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Tamás Csordás – Nóra Góbel: Brands in memes. Perception of LEGO and Barbie toy brands through internet memes

Internet memes are fresh and up-to-date elements of the internet culture, and in this respect show many similarities with traditional gossip. Memes are becoming an integral part of the internet folk's everyday vocabulary and part of consumer culture. They can thus be considered a relevant source of consumer insights, meanings, even in corporate contexts, and can thus be employed in marketing communications. In a netnographic study and content analysis of 541 internet memes related to the Lego and Barbie toy brands we explore and characterize their online user perceptions and the implications thereof for marketing.

Rita Glózer: Meme Theory in the Discourse of New Media Studies

The adaptation of the sociobiological notion *meme* in the social sciences provide an intense and more precise explanation of the anonymous, variable contents (texts, pictures, music pieces, and videos modified digitally) spreading in New Media. Considering the investigations in contemporary directions of ethnography and cultural studies, the question arises if the memetic approach offers more or perhaps better research opportunities, and if it is more than a recent scientific metaphor at all. In my study I confront the approaches based on the concepts of Internet folklore and participatory culture, and the meme theory matured by Limor Shifman in media studies. I reveal common features and differences between accents of the three approaches, which enable their combination. Lastly, by using some illustrative examples of memetic videos I demonstrate how these approaches can be combined.

Imre Mátyus: 'Dad what's a blue screen of death?' Internet meme images as carriers of collective identity

The technological context of contemporary participatory culture provides a wide range of possibilities for sharing ideas, opinions, and experience with the appropriate audiences in a simple and ecological manner. The appropriation of these possibilities can be observed in groups created and maintained at social networking sites. The research of online (virtual) communities has been a crucial area for social sciences since the 1990s. This article joins in with this research tradition by examining the role of internet meme images in a closed community – namely the international Ubuntu user group of Facebook. I investigate the values of community represented in image-based memes created or shared by the members. What kind of content gets represented, in what format, in what modalities?

Norbert Merkovity: Donald Trump and the attention. Memes as tools for attention-based politics.

Donald Trump is one of today's most divisive politicians. This study does not argue with this statement, but it is studying how he uses features of memes in his Twitter communication in order to attract, maximize, and direct the attention of followers and journalists. Over the adjectives attached to the person's name, the used words, and the excessive use of exclamation marks becomes clear that Trump's Twitter communication actually follows the logic of memes. However, this tactic also sets the focus of analysis to attention-based politics and the phenomena around it (network logic, self-mediatization, popularization and populist political communication). The main finding of the study is that Trump takes advantage of his billionaire-celebrity status, as well as the weaknesses of the American presidential primary system and democratic processes to forge political capital for himself.

Kate M. Miltner: There's no place for lulz on LOLCats: the role of genre, gender, and group identity in the interpretation and enjoyment of an Internet meme

Internet memes are an increasingly widespread form of vernacular communication. This paper uses LOLCats, one of the most popular and enduring Internet memes, as a case study for exploring some of the social and cultural forces that contribute to memes' popularity, both individually and as a whole. A qualitative audience study of 36 LOLCat enthusiasts indicates that individual memes can be used by multiple (and vastly different) groups for identity work as well as in-group boundary establishment and policing. This study also shows that as memes travel from subculture to the mainstream, they can be sites of contestation and conflict amongst different stakeholders looking to legitimize their claim to the canonical form.

Róbert Pölcz: Internet memes, viruses, (post-?)memetics – a short introduction with notes on research history

Richard Dawkins coined the term *meme* in 1976 as an analogous notion to the gene. He defined it as a unit of information that spreads in culture through copying. He attributed a central function to the meme in the construction of culture and also argued that it has agency, the ability to act with an effect. Representatives of the memetic school have received major criticism due to their

mechanistic, reductionist and epidemiological approaches to culture, which finally lead to the decline of the approach by the 1st decade of the 21st century. Parallel to this process the meme has acquired a new meaning: currently it refers to pieces of spreading cultural content modified and shared on the Internet. Although researches interpreting this new phenomenon partially inherited the vocabulary and argumentation of memetics, their approach is entirely new as they research internet memes along their characteristics as genre.

Limor Shifman: Defining Internet memes.

The fourth chapter in Limor Shifman's *Memes in Digital Culture* addresses the problem of interpreting memes. She introduces a three-dimensional framework, which identifies three separate aspects of cultural content: the content, the form and the stance. The first dimension relates to the content of the text and the thoughts and ideologies referenced by them, while the second dimension represents the physical incarnation of the message, which we can perceive through our senses. The third dimension – introduced here for the first time – is the meta-communicational aspect of the meme, and it relates to the addresser's relationship to the text, the linguistic codes, the addressees and other potential speakers. Based on these three dimensions Shifman provides a new definition of Internet memes. In order to exemplify how these separate dimensions can become subjects of imitation, Shifman analyses three popular memes, the *Leave Britney Alone* meme, the Pepper-Spraying Cop meme, and response videos to the *It gets better* YouTube media campaign.

Bradley E. Wiggins and G. Bret Bowers: Memes as genre: A structural analysis of the memescape.

A tenable genre development of Internet memes is introduced in three categories to describe memetic transformation: spreadable media, emergent meme, and meme. We argue that memes are remixed, iterated messages which are rapidly spread by members of participatory digital culture for the purpose of continuing a conversation. We understand that memes develop from emergent memes, which we define as altered or remixed spreadable media. We have adapted and modified Jenkins' term "spreadable media" to refer to original or non-parodied messages. Our analysis benefits from the inclusion of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory to aid in understanding how memes as artifacts of participatory digital culture are created. Our genre development of memes demonstrates the generative capacity for continued memetic transformation and for participation among members of digital culture. We use structuration to position these dynamic components as the core of a duality of structure for Internet memes.

