, to others. They illustrate a sense of belonging when capable of sharing content with others, and, in fact, discuss that when such abilities are taken away, they actually feel stress by not being able to participate (Stald 153). As pointed out in Chapter 2, in addition to the information presented here, having content, and the ability to broadcast, share, and utilize such content within a small social environment is an empowering trait.

The Google/Android Brand

Unlike Apple, Google distributes an operating system compatible with multiple mobile device developers. Google's operating system, known as Android, possesses many of the same attributes as Apple's iPhone, yet their marketing techniques are highly different. For Google, the "Droid Does" campaign appears to focus on the software's flexibility and functionality while also promoting the product's ability to distinguish the owner as an individual who values personal customization and control.

When Google purchased the small Android organization in 2005, it kept a great deal of its business dealings concerning the technological development of the software relatively private. As the company geared up to present its product to the already saturated mobile market, it created deals with numerous device makers and service providers. This decision demonstrates Google's desire to reach multiple markets by not

limiting their services to a single provider, a much different approach when compared to the selectivity and exclusivity associated with Apple products. After launching the product, the initial print and video advertisements simply stated “Droid Does” and never offered any significant information about the product. This sort of promotional tactic helped create a strong sense of obscurity surrounding the product and made it difficult to pinpoint exactly what the brand represents. In an article published in *Advertising Age*, Karl Barnhard, the managing director and partner at CoreBrand describes Android’s advertising strategy by stating that “There is no summary about the product, and you do not know who the brand is. It is clever, but you have no idea what this is for” (Chang). However, as the software’s popularity gradually increased, the company focused less on creating intrigue about the product and began to elaborate on the obscure “Droid Does” slogan. They began to highlight the endless capabilities and customizable nature of the device, essentially building on the “Does” verbiage concerning the product.

The fact that Android encourages individuals to develop and utilize their own applications speaks to the company’s desire to distance itself from Apple’s exclusive and pretentious brand image. In fact, one particular advertisement by the makers of Android even mocks their Apple competitors by highlighting the limitations of the iPhone. This commercial opens with the prototypical Apple white screen and font, generating a very Apple-esque feel. It continues by scrolling through a few simple sentences describing what the iPhone is unable to do, all the while mocking the aesthetics of Apple’s advertisements. Specific examples include “iDon’t have a real

keyboard", "iDon't run simultaneous apps", "iDon't take 5 mega-pixel pictures", "iDon't customize", "iDon't run widgets", "iDon't allow open development", "iDon't take pictures in the dark", and "iDon't have interchangeable batteries". The commercial is then interrupted by a techno, robotic mish-mash of images with the words "Droid Does" appearing on the screen. What Google appears to do here is reach out to a market that is frustrated with the iPhone's limitations by appealing to a customer base that desires a customizable device that performs multiple functions pertinent to the user's interests. Although there are similarities between the two organizations, Apple focuses on being hip and part of an exclusive organization and Google tends to play up the idea that the Android service is all about performing diverse functions, with the user being in complete control.

Android Advertisements

Google's advertisements have predominantly concentrated on selling the convenience of applications and how the mobile can act as an extension of oneself as with regards to having access content in order to get things accomplished. With an Android mobile device, one is always permitted to utilize its "Swiss army knife" functionality in an expedient and mobile manner.

Recent Android commercials focus on the device's ability to freely access content by boldly proclaiming "there's no limit to what Droid does." To validate this claim, the "Verizon Droid Other Planets" commercial first begins with a robotic style identification statement to introduce the viewer to the brand identity and the product. Next, the commercial introduces visuals associated with the Droid software (being futuristic and

technological) and utilizes an enormous holographic sphere composed of available applications. Then a mechanical arm activates one of the small application images as the accompanying voiceover asks—"Can a smart phone see light years into space? Can it pinpoint your location to find any star in the sky above you? Trace constellations? Or even identify other planets you are currently not on?" The voiceover then explains that all of these are possible with the ever-expanding Android market. To close, the voiceover claims "when there are no limits to what Droid gets, there is no limit to what Droid does." The Android commercials are promoting their products as an instrument of unlimited functions. Through their applications, Android promises that the user is free to access type of content he/she desires to utilize in their environment.

This common theme is present in another advertisement entitled "Verizon Droid All Comers". In the "All Comers" advertisement, the commercial begins with nearly the same thematic display of numerous applications. However, instead of focusing on specific applications, the commercial raises the question, "can a smart phone take on all comers without flinching?" The commercial then answers its own question by stating that "it can when it is operating a cargo bay full of apps, apps that maximize the functions of your phone, apps that you can run while running other apps, multitasking and taking names, only from the ever expanding Android market. When there's no limit to what Droid gets, there's no limit to what Droid does!"

Even with the newer advertisements, such as the "Droid 2" by Motorola, the main idea pertains to emphasizing the mobile device as an instrument with unlimited access to information. It describes the phone's high memory and how with this device,

one is able to “hook up to everything you need to do”. In this commercial, as the user operates the device, his two arms transform into mechanical extensions of the phone, alluding the idea that the user and device are one and the same. Similar to the Blackberry commercial, these Android phones are described as vehicular, except instead of highlighting the phone’s ability to access areas of identity, the commercials focus on the ability to acquire content to utilize in your environment, no matter where you are located on the planet.

Connection to Youth Culture

This dynamic impacts youth culture because, as expressed in Chapter 2, youth culture is empowered by the ability to access and utilize content. On the *New York Times* student section blog, one student stated one reason she preferred the Android concerns the ability to access Google’s Do-It-Yourself App Creation Software. With this service, users are capable of creating their own applications that are pertinent to one’s needs. She writes,

It’s awesome that Google is creating such a program because it allows their users to make something personal whereas, on the other hand, Apple users would have to download or buy the applications made by others for their own phone. I think that this new program will lead to many positive results, as people will let their creative minds develop and create useful and entertaining applications for their phone to better their lives (Kim).

In this blog post, ‘Kim’ describes how she believes this customizable program for applications will empower and encourage youth to create applications pertinent to their own interests and desires. She also states that such applications are empowering in that they will help better the creator’s life because such applications allow easy access to desired content. Essentially, if youth are capable of creating applications

customizable to their interests, they will be empowered to do so because of the informational utility attached to these applications.

Also, for the MacArthur Foundation 2010 Digital Media and Learning Competition, one group from Washington D.C. submitted a 3 minute clip that outlined what they would create following the completion of an Android app training course. Some of the respondents stated that they would like to create an app that allows them to “show off their artwork” and stay “updated with everything going on around the [sports] leagues” (bestandroidappsite). The first statement demonstrates that this student desires an application that allows her to display her creative works (similar to the dynamic in Luschen’s case study, as outlined Chapter 2). This student displays an attitude of empowerment in that she wishes to broadcast her artistic creations with the intent to receive feedback from others. The second statement demonstrates the student’s desire to remain up-to-date on sports content. What each of these youth demonstrates is the desire to possess and utilize content. With these applications, the users will have the opportunity to create content and receive feedback from others, or use content to remain knowledgeable about events they find interesting.

Another reason why youth would find empowerment in the informational utility offered by applications is because applications remove their spatial and temporal limitations, a dynamic that allows the user to ultimately be in control. This attraction is elaborated upon by Stald, who states that the mobile offers a “potential solution to the frustrations of young people regarding the potential management of everyday life. The mobile is an important tool that allows one to be in control—which is an essential ability

for adolescents in general" (161). One student in the MacArthur Foundation video expressed that she desired to create an application that would allow her to "complete outfits" (bestandroidsite). For this statement regarding outfits, the student wants an application that will allow her to plan and store content from regarding her wardrobe choices, a dynamic that lessens the time spent mixing and matching outfits. This student displays a desire that she wants an application that allows her to be more in control of her own life, and thus wants an application to help solve an issue that she finds too time consuming.

Additionally, in an article by Matt Hamblen, he interviewed a group of teenagers who discussed the attraction to Android's applications. He states, "they said that the Incredible's (Droid smart phone) ability to run Google Maps and use GPS tools to find, say, pizza shops or stores could be valuable. It might even be possible to replace a dedicated GPS device with an Incredible, they said". Also, even though he is an established Apple user, 'nateo200' states on a Macworld forum that, "I was on my way to a friends graduation party and I didn't know where he lived so I Google [mapped] it. On the way I noticed a blue bubble like icon moving down the road I was on! I was so perplexed I never saw this feature till the 3.0 update!" (nateo200—4). According to 'nateo200' and these interviewees, the mobile is a valuable tool in how applications offer convenient mechanisms to perform tasks, such as ordering pizza quickly and conveniently, as well as how they are capable of accessing content, such as directions via the phone's GPS application. Such exuberance exhibited by these individuals demonstrates the empowering nature associated with applications. These youth clearly

display positive feelings towards their mobile due to the way applications allow them to quickly utilize the content provided to them.

Conclusion

In part due to the overwhelming presence of applications, the mobile is an amalgamation of other technologies, and it is ultimately being sold that way—particularly as more applications develop. The company under review, Google/Android, has thus far demonstrated how their products are convenient and technologically efficient due to the phenomenon of applications. As demonstrated, youth are attracted to mobility because of the empowering nature associated with applications, and the content they provide. Plus, having such access to content permits them to organize their lives in different ways than before. For example, due to the mobile device, and the ability to access content, they undoubtedly see themselves as being more efficient and capable of handling potential problems. With their advertising campaigns, Google/Android has explicitly claimed that their products are the most superior products on the market with regards to accessing content and performing mobile functions through the phenomenon of applications. As evidenced by the positive comments from these youth individuals, Google/Android has created a buzz about its brand with regards to convenient, informational mobility.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

These mobile companies are not merely advertising their products this way without a clear motive. They are not only trying to sell social distinction, vehicular abilities, brand communities, and the mobile accessibility of content, they are promoting an entirely new type of lifestyle concentrated on mobility. By transitioning to a more mobile climate, young people will have the opportunity to engage their social environment, a trait, as discussed in the introduction, is crucial for social acclimation.

In *Convergence Culture*, Henry Jenkins discusses the current transformative state in media and how we have moved towards a more digital era. With such a transition in place, more people are granted the opportunity to access and actively contribute in the digital realm, a dynamic that facilitates youth empowerment. Jenkins showcases convergence through collective intelligence amongst fan communities, efforts of educators to encourage literacy among youth, grassroots creativity amongst fans, content crossing multiple mediums, online political activism, and methodologies exhibited by advertisements to create better relationships with their consumers (which, as evidenced by the chapter on Apple, is definitely occurring). In these case studies, Jenkins discusses, in a very optimistic manner, the freedom to create, participate, and converse in a world of media. Through media convergence, consumers now possess the ability to fulfill their desires, and as Jenkins demonstrates, we have entered a new era of media participation that is transforming how culture, particularly youth culture, communicates and engages media. The mobile helps in the facilitation of this

phenomenon because it allows for efficient and immediate access to the digital universe with no concern for physical location, while also promoting communal activities through brand identification.

There is no doubt that the mobile is a prolific and dynamic tool capable of changing how youth culture learns, communicates, and structures their everyday lives. We are currently witnessing an unprecedented amount of communication between people. Young individuals with access to such technology are free to share content with nearly anyone at any time via textual and verbal exchanges, and this statement does not even begin to explain what the more advanced mobiles can do with regards to their abilities to access the digital environment. Messages boards, social-networking sites, e-mail servers and instant messengers are instantly accessible by simply pulling out one's phone and pressing a few buttons. These capabilities are no doubt revolutionary breakthroughs from a technological and communicative perspective. In reality television shows such as *American Idol* (the under 24 year old demographic accounts for twenty-two percent of their overall audience) a youth can participate in the voting process using their mobile and then discuss their experience with a participating social community immediately via the mobile device (Johnson). And that's the beauty of the mobile device—it facilitates communication and the exchange of information regardless of location.

Furthermore, participation increases one's own media citizenship through mobile publics, a dynamic alluded to in Chapter 5. In Aswin Punathanbekar's article about mobile publics and *Indian Idol*, he demonstrates how the mobile encouraged unity

within socio-political groups based around endorsing a contestant. In the case of *Indian Idol*, the mobile permitted the collective group of fans to mobilize around a common element, demonstrating that, in the most basic sense, the mobile device permits individuals to temporarily participate in communal relationships fostered by a combination of social events and technological developments. This element is touched on by Gunilla Bradley in her book, *Social Informatics*, when she states “work environments, home environments, and public environments are converging into a life environment, where public issues tend to merge with the private spheres of our lives” (54). This transformative atmosphere is encouraged by society’s emerging power to exist in a mobile fashion, and while there are concerns surrounding mobility, I ultimately find the relationship between mobility and how it encourages social participation and social learning a valuable trait.

The shift towards youth mobility is undoubtedly occurring, and as technologies continue to develop, the specific products described in this text will become more commonplace in society, especially as advertisers continue to push their products in the methods described. Additionally, as newer technologies enter the market, the social distinction and cultural capital associated with the products specifically discussed in this document will also be affected. With more advanced products equipped with new, exclusive abilities entering the market, the costs of the current devices will undoubtedly decrease, enabling more youth to purchase and utilize the features associated with these products, decreasing the exclusivity. As more members of youth culture are permitted to participate in mobile culture, behaviors will adapt and new expectations

will emerge with regards to participation. In particular, as the price and network barriers begin to fall, more youth will be expected to participate in digital arenas through their mobile device. Social-networking websites, digital environments where communication is constantly occurring, will become even more important, and not simply because of all the communicative activities transpiring, but because participation in these environments will be taught as the established norms. Youth will continue to rely on websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and MySpace to communicate with others; however, due to the overwhelming amount of people operating with mobility, this dynamic will become amplified, especially when you consider how mobile device manufacturers are currently marketing their products to consumers. Through my research, I have discovered numerous young people participating on message boards ecstatically lauding their mobile devices for the abilities it provides them, as well as how it makes them feel as an active participant within their environment. They feel privileged, more relevant, and culturally powerful due to the fact that they can create social distinction, belong to an elite community (such as Apple), communicate with others, and access content free of physical location, all through their mobile device.

Similar to the current dynamic, as newer technology emerges, cultural capital and social distinction will be granted to those who can afford and exploit the newer, more technologically prolific devices. Just how the mobile devices described in this document have evolved, newer, more technologically proficient devices will be introduced into the marketplace for consumers. Some designs to consider would be a recently introduced concept model by Nokia. This phone, unlike other mobile devices,

is flexible and allows the user to mold the phone to suit whatever shape they find the most convenient. This device, in particular, would allow someone to wear the device around his or her wrist if the user desired! This innovation would help solve one of the complaints about mobile devices—being that they are bulky and difficult to operate if your hands are occupied. Another consumer complaint about mobile devices concerns their inability to maintain a lasting charge. With our society transitioning to a mobile environment, battery life must evolve as well. As such, it is only a matter of time before mobile companies develop a device that possesses technology to operate on a more efficient energy source, such as a solar power (in addition to the battery charge). Additionally, more practices will emerge and become more common in society, such as the ability to purchase products, organize and even perhaps operate separate electronic devices all through the use of the mobile device. In a mobile society, it is almost a guarantee that not only will mobile devices become more technologically advanced when compared to our current machinery, but they will also become more compartmentalized—acting as an all-in-one machine. This future has not quite arrived, but when analyzing the current trend of technological developments, combined with youth's desire to utilize the mobile for multiple functions, it demonstrates that this future is definitely a real possibility.

These mobile abilities are not necessarily new occurrences, but they do underscore a major dynamic about telecommunications in our society. As our desires and needs drive the development of new communicative technology, new norms with regards to these behaviors will materialize. As digitalization helped shape our current

communicative climate, so too will devices such as the iPad, iPhone, Android, and Blackberry once the bulk of youth culture adopts the technology. Advertisers understand the attractiveness of such technology, as evidenced by the strategies employed in the Blackberry, Apple, and Android campaigns. Therefore, based on my research, it is clear that the reasons youth individuals will become increasingly mobile concerns the attraction of being an early adopter by virtue of their vehicular, communal, and informational utility.

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Video Advertisements

Blackberry Storm—"Feel Your Passion"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8psFU5IILy4&feature=related>

Blackberry Bold—No Title

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvjoMHZK6TU&feature=related>

Blackberry Storm—"I Hope You're Thinking of Me"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWdCzdfh_zo

Apple—"1984"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYecfV3ubP8>

Apple—"Get a Mac" Collection

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siSHJfPWxs8>

Droid—"Droid 2"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8bSLMcerCc>

Droid—"Other Planets"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXwel89p59c>

Droid—"iDon't"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnaAQwGcBks>

Droid—"All Comers"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GytCEf4Ojpw>

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<http://www.youtube.com/user/VerizonWireless>