A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Communication and Media Texts and Contexts

Communication is omnipresent in our everyday lives. It transpires within, between, and among people, and within and across groups and organizations. The media, too, are ubiquitous as we produce and negotiate mediated texts in personal and professional capacities, and in public and private spaces. And it is this pervasiveness of communication and media that continues to provide us with the many contexts to enrich the increasingly intensive and expansive scholarship of our discipline.

This issue of the *Plaridel: A Journal of Philippine Communication, Media, and Society* attests to the breadth and depth of the field of communication and media—and the many studies which it enables. Using a wide array of theoretical and methodological approaches, the articles in this issue discover new insights about communication from the interpersonal to the organizational, from the mediated to the non-mediated, from traditional media to the new. Indeed, the diverse papers in this issue are bound by their desire to inform the many facets of our discipline.

The first three articles enlighten the complex relations among communication, media, and people. The first article by Ma. Laize-Ar Abalos, Mark Joseph Alminanza, Christine Elizabeth Macaraig, Anna Karina Samia, and Jennifer Christine Rose Sumagui looks at the efforts of the Philippine Cut Flower Corporation (PCFC) in reaching new markets by developing its website and supporting communication technologies. By discussing how PCFC is adapting to the challenges of the online economy, the team enlightens us about the practices, pitfalls, and potentials in engaging in new forms of communication and in developing new business models.

The second and third articles, meanwhile, more specifically look at the interplay between mediated texts and audience reception. These papers assess important values and skills among consumers and media—credibility, news literacy,

and political participation. Regine Anne Ramos, Kessica Camille Tanglao, Rowena Tatad, and Mariedel Vasquez determine which newspapers and TV news programs people rate most credible, and which medium (print or television) they see as more credible, in delivering the news. The differences and the absence of differences in the ratings across respondents of various age groups and levels of educational attainment at once support and contradict conventional assertions about how specific groups evaluate media credibility. In their study, for instance, young people do not necessarily hold TV news—which they are more exposed to—as more credible than broadsheets.

Young people are also the focus of the study by Gabb Riel Agapito, Katrina Kwan, and Shiela Camille Bascos. They discover that public high school students are news literate, perhaps contrary to the popular idea that young people no longer access, more so critically evaluate, the news. Indeed, the team shows how students access and acquire news, and construct and retrieve their body of knowledge about the news, depending upon their own interests and personal valuation of newsworthiness. The team presents a framework on the processing of news information, providing us with a clear guide on how to promote news literacy among young people.

The fourth and fifth papers tackle how people negotiate different communication contexts to help them achieve certain goals. Coincidentally, the two papers focus on online environments; however, they deal with two markedly different settings – a gaming website and an online support group. This divergence in focus is propitious, as it allows us to see where and how engagement with the online environment would be the same, and different, when done in two different contexts.

Mark Anthony Gubagaras, Neil Jerome Morales, Stephen Norries Padilla, and Jun Daryl Zamora bring us into the intriguing world of online gaming. Grounding their arguments on three theoretical perspectives, they elucidate on how gamers define, form and recreate a virtual subculture of gamers among the Filipino youth. Drawing from their first-hand

experiences as online gamers, they present recommendations on how online gaming may become a better venue for identity formation among the youth. Given that very few studies of online gaming in the local context have been conducted, their study is an important contribution towards addressing this research gap.

On the other hand, Monik Moya, Jurise Athena Oliveros, Louie Diane Rentutar, Mariane Genelou Reyes, and Maria Angelica Sison add to the literature on how the Internet facilitates the formation of social relationships. Using an online community for Alzheimer's disease as their case, they show how it is possible to form relationships online that approximate, and sometimes even surpass, face-to-face interpersonal relationships. Their study is especially significant because it demonstrates that people in difficult situations can, and will, harness the ever-expanding communication space to their benefit, so as to meet kindred souls with whom they can share and compare experiences. As such, one could take their study as a challenge for other local researchers to look more closely at how Filipinos similarly situated as the Alzheimer´s patients and caregivers that they studied, can use the Internet to expand their social networks.
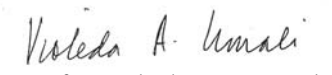
The last two papers look at media and communication dynamics from a broader perspective – i.e., instead of examining media and communication texts and contexts directly, they contextualize media and communication vis-à-vis other phenomena. In the first paper, Monik Moya, Jurise Athena Oliveros, Mariane Genelou Reyes, April May Sumaylo, and Ervin Nil Temporal examine the career considerations of Filipino workers and the implications of these for organizational communication. Methodologically, their study stands apart from the other articles in this issue because it uses secondary, not primary, data. Thus, aside from its substantive contributions towards a better understanding of the mindsets of Filipino workers and towards enriching organizational communication practice, their study also informs other researchers about the potentials and challenges of doing secondary analysis.

Finally, Rhodora Ramonette de Villa's analysis of research dissemination practices in selected Metro Manila universities provides both encouragement and challenge to communication and media scholars and practitioners. Her findings are encouraging in that they establish that research indeed occupies an important place in the academe. However, it is quite disappointing to note that research dissemination, wherein communication is crucial, is not emphasized in the universities' research thrusts. The challenge for those of us in communication and media field, therefore, is to increase awareness and appreciation of the value of research dissemination among members of the academic community.

Completing the lineup of papers in this issue are Jennifer Christine Rose Sumagui's interview with Dale Rutstein, Communications Chief of UNICEF Philippines, and Maria Lucia Soria, Kessica Camille Tanglao, Aleli Roselo and Sheila Abubacar's review of selected software for qualitative data analysis.

In exploring different texts and contexts, the main articles in this study are bound by their desire to enrich our understanding of communication and media. These papers are further bound by a shared experience. All of them were presented at the First Communication Research Student Conference held at the Media Center of the University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication (UP CMC) on September 7, 2007. Through this conference, and this issue of *Plaridel*, the UP CMC has taken yet another step towards meeting the challenge we have earlier posed: advancing research dissemination, towards the advancement of research and scholarship itself.

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