

The Evolution and Path of Media Literacy in The Meta-Universe Era From The Embodied Perspective

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Abstract

Media literacy and media technology need to go hand in hand, the disconnection between the two will cause chaos in media ecology. The meta-universe is a concept and technology of a higher level than the existing media ecology. The digital survival of human beings in the meta-universe era also needs the corresponding media literacy. The development of new technologies has put forward revolutionary requirements for the existing media literacy. From the perspective of embodiment, this paper analyzes the strong embodiment of media in the era of meta-universe and the evolution of media literacy caused by it, and puts forward the path of enhancing the dimension of media literacy.

Keywords

Media literacy, Metaverse, Embodiment.

1. Introduction

In Zuckerberg's Founder's letter, published in October 2021, he declared that the metaverse is the next chapter of the Internet, and we are at the beginning of that chapter. The term "meta-universe" was born in the science fiction novel "Avalanche" in 1992. It refers to the virtual world that is linked and created by scientific and technological means, maps and interacts with the real world, and the digital living space with a new social system. This concept was well interpreted in the film "The Matrix" produced by Warner Bros. in 1999. The evolution of media literacy goes hand in hand with the role played by media. The emergence and popularization of new media technologies have created new possibilities for the production and life of the public, and media literacy should also be timely adjusted according to the media ecology. The meta-universe has the potential to subvert and reconstruct the social structure and the way of human existence, but the problems of space, time and self-alienation brought by it also bring "revolutionary" changes to media literacy, and the public needs to promote the upgrading of media literacy to adapt to the digital living environment in the context of the meta-universe[1]. Therefore, this paper intends to take media literacy as the research object, discuss the new pattern of media literacy in the era of strong embodied metauniverse and the resulting evolution of media literacy, and put forward the path of media literacy upgrading accordingly.

2. The Strong Embodiment of Media in The Meta-Cosmic Age

2.1. Body as a medium

McLuhan believed that any medium is nothing more than an extension or extension of one's senses and senses. But in the age of the meta-universe, this view will be completely broken, and the strong embodiment of the meta-universe will promote the transition from "media is an extension of people" to "media is people." [2]In the existing media ecological environment, the media plays more of a tool role independent of the human body. Even in the era of Internet of Things, the connection between the media and the human body is getting closer, the media still does not get rid of the nature of other people's attributes. At present, the public's use of new

media and its synthesis of virtual identity in the network constitute the "digital avatar" of the public, but this degree of "digital avatar" is more of a digital brand that is divorced from human ontology.

In the concept of the meta-universe, the human body can be fully digitized, relying on the powerful tracking and monitoring system and measurement capability of intelligent devices, so that all aspects of the human body data can be accurately and comprehensively tracked, collected and uploaded, relying on these data, the human body can be copied and reproduced in the virtual space, forming a virtual dopebody [3]. At the same time, in the meta-universe era, the public can transmit their consciousness to the meta-universe through the brain-computer interface to enter the virtual avatar, and the two are combined to form a "Cyborg avatar" equivalent to the human body in addition to the physical conditions, and the human body becomes the medium.

2.2. The full sensory envelopment of the body by the medium

McLuhan believed that media is the extension of human beings, radio is the extension of hearing, text is the extension of visual ability, television is the extension of vision and hearing, and the existing media realize the expansion and extension of one or several senses of human beings. All human senses rely on sensory neurons to receive external stimuli and return to the central nervous system in the form of nerve impulses. Under this biological condition, the meta-universe era will rely on deep neural networks and intelligent devices to build digital sensory neural models according to the stimulation-response process of human senses, simulate human touch, taste, smell, taste, and vision, and then establish a "Cyborg avatar" of the public in the meta-universe, which has all human senses. Breaking through the stimulating effect of the existing media on a single or several senses of human beings, realizing the full sensory surround of human beings, enabling the public to have a real physical sensory experience in the meta-universe space that is no less than the real world, and its call to embodiment has never been seen before.

2.3. A spiritual world based on consciousness

Unlike VR/AR technology, which acts on human audiovisual senses through some wearable devices to create an "immersive" sensory experience, Barlow declared as early as 1996 in the Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace: "Cyberspace is composed of mutual influences, relationships and ideas themselves, and our world is not a world of physical existence." The meta-universe is to create a spiritual world parallel to or even beyond the real material world, which can not only create the authenticity of the real world, but also have the virtuality of the digital world. It can free human beings from the shackles of the material body, and seek the trans-time movement of the spirit with the "Cyborg incarnation" to extend the spiritual world of human beings.

As a new space with the duality of reality and virtuality, the meta-universe is a reflection of the real world and can replicate and reproduce the real material world[4]. In addition to material properties, the "Cyborg avatar" of the public is basically equivalent to the reproduction of the public body. In the spiritual space with high similarity to the real world, the public personally contacts and perceives various elements in the environment, so as to obtain an immersive experience, just like being in the real world. But in essence, the meta-universe is a spiritual world based on body and consciousness.

3. Evolution of Media Literacy in Embodied Universe Age

3.1. Marginalization of media literacy

According to Michael Robliko, media literacy is the development and practice of knowledge and skills in media communication that people must carry out in order to participate in and

maintain power in society. It can be seen that the core factor of media literacy is the "knowledge" and "basic skills" necessary to use media. The evolution of media literacy goes hand in hand with the role played by media. With the development of the Internet, media has gradually generalized and penetrated into all aspects of human life in an all-round way. The concept of "digital survival" has been put forward, and media literacy has gradually broken through the traditional shackles. For example, the disorderly expression of the public in the network space leads to the deterioration of the network environment. At this time, the edge of media literacy begins to expand, and the corresponding laws and ethics in the real world are gradually integrated into media literacy, becoming the quality that Internet users must possess when using new media.

In the meta-universe era, the edge of media literacy is further generalized. Since the meta-universe creates a spiritual world parallel to the real world and is a mapping of the real world, regardless of physiological conditions, the activities of the public in the meta-universe are largely equivalent to those in the real world, so human survival in the meta-universe also needs to follow the rules of the human real world. At the same time, since human beings themselves become the media, the digital survival activities of human beings in the meta-universe are themselves media activities, and all the criteria to be followed by human digital survival will become the media literacy of the meta-universe era. For example, if human beings observe the traffic rules of "stop at red light, go green" and map to the meta-universe, it will become the necessary media literacy. The social norms of human daily activities become the media literacy of the meta-universe era, and the edge of media literacy is further generalized.

3.2. Media literacy applies goal duality

As Michael Robgliko said, the traditional media literacy mainly includes the basic knowledge and skills necessary to use a certain media, and its main goal is to be able to skillfully use a certain media and narrow the technical gap caused by media technical barriers. In today's new media era, the edge of media literacy is gradually generalized. Cultivating media literacy is no longer just to strengthen the public's ability to use media, but also to manage the deteriorating media environment and regulate the disorderly network space. Another important goal of media literacy is to restrict the public's network behavior.

In the meta-universe era, media literacy as a functional attribute of regulating mass behavior has been further strengthened. Meta-universe can break through the limitations of time and space, allowing users to freely travel in the spiritual space. Meanwhile, due to its powerful virtuality, the public may lose their rationality in the activities of the meta-universe, get rid of the constraints of the rules of the real space, and produce media ethical anomic behaviors. Therefore, as a meta-universe parallel to the real world, the regulation of anomic behaviors becomes a major problem. As a means to realize mass self-discipline, media literacy will further assume the function of restraining mass meta-cosmic behavior.

3.3. The consideration of the "body" becomes the core content of media literacy

Embodied became a theoretical hot spot in philosophy and cognitive science in the 1980s, aiming to break through the existing traditions of previous research paradigms that separated spirit from entity, placed reason over sensibility, and dismissed the body as an obstacle object to be overcome. With the advancement of artificial intelligence technology, the application of big data, cloud computing and other technologies, the modern media relying on computer "logical calculation" has the computing power and data processing ability beyond human beings, and even gradually realizes automation and autonomy[5]. The academic community shows two attitudes towards the development of media: "embodied" and "disembodied". One is based on the computationist view that everything can be turned into an algorithm, and the media can

abandon the body and become a disembodied existence. The other side believes that the medium will eventually call for the return of the body.

In the metaverse era, human beings can transfer their consciousness into the metaverse space through the digital interface, and enter the "Cyborg avatar" equivalent to the human body. At the same time, the spiritual world created by the meta-universe is a space with both authenticity and virtuality, which can highly restore the human social environment. Human beings connect their consciousness to the meta-universe through digital interfaces, and to some extent become independent spiritual individuals free from physical bondage. Under this media ecology, the subject status of human body is challenged. The digital existence in the meta-universe era is essentially a reflection of life in the real world, and its high "immersion" and "authenticity" may make it difficult for netizens to distinguish between the virtual and the real world and the material world, and it is difficult to extricate themselves from the spiritual space, which leads to the neglect of the real world and the noumenon. Therefore, the consideration of "body" in the meta-universe era will have important value and practical significance, and "body" will become the core content of media literacy consideration.

4. The Ascending Path of Media Literacy in The Age of Embodied Universe

4.1. Strengthen media literacy education

The cultivation of media literacy needs to adapt to the progress of media technology. At present, China's media technology is making explosive progress, but media literacy is derailed from the development of media technology[6]. The hysteresis of media literacy leads to the lack of core abilities in people's communication with media and society in the Internet era, such as judgment and moral power, resulting in frequent phenomena such as entertainment to death and media ethics anomaly. The meta-universe is a higher level concept than the current media technology ecology, so in the process of the gradual development of the meta-universe technology, we must absorb the lessons of the lack of synchronous media literacy education when the Internet and new media are popularized in our country, and put the matching media literacy education on the agenda.

At present, the meta-universe is still in the initial stage of constant exploration, and it is a gradual and long process from its maturity. In this process, a professional team of experts needs to be formed to explore the connotation of media literacy corresponding to the meta-universe according to the perfection of the concept and technology, and put it into media literacy education. Secondly, due to the particularity of our stage, we pay more attention to the practical value of new media technology, while ignoring the media literacy behind it. Therefore, the government must place media literacy in the same important position as the media use value, and promote the media literacy education adapted to the meta-universe for schools and the whole society, especially in school education. In the era of deepening digital survival, media literacy education should be promoted as a basic education course, and one of them should be consistently integrated into the curriculum education system from primary school to university, so as to guide the public to adapt to the digital survival in the metacomph era.

4.2. Insist on the primacy of the body

Zuckerberg has high hopes for the metaverse, which he has predicted will reach 1 billion people within the next decade, becoming a new ecosystem that will create "millions" of jobs. It can be seen that in his view, the meta-universe is a new space to expand the living environment of human beings. Different from the physical space, the meta-universe is a spiritual space established based on human consciousness. However, because the meta-universe is surrounded by human senses in an all-round way, even if human beings are in the virtual space of the meta-universe, they can achieve sensory experience equivalent to the real world.

Moreover, since the human body itself is only a carrier for consciousness to access the meta-universe, and the "Cyborg avatar" in the meta-universe can be regarded as an independent individual to a certain extent, it is easy for human beings to get lost between the virtual and the reality, and even become addicted to the meta-universe for a long time just like the current media dependence disease, ignoring or even forgetting the departmentalism of the body.

However, the public must clearly realize that human beings should always be in the main body position and should adhere to the first identity of the body. Even if the meta-universe can highly restore the real world environment and the sensory experience of the human real world, but as a spiritual world, its essence is based on human consciousness, and consciousness is born in the body and its experiential perception of the environment, the body does not exist, the consciousness is no longer. At the same time, the combination of virtuality and reality in the meta-universe easily causes the public to lose the status of the subject as a "manipulator", and gradually become a species tamed by the meta-universe in a subtle way. In this process, the thinking mode of human beings gradually turns to "stylized" and "digitized", the subjective initiative is greatly limited, and the objectivization tendency becomes more and more obvious. The thinking individual is gradually disciplined as a "one-way person", losing reason and self-consciousness, spontaneously becoming an object controlled by technology, giving birth to "technical consciousness", and the ethical relationship between natural person as the subject and the meta-universe as the object is distorted, and even faces the risk of transformation.

4.3. Construct a media literacy ecology with both jurisprudence and theory

Since the founding of human civilization, law and ethics, as two important means of adjustment, have exerted different influences and functions on social life from different aspects and in different ways. At the beginning of the construction of the current positive meta-universe, as a new thing, there is no corresponding law or ethics to regulate it. On May 28, 2022, a woman suffered "sexual assault" in the Meta universe game Horizon World, which was hot on Weibo, but there was no corresponding legal basis for sanctions. In the future, the meta-universe will become an important carrier of human digital survival. Human beings will experience a life similar to the real world in the meta-universe, and the edge of media literacy will be generalized. Therefore, laws and ethics in real life should be integrated into media literacy at the beginning of the construction of the meta-universe, so as to adapt it to the meta-universe technology.

The first is to optimize the legal environment and build a corresponding legal system for the construction and operation of the meta-universe. First of all, it is clear whether "Cyborg avatar" has the subject status, and the subject-object relationship and the right and responsibility relationship between "digital avatar" and "human ontology" are clarified from the legal level, so as to provide a clear basis for maintaining the order of meta-cosmic space and real space. Secondly, according to the media ecology of the meta-universe and the scientific legislation of the operating environment, it is necessary to clarify the "edge zone" and "gray area" of the application of new things in production and life, and formulate clear legal provisions. Finally, we should strengthen the corresponding law education in the meta-universe, enhance the whole society's attention to the meta-universe order and knowledge quality, and create a clear and healthy legal environment.

The second is to explore the ethical and moral ecology of virtuality and reality. Although the meta-universe has both the authenticity of the real world and the virtuality of the digital world, the meta-universe, as a spiritual space parallel to the real world, is not a one-to-one restoration of the real world, and even exists a field beyond the real space. The meta-universe is both similar to the real space and beyond the real space. Therefore, in the process of digital survival in the meta-universe, human beings should not only follow the ethics in the real space, but also explore the unique media ethics in the meta-universe space. The combination of the two forms a media ethics that mirrors reality.

5. Conclusion

In view of the gradual development of the meta-universe space, the first step should be taken from both the legal environment and the ethical and moral level to create a healthy legal environment for the development of the meta-universe, and incorporate it into the connotation of media literacy, so as to promote the upgrading of the media literacy of Internet users and make media technology and media literacy go hand in hand.

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