



The collective impacts of traditional and social media: The case of HKTU

On Oct 15, 2013, Hong Kong government released the final decision that Hong Kong Television Network (HKTU / 香港電視) was not given a free TV license. As this decision conjured up much controversy and noises from the public, both the traditional mass media as well as the social media had an extensive coverage on the issue. However, in the light of motivation of the mass, social media seemed played an influential role, for example, to lead the public to the Causeway Bay demonstration on Oct 20, 2013. Users took initiative to upload information and the frequent updates in turn motivated the mass. Users relied on social media to follow-up the latest information as reflected from the tremendous feedbacks and interactions. Social media has been developed as an important common platform for exchanges and collective motions.

Background

This Facebook Page, “萬人齊撐 !!! 快發牌比香港電視” (<http://www.facebook.com/supporthktv>), was created by the public on Oct 15, 2013.



The administrator aimed to protest against they think the unreasonable act of government to deny giving the free license to Hong Kong Television Network. As stated on the Page, the Page name highlights about the supports from the mass. The administrator expected a few thousands would support the Page by clicking the “Like” button. Later, the number of “Like” exceeded 10,000. Within 6 days, from Oct 15th -Oct 21st, the page enlisted a total of 495,000 “Like”. It dropped to a total of 483,000 after the zenith of the incident. This has been the highest number of “Like” for a Page, as compared with the latest Page named “Scholarism” enlisted over 184,000 “Like” as of 2014.

Table 1: Related Facebook groups and pages with keyword “Hong Kong Television”
(Retrieved on Oct 31, 2013)

	Names of Related Facebook Pages or Groups	Total "likes"
1	萬人齊撐!!! 快發牌比香港電視!!! [Event page]	495,620
2	HKTU 香港電視 [Event page]	213,670
3	我要公仔箱 不要黑箱作業 [Group]	5,013

Findings

Social Media: Intensive Facebook users' interaction

From Oct 15 to 31, 2013, it was found that Facebook Page “萬人齊撐!!!快發牌比香港電視!!! ” had 278 posts, on average, 16 pieces per day. The updated content include the *status, photos, link sharings, event promotions*, etc. The Facebook users interacted by “Like”, “Comments” and “Shares”, these three enable them to interact with the users and especially their circles of friends could see they support this page as every post is a public one. Take an example, if they like one post, it would be put onto the top feed. According to our result, there are 27 posts have over 10,000 Likes; for the posts that conjure up 1000 likes, there are altogether 254 which accounts for 91% of the total postings within 17 days. More than that, for comments that could have over 100 people discussing, there are a total of 102 posts. For the shares, there are a total of 88 posts that could have over 100 people involving. It could be concluded that the interaction is vigorous in the page. It is notable that the top five that resulted in the most Likes are the status with words and photos.

Table 2: Summary of Interactions of Page "萬人齊撐!!! 快發牌比香港電視!!! "

Interactions	Min	Max	Postings	Total Number
Likes	200	36,346	Over 10,000	26
			Over 1,000	254
Comments	2	1,899	Over 100	102
Shares	1	3,631	Over 100	88

The figures showed that many of the postings received widely support by the users. By clicking the like button, users automatically feed their liking into the News Feed where their friends could filter through their recent activities. This liking gesture is interpreted as a "user-generated linking", which indicates, on the one hand, "an affective response" and on the other hand, user's adding social values to it. Therefore, it is plausible to see "liking" as a sign of users' engagement in this event. From this point of view, the mounting likes from users could be as regarded as gestures of wide on-line support.

Table 3: The Top Five Postings of Page "萬人齊撐!!! 快發牌比香港電視!!! "
(Sorted by "Likes")

Date	Contents	Likes	Comments	Shares
15/10/2013	Text, “Facebook 支持人數已超過1 萬”	36,346	1,200	3,631
15/10/2013	Text, “召集更多撐港視發牌”	35,928	826	1,392
16/10/2013	Text, “撐港視發牌”	29,090	1,899	1,801
20/10/2013	Photo, “藝人支持港視發牌”	28,380	382	345
20/10/2013	Photo & Text, “很多人中環遊行”	23,304	289	307

Traditional newspapers: Widely cover the event

In these two weeks' time, we focus on local news. The Chinese keywords, “香港電視” were typed in the WiseSearch and retrieved the news that were related to this keyword daily. In order to shed light in Hong Kong, we only dig out the local newspaper and only chooses those are local news (本港新聞). In the search results, we have a total number of news pieces of 2,043. The least coverage appeared on Hong Kong Commercial Daily and the most coverage appeared on Apple Daily.

Furthermore, there are altogether 14 newspapers listed below that have coverage in this particular issue. Averagely, each newspaper has around 145 piece of news in these two weeks. And it is crucial to see that the most coverage (365) that the newspaper gets is the Apple Daily which is considered as a radical newspaper with sharp agenda setting, and then the Ming Pao Daily News (319) and the third one is Sing Tao Daily (193). It is rather surprising to see the radical newspapers Oriental Daily News and The Sun have 111 and 122 respectively within these two weeks, ranked seventh and eighth. Therefore, it could be interpreted that these papers may not be as effective as the social media platforms so as to motivate the mass to go on the street.

Table 4: Wise News Search with the keyword “香港電視” during 15-31 / 10 / 2013

Newspaper	Sub-Total
Apple Daily	365
Ming Pao Daily News	319
Takung Pao	101
Hong Kong Daily News	179
Sing Tao Daily	193
The Headline Daily	133
Sing Pao	132
The Sun	122
AM730	122
Oriental Daily News	111
Hong Kong Economic Times	89
Sky post	70
Metro Daily	69
Hong Kong Commercial Daily	38
Total	2,043

Dominant role of social media: Facebook act as a more prominent role in social mobilization than radical papers

On Oct 20, 2013, a large scale demonstration was held in Central to show public

discontentment and opposition to government's decision on the HKTV's application for free license. This demonstration, "包圍政總" which means besieging the Central Government, has been given frequent concern and grand supports in the Facebook campaign page ""萬人齊撐!!! 快發牌比香港電視!!! ". As the data displays, there are overall 27 postings from Oct 15 to 20, 2013 which have explicit information of this parade in a variety of forms such as pictures, videos and articles. Besides, all of the 27 have been liked by at least a thousand users and 8 postings have won 10 thousand likes. All these figures have spoken for heated concerns from netizens to this social mobilization.

Conclusion

The general analysis of the case showed that Hong Kong subtle identity is further enhanced by the flow of information in Facebook social media platform. Identity construction is a complex issue. However, in this context, most of the people that go for the demonstration are under the crown of “supporting the HKTV against the denial of television license.” This is particularly true that the traditional mass media has been seen as a bridge for transmitting the messages. However, sometimes, these media could not carry out the concept of social responsibility with their own stance. From the angle of cultural studies, “the image fatigue” and “hyper-reality” could not only be seen in live reporting, but also in Facebook platform in which people could feel the pulse of the demonstration instantly. The power could not be underestimated in which it is emotional appealing to other readers in the Facebook.

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7.2014