

Intro to the session

I'll take about 5 minutes to set up some themes with some examples, and then I've got some starter questions, and then let's try to have a conversation on these themes. We may simply end up raising more questions?

When you guys talk, be sure and say your name and your organization first?

Participation and the Prosumer

Dethklok – a show on Adult Swim about the most brutal band in metal – fans on YouTube record their own shredding version of their theme song

DVD tracks – fan-recorded commentary for DVDs

Fan subs – fan created subtitles for anime or other hard-to-find foreign movies

Gizmodo solicited from the general public for the Nintendo DS before it was released

Casemods – people are making their own product, effectively, and providing instructions on how others can do it

Star Trek: New Voyages are Fan-created new Star Trek episodes

- Some of these are hobbyists, some are underemployed professionals working in other channels

Marketing of Participation

Michel Gondry - The central action in “Be Kind Rewind” takes place in a car junkyard. In the movie, Jerry, the character Jack Black will play, accidentally becomes magnetized by a power plant. His magnetic field erases all the tapes in a video store where his best friend, Mike, played by Mos Def, works. The duo end up re-enacting and refilming their own versions of movies like “King Kong” and “Ghostbusters.” These re-enactments will allow Gondry to recreate well-known films, many of which have elaborate special effects, in his inventive, handcrafted style.

Daniel Clowes – making a film about kids who recreate Raiders of the Lost Ark shot-by-shot in their backyard over several years. It's based on a true story.

YouTube and Cingular running a contest to find an “underground” band (which leads us to question)

Co-creation – the newest buzzword – examples include create-an-ad-for-us efforts: Firefoxflicks, Chevy Tahoe (and some of those were anti-ads), Converse

Authenticity

BzzAgent – recruits people to act as evangelists for a product or service their network of friends

Undercover or Stealth Marketing – attractive actors or models are paid to go into bars and use products like a Sony Ericsson Phone

LonelyGirl15

Subservient Chicken – Burger King ad campaign that was only online and used the aesthetic and the interface of a porno site – it was very post-modern in that it managed to be obviously fake enough to feel authentic

Questions

How do marketers determine the right voice?

Is there an ethical issue in terms of honesty? Or does it not matter as long as you get the buzz? Or do some brands have different interpretations of what's viable and right for them?

What does this mean for the products that we made, as opposed to the messages we use to sell them?

What happens when companies let go of their brand enough to allow anyone – even though who are wildly off message – to participate? Or should they be placing more restrictions on who and how the public participates?