Sat Evolution Article/Blog: What is Broadcast's Future?

(…with reference links)

Interesting question. I started to think about the beginnings of broadcast and was reminded of our recent celebrations here in the UK for our Queen's 70th Jubilee in June of this year. Beacons were lit across the country to celebrate the moment. So, on top of Hambledon Hill (Dorset) ours was lit! Big event and amazing to see out across the various counties that surround us, all those other beacons lit. Ok, that is perhaps thinking a bit too early about broadcast, mind you, we have been using beacons before the Spanish Armada and that was 1588!



…beacon lit on Hambledon Hill, Dorset, UK

Let's get more up to date. Sensibly you could say that the real innovation for broadcast was the printed word, followed by photography and film then, the big breakthrough, Radio!

Radio really started the broadcast moment as we know it today. Of course with technology development at a pace meant that it wasn't long before television hit the streets then that next "big" moment, the Internet.

Now to my point.

Instead of me thinking about the broadcast future I decided to take this question to my local school in Shaftesbury where I have been a part of their STEM program for the past four years. They are a beacon in themselves, excuse the pun; as being one of a handful of schools within the UK to develop the concept of a "Future Classroom" and what a fun ride to be a part of.

Why a school? Well, to really answer "what I broadcast's future" I think understanding how young people, the next generation of parents and workers, innovators and leaders see future broadcast. No point listening to an old man stuck in his ways😊



…courtesy of Shaftesbury School, Dorset, UK

So, let's push the "Broadcast pedal" to the metal!

SETTING THE SCENE STOP STUDENTS AGE RANGE 13 TO 15 STOP
…remember Telegrams? 😊

So here is a snapshot of what these guys do now and want tomorrow from broadcasting and all in 40 minutes! And remember, this is their views not mine…

Today…

Apps: Tik-Tok, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Discord, Twitch TV, BBC
TV, Film, Radio, Streaming Services, Netflix, Amazon Prime
Consoles: Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo Switch, Wii & Wii U
Search Engines: Google, Bing, etc.
Tech: Phones, Smart Glasses, Computers, Smart Speakers
Newspapers
Other People…
Billboards
Search Engines
Mario & Luigi Series - Influencers!!!

Tomorrow and beyond…

Easily Accessible, Short Videos, Immersive Short News
Customised TV Accounts (Comment: *I don't want Channels that nobody watches!)*
VR/AR (…on a new level?) & AI or a new method of 'Socialising'
Robots, the Metaverse?, Brain Chip?
Gaming - News Games: Consoles & Computers (…next Gen!)
Smarter Phones/Glasses/Watches/Wearables
Attention Catching, Educational
Specialised Methods of Communication
Positive & Negative News, Fake News Filters
Local News that relates to You
Interactive Entertainment
Super safe News Channel for the Bad News
Learning News Channel or News App
Adverts! Cut most Mobile Ads! 10+ TV Ads in a row!
Free Access to Foreign TV Shows – Some cost but must be small
Add Top Channels to make people Happier…

General Feedback:

Factual, Unbiased News that is trustworthy. No scaremongering or over exaggeration!

One Streaming Platform with everything in place so that you don't need to subscribe. At the moment there are too many different platforms to watch, often with repeated information.

More focus on quality rather than quantity when creating shows.

Less Ads and no really outdated Channels.

Avoid creating addictive and time consuming apps.

More filters on Media for children avoiding young people's exposure to harm! No use of Children for entertainment when they are unwilling!

More focus on longer videos to promote better attention spans. Especially compared with the plethora of short, meaningless videos we all often see!

Short videos are having an effect on this generation's attention span!

Good/Bad & Informatic News & different stations for different News Types…

The problem is people might stop learning about the bad things.

Summary News that explains news in a shorter version.

…and some great comments that need to be taken seriously!

We Want Balance!

We don't want to be bombarded with false or too much information but we still want to be involved.

You need more than one source so you can choose what things you want to listen to.

(Authors add: …and ensure you get an accurate and clear interpretation of the facts versus trivia given)

Certain broadcasting makes it difficult to believe the News!

Our generation:

- *Believes majority of Tik-Tok News instead of, e.g., Newspapers*
- *Is so used to social media and false information that when issues occur they can be so oblivious to it! (Authors add: …and here we have a real problem!)*

Broadcasting today does fit our needs but not all the time. *(Authors add: …not consistent!)*

Social Media and all other Broadcasting sites are taken for granted or seen as 'standard'. The moment it's gone everyone will want it back!

And finally this brief outline essay from one student is a great summation of how they were all thinking about broadcast. Graphics courtesy of the writer, again, all in 40 minutes!

"*Radio only requires a single sense to process. If one is able to multitask, then workload can be reduced significantly and media is consumed at the same rate – arguably both a benefit and a drawback… Books are a neutral example…*

Superstition:



- *Unreliable*
- *Outdated*
- *Free*
- *Scaremongering*

Word of Mouth:



- *Unreliable*
- *Biased*
- *Simplified? Benefit for children & people without sufficient grasp on language of choice*
- *Free*

News:



- *Often expensive to access*
- *Government modified content*

Radio:



- *Listener need not be literate*
- *Listener can multitask*
- *Content is diverse*
- *Often Cheap to obtain and run*

Online Unofficial Content:



- *Scaremongering for viewers*
- *Unreliable*
- *Biased and/or Exaggerated*
- *Despised to exploit*
- *Need to be literate*

And, of course, social media: Facebook, Instagram, Tik-Tok, Twitter, etc.

- *Biased?*
- *Potentially overdramatic or misleading*
- *Simplified*

In conclusion and looking at news as the most controversial subject area, whatever type of broadcast medium is used, whilst useful, often worthless compared to the original intention of the news item itself. For example, the news in America is often biased and designed to obtain maximum views. Most news is, of course, biased but one could argue that the news is intended to 'scaremonger' by presenting false or excessive information for disturbing or provoking concern within the audience. The more views the channel gets, the more that it is paid. And so, by dramatising an article it gains more views as consumers become concerned and wish to better comprehend the situation by increased viewing.

A few news articles are paid for by the government or leading authority. They have no cause to dramatise the situation, as regardless of how many viewers they have, they will be paid the same.

However, the question of 'How to Broadcast Information' is a conflicting one to say the least."

How to sum up?

My first impression raises more questions:

- Are we close to delivering what the future generations want?
- Do we really understand our future audience?

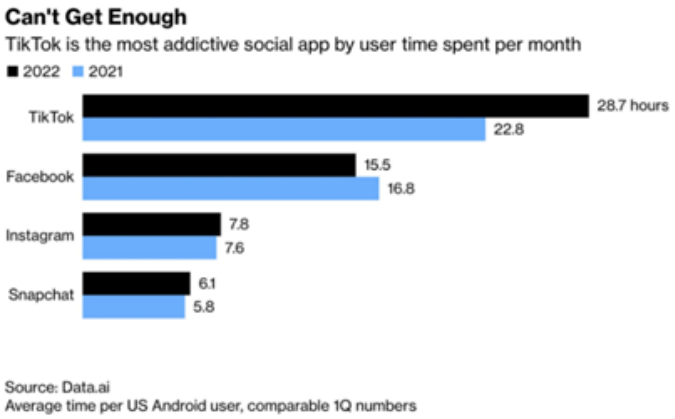
Overall, I think the answer to these points right now is an emphatic "No"!

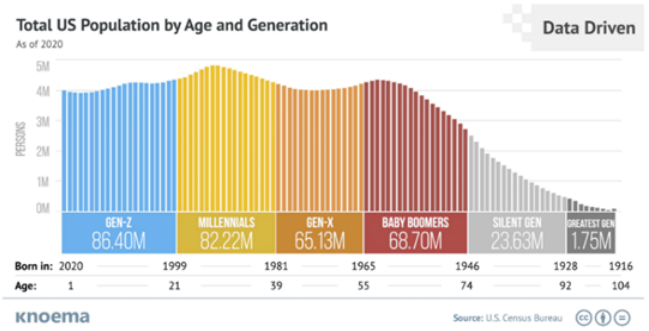
I think what really surprised me was their thoughts around news, especially fake news, needing balanced, creditable and condensed input better presented and ultimately, safety online. When you get words like "scaremongering", "unreliable", "biased", "harm" from the majority that alone should make our broadcast industry take serious note.

Some facts

Take a look at the article from #nabamplify **What Gen Z Means for Media**. In the US, Gen Z is age group 1 to 21. Then there are the statistics.

Gen Z is now the largest generation in the US
and with that undercurrent of relatively insignificant behavioural changes often creates serious cultural shift.





The social media effect.
And both US and UK agree on this. Follow this link for UK results... UK teenagers get their news from Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. This article also comments on the decline in traditional TV news viewing!

Then you find this headline from the UK… 19 million Brits check out social media on the toilet

What can you say?

It is so interesting that the subject of News was on everyone's mind. With world politics, health, environment and climate at it most complex for decades these young people really want news programming sorted. With thoughts such as a super-safe news channel for the bad news and supported by a learning news channel or news app and fake news filters.

Such insight. Yet, I see none of this innovation in our industry news.

Something else that interested me when introducing the subject of broadcast to this student group. Radio and Podcasts were surprisingly popular. I thought radio was for just old people! Their thinking, and I have to say I agree, without the visuals ensured the listener concentrated on what was said and could be working on a separate task at the same time, picking up on statements or information that you naturally were interested in. They also thought that real facts could be better presented by using technology such as VR and that if we went one step further using the metaverse would allow people to be immersed in the news itself, get a real feeling for what was really happening on the ground. What a concept…

Of course news aside, there were all the usual suspects in the mix for today and tomorrow, social media is at the top. But my take was cautious optimism as these young people understood the hidden problems behind each and every platform.

On the video front they also want more concise and higher quality short videos but equally realise that, and I quote, "*Short videos are having an effect on this generation's attention span.*"

We talk about apps all of the time but this quote struck me "*Avoid creating addictive and time consuming apps".* That word '*addictive*' also reminds us of a worrying trend these days.

One interesting outcome of this exercise is that not one student or group mentioned sport. Odd. I would have thought that sport is near the top of their list. Perhaps it depends on the group of people you ask? Perhaps it is not seen as "broadcast"? I think this needs to be looked at further as sport is a critical part of the broadcast industry income stream. Or maybe an in-depth look will uncover more revelations than the industry may want to hear.

To summarise

The real problems as seen by this generation are fake or unreliable news, online safety, effects on attention span, addictive apps, too many adverts and to sum up "*Our generation is so used to social media and false information that when issues occur they can be so oblivious to it!*"

Right now, if I were at the forefront of broadcast and its current offering then the initial way to win over our younger audience is to take on the ideas above. Eliminate the worry. Reduce the quantity of adverts. Ensure apps are useful not just for fun. Create better, be truthful and ensure it is clear what is fact and what is fiction or fake.

So, like me start with our young people, work with them and learn from them. They are a substantial force to be reckoned with. We cannot just assume the industry knows best. With input from our young people and the data we have to help better assess the state of broadcasting today will lead to creating better programming for all tomorrow. Bringing some honesty back in to the broadcast trade would go a long way to moving in the right direction.

And the answer to the question I believe is simple, today's young people are broadcast's future.