Re-thinking Health Communication in the New Media Landscape

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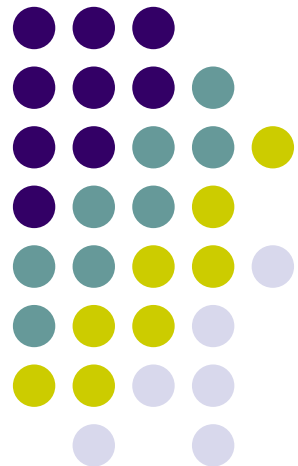


Database for this presentation

- Review and synthesis of academic and professional research on media behavior in the new media landscape--over 1,000 annotated articles in bibliography: http://www.growingaudience.com/downloads/NeedStates.pdf

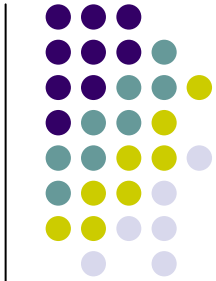
- Analysis of DDB Life Styles Survey for 1995, 2000, 2005, which allows observation of changes in behavior as the digital world unfolds

Theorizing about the digital media environment

There is an abundance of research and opinion about the digital landscape but little in the way of an organizing framework, so here we try to pull things together and introduce a theory that:

1. Explains why and how changes are occurring in the new media landscape
2. Poses a new set of research questions to ask
3. Suggests a needs- and features- based segmented audience strategy for effective health communication

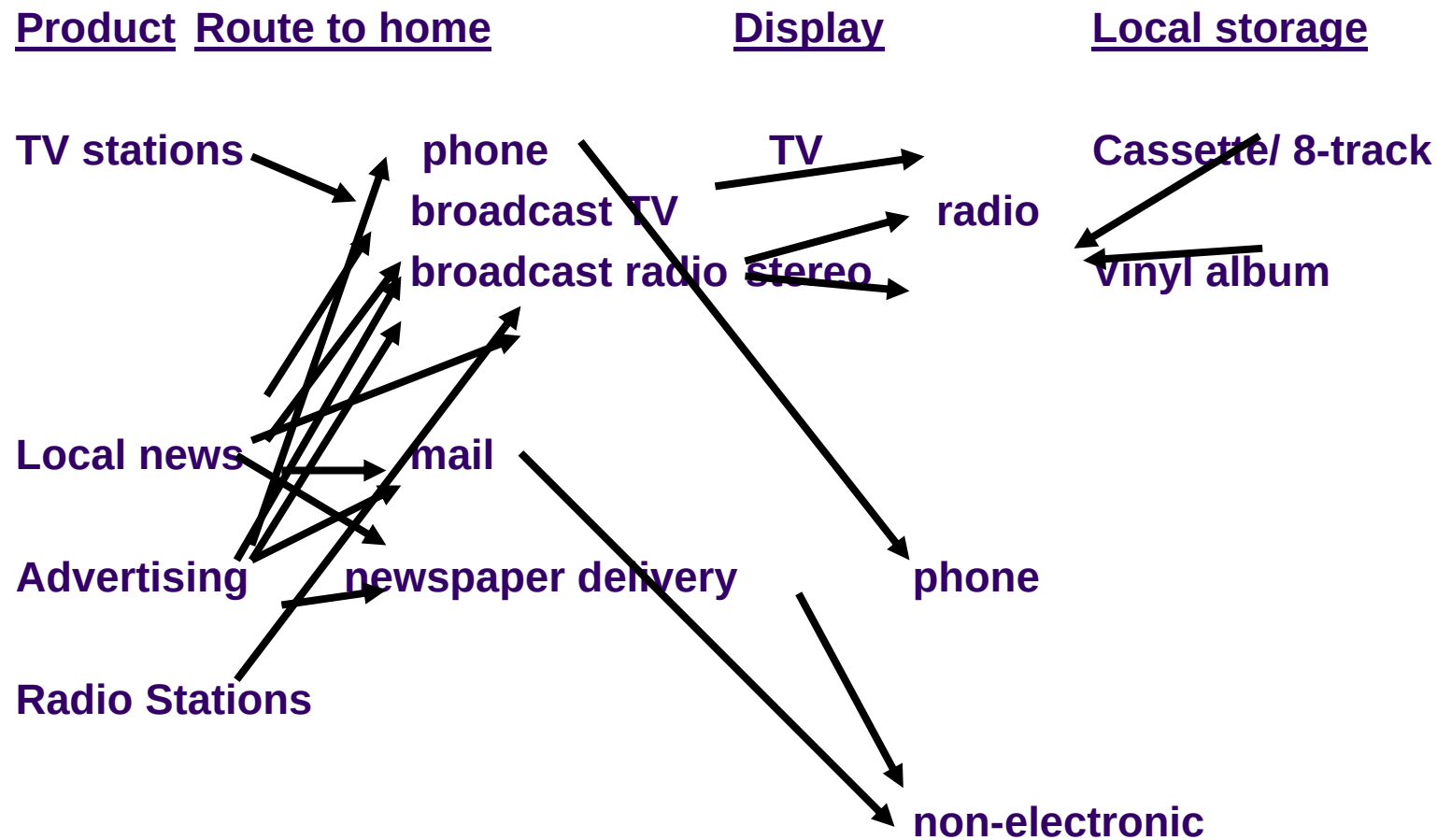
The digital environment has massively changed behavior



- Technology has created major behavioral and lifestyle changes that pose serious challenges to effective health communication. First among these:

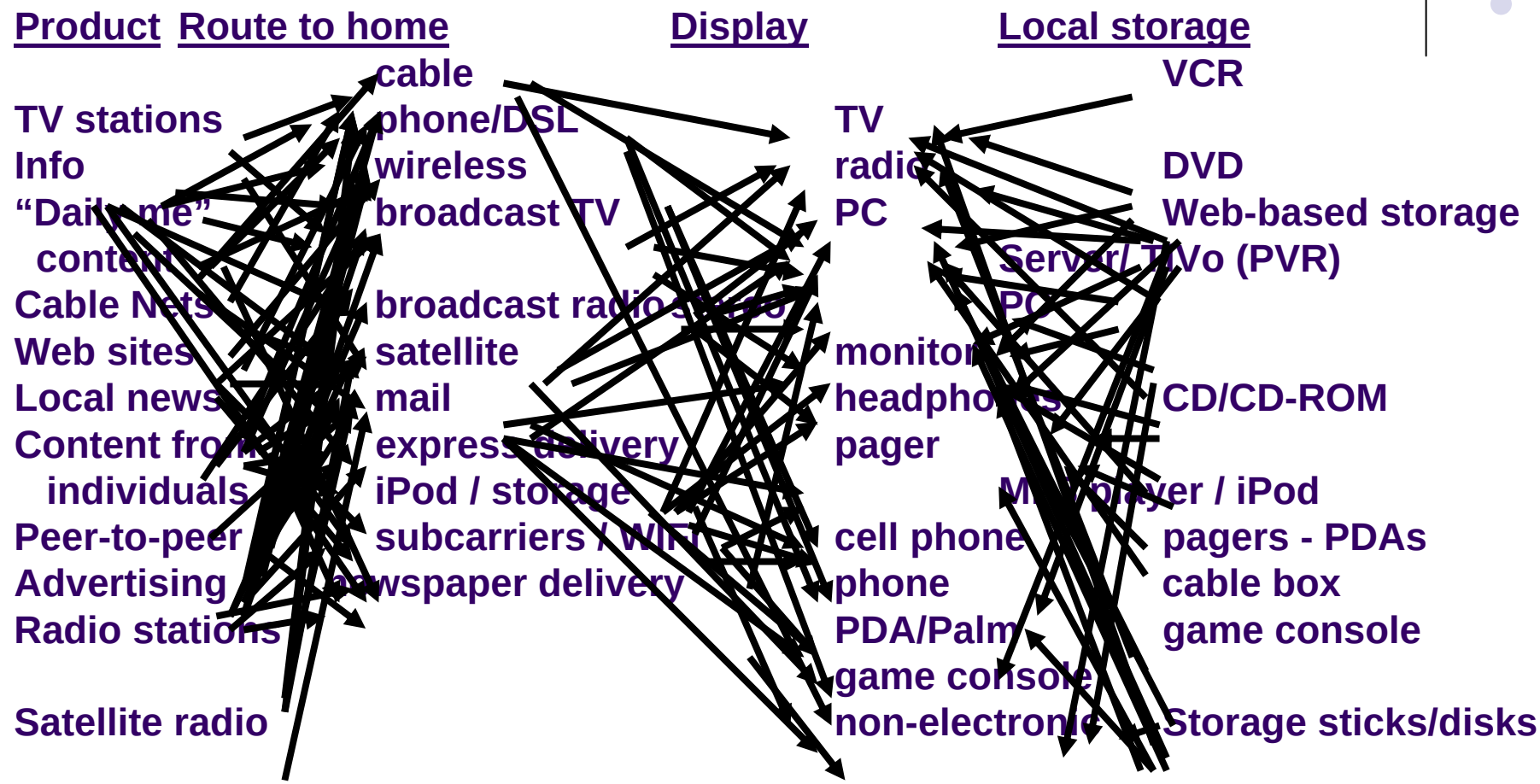
1. A Phenomenal Increase in Media Choices

Home Media Capacity - 1975



Tom Wolzein, Sanford C. Bernstein & Co

Home Media Capacity – Today



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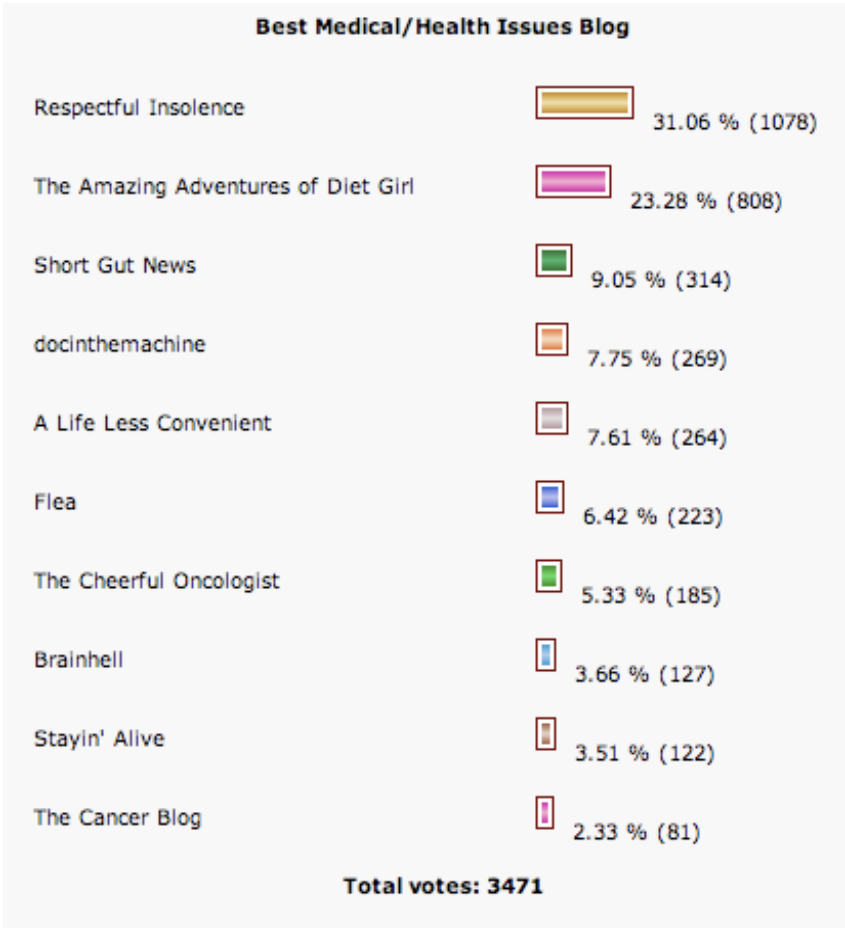
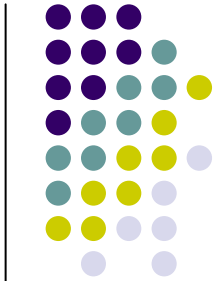
2. Ubiquitous desire to create media content



- Growth of myspace and facebook
- Flickr, YouTube
- 30 million blogs with over 2 billion links
- Blogosphere size doubles every 5.5 months
- Thousands of medical/health related blogs, sites

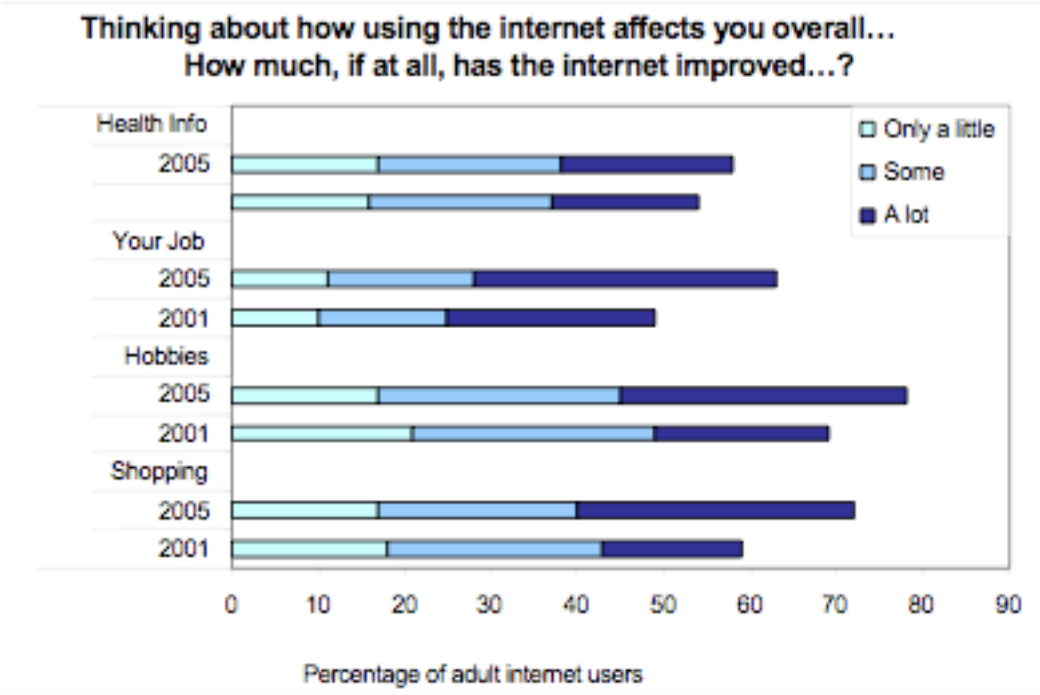
3. Massive migration to the internet



- Estimated percent of U.S. adults online: 79%
- Number of U.S. adults who have ever gone online to look for health or medical information increased from 136 million (2006) to 162 million (2007)
- Percent of online adults who often or sometimes look for information online: 61% in 2006; 66% in 2007

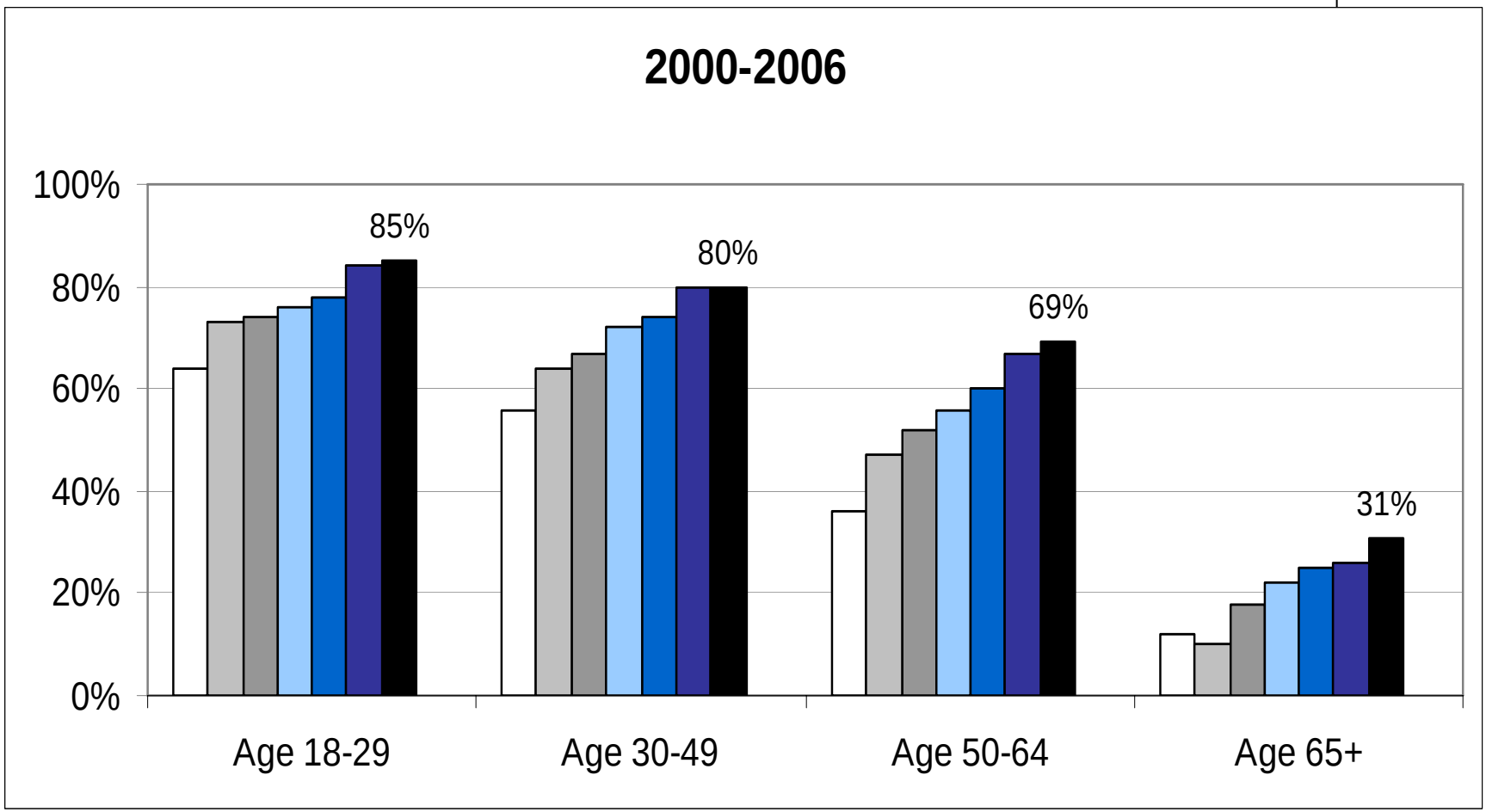
(Harris Poll, July 31, 2007)

Accompanied by a perception that the internet has a positive effect



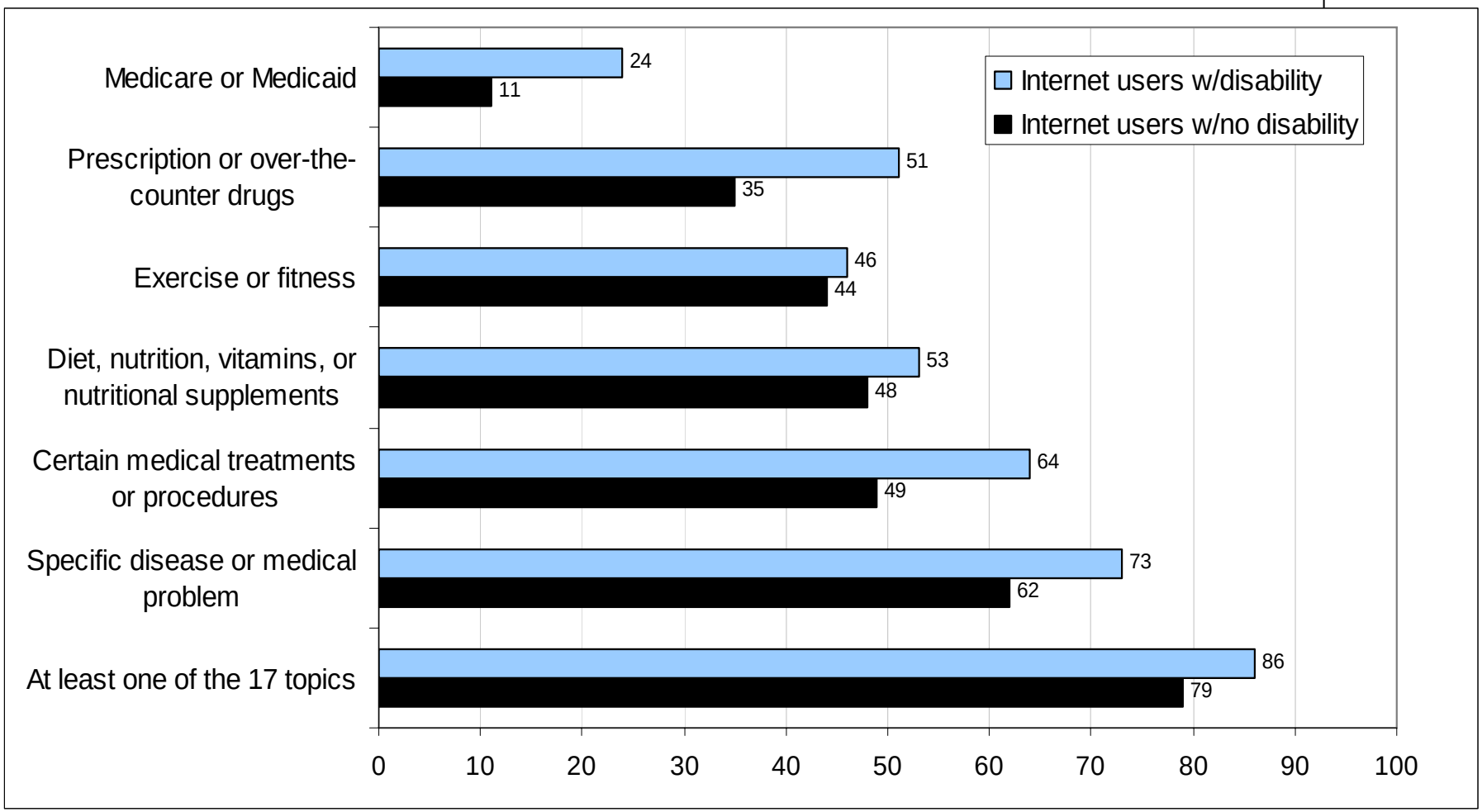
Share of Americans online by age

(Based on Pew Internet Project telephone surveys)



Percent of each group who have looked online for various types of information

(Based on a Pew Internet Project August 2006 survey)



4. Decreased reliance on traditional media sources for information

Mean agreement with the statement: "I need to get the news (national, international, local) every day."

- Across all ages, agreement down 6% from 1995 to 2005
- Agreement among Baby Boomers down 5% from 1995-2005
- Agreement among those 60+ down 8% from 1995-2005
- The mean of youngest group's expressed need for news is 29% lower than oldest group's

Increased reliance on the internet

The Internet is among the top performers on up-to-date, useful way to learn, and provides news only when I want it.

	Local TV News	National TV News	Cable TV News	Internet	Newspaper
Trustworthy	21%	19%	21%	10%	9%
Up-to-date	19%	13%	24%	29%	4%
Offers “news I can use”	37%	11%	10%	20%	9%
Useful way to learn	15%	11%	14%	41%	8%
Entertaining	23%	12%	18%	20%	4%
Provides news only when I want it	12%	6%	9%	49%	9%

5. Growing demand for personalized input

"Consumers want their media when they want it, how they want it and in whatever quantities they want it."

-- Price-Waterhouse, 2006

- RSS feeds
- iPod personalized playlists
- Customized online communities
- TiVo
- Personalized ringtones
- Growing preference for "news with a viewpoint" that matches ones own

6. Increased Focus on Celebrities-- Even Their Health Behaviors

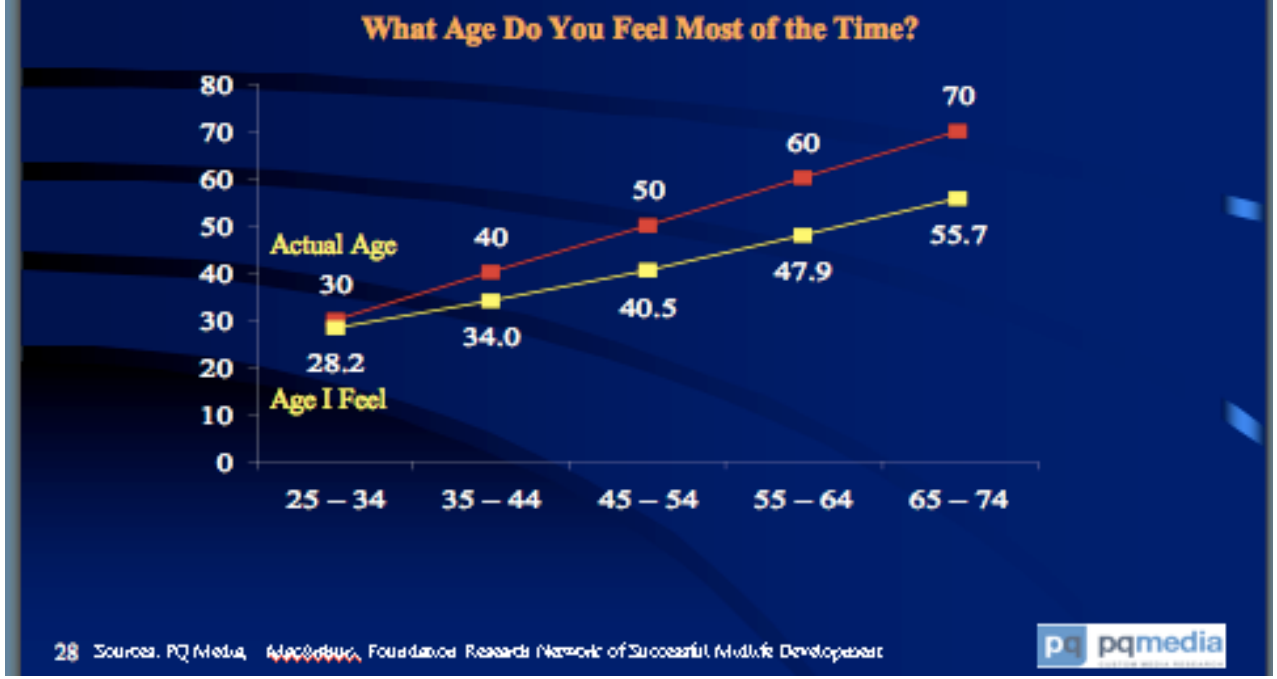
- Technology has reduced distance between consumers and celebrities
- Celebrity magazines is main magazine category to show substantial ad page growth. The granddaddy of them all, *People*, showed the least growth, with 6.4% p in 2005 compared to 2004, but its competitors fared even better: *In Touch* gained 38.4%.
- Celebrities have become common focus of gossip
- One-half of adults surveyed said they "regarded celebrities as a fair and reliable source of information about public issues"
- One-third said their own views or activities had been "shaped by the pronouncements of celebrities"
- Strong evidence that individuals model behaviors on portrayals in entertainment media

7. Development of First Generation that Refuses to Age

- Number of online adults aged 55 and older grew by 20% to reach over 27 million in 2005
- Ability to access content any time of the day is drawing these adults online. This age group also finds more accurate information on the Web than with TV, radio, magazines, and newspapers
- 58% of surveyed adults over 55 stated they could find content online they couldn't find via other media
- 45% said Internet offered up-to-date content, particularly when compared with broadcast media
- In addition to gathering information for their personal needs, over 50 percent of this demographic uses the Web to communicate with others

Aging Baby Boomers Feeling Young

- Aging Boomers are working to ensure a vibrant and youthful self-image



 Sources: PQ Media, [illegible] Foundation's Research Network of Successful Midlife Development

pqmedia

Baby boomers tap online health resources

- Boomers just as likely to use online health resources as any other age group
- 67% of older boomers used a general health site such as WebMD
- 65-67% of boomers used a general search engine to find health data

Source: Jupiter Research (2006)

8. More total media time; less information time

- Studies of daypart use show that the total media use time increased from 1995-2000 across age groups
- But a larger percent of that increased time use is going to entertainment and a smaller percent to information

So how can we think about all these changes and harness them for effective communication strategies?

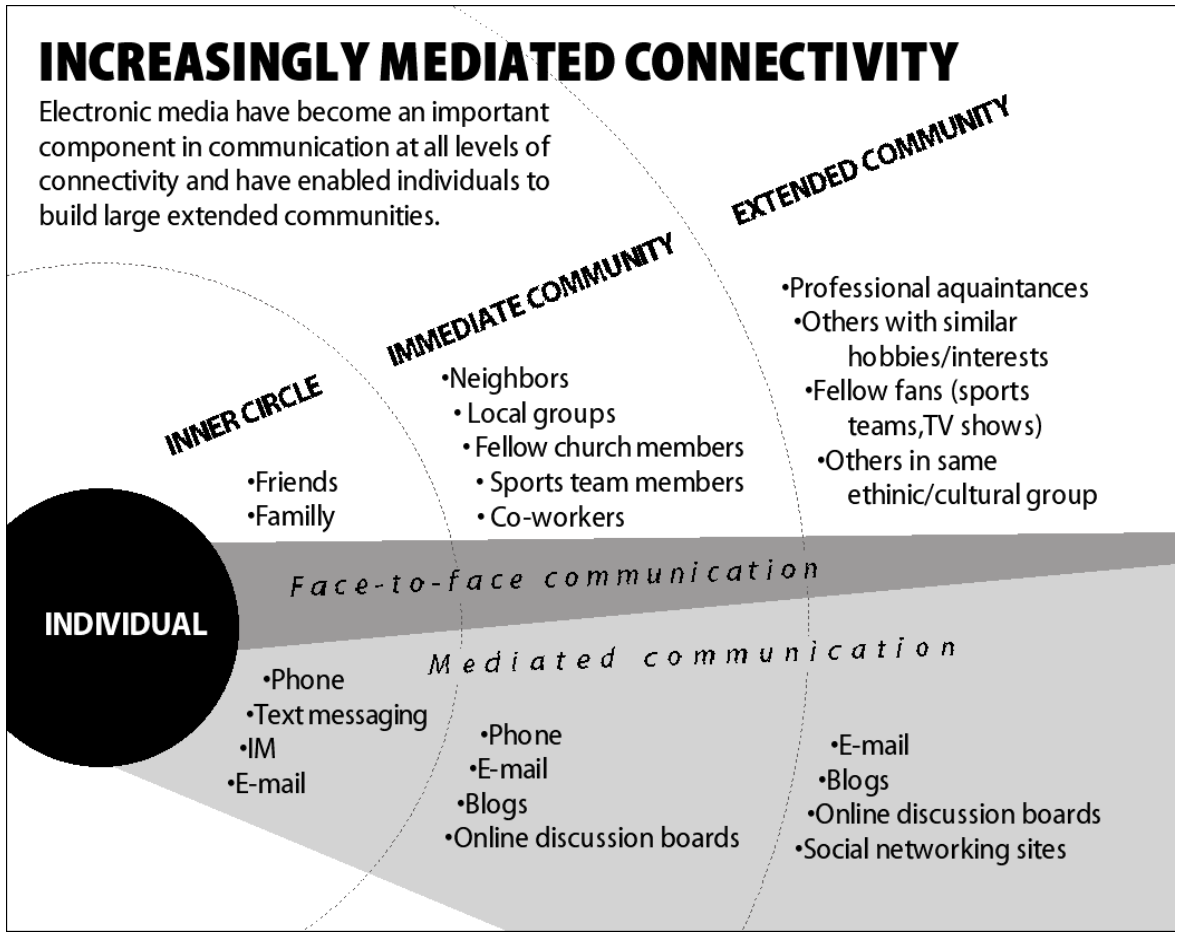
First, begin with four basic communication needs:

- Connectivity
- Information
- Entertainment
- Shopping/consuming

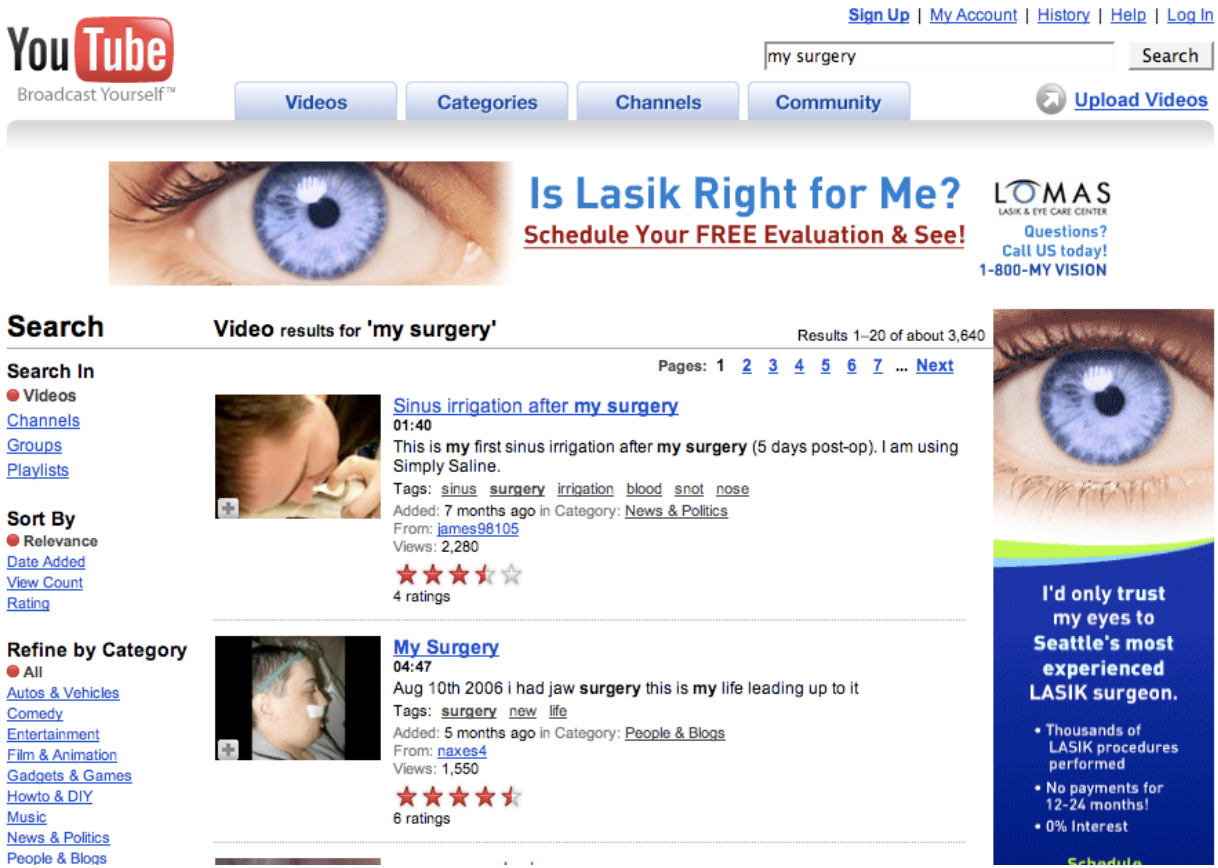
Every instance of media use is motivated by a communication need

- Logging into a http://Revolutionhealth.com community or belonging to an online affinity group are *connectivity* behaviors
- Searching http://marrtc.org/ is *informational* behavior
- Watching television and viewing health-related portrayals is *entertainment* behavior
- Going to http://canadadrugs.com for medication is *shopping* behavior

Satisfaction of connectivity need with media

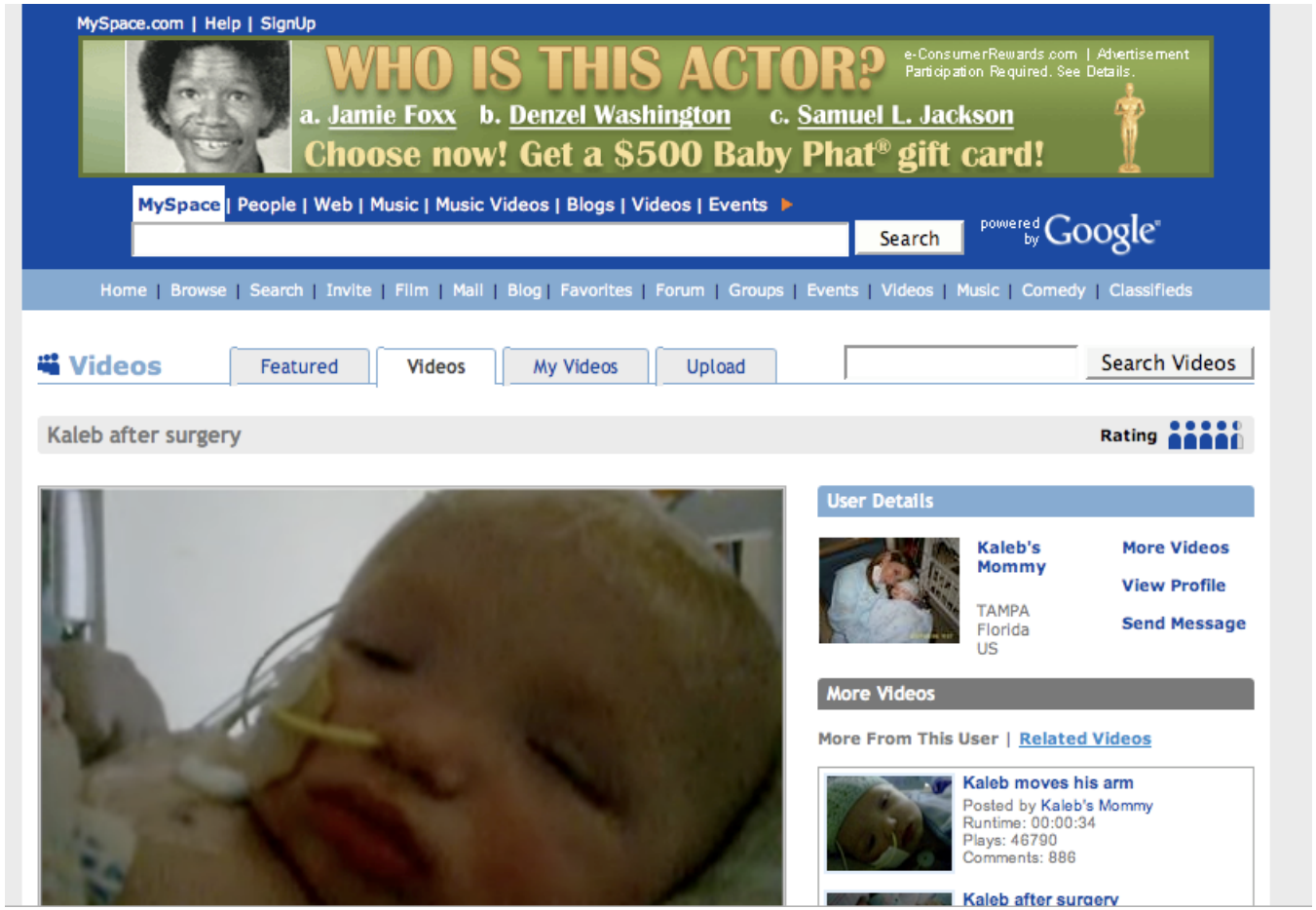


Connectivity Need:
YouTube: Personal surgery photos

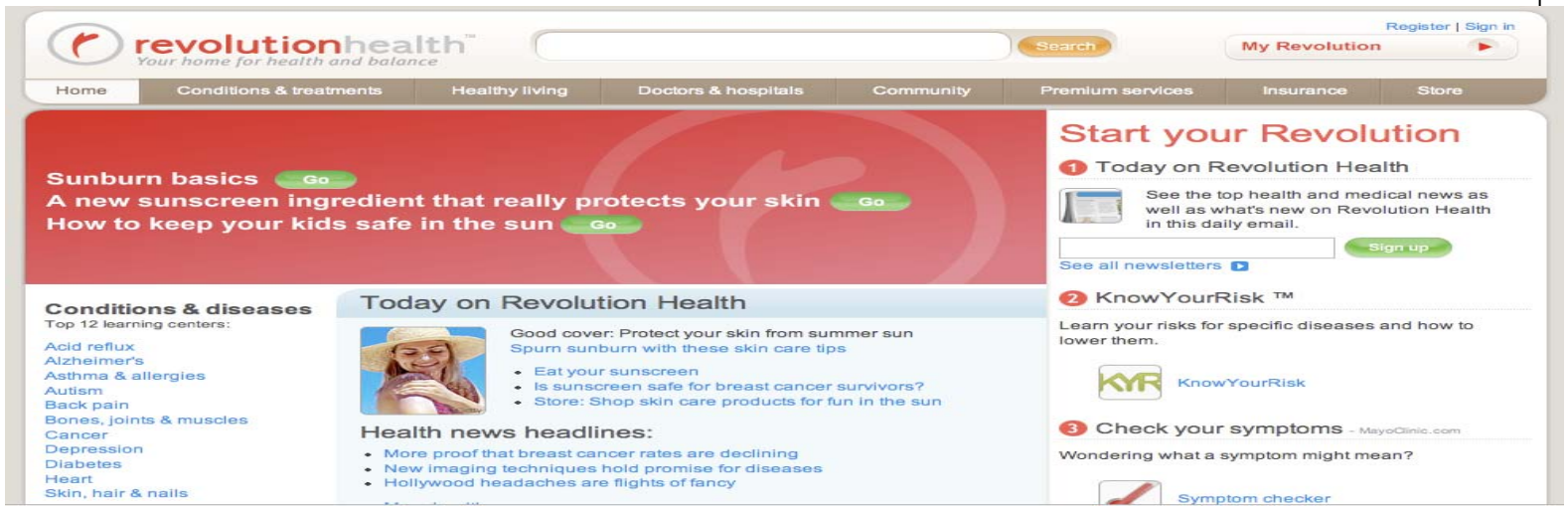


Connectivity Need:

MySpace: Kaleb after surgery



Information Need:
Search Engine Domination



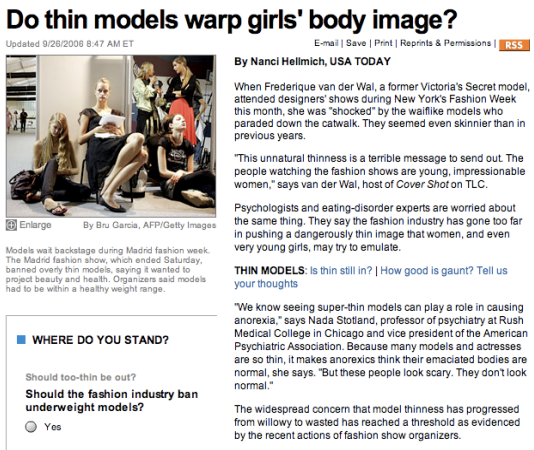
- Dr. Google: Search is massive
- 80% of Internet users, 93 millions Americans, have searched online for one of 16 major health topics
- One in 5 has researched mental health information
- 13% have looked up vaccination information
- People expect search engines to give them reliable health information

Information need increasingly satisfied online

- 36% of e-caregivers said the internet helped them find advice or support from other people.
- 34% of e-caregivers said the internet helped them find professional or expert services.
- 26% of e-caregivers said the internet helped them find information or compare options.

Entertainment Need

- Individuals model behaviors on celebrities
- Celebrities as role models, advice givers
- Portrayals in media matter
- Some people browse health matters as diversion



Do thin models warp girls' body image?

Updated 9/26/2008 8:47 AM ET

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Enlarge By Bru Garcia, AFP/Getty Images

Models wait backstage during Madrid fashion week. The Madrid fashion show, which ended Saturday, banned overly thin models, saying it wanted to project beauty and health. Organizers said models had to be within a healthy weight range.

By Nanci Hellmich, USA TODAY

When Frederique van der Wal, a former Victoria's Secret model, attended designers' shows during New York's Fashion Week this month, she was "shocked" by the waiflike models who paraded down the catwalk. They seemed even skinnier than in previous years.

"This unnatural thinness is a terrible message to send out. The people watching the fashion shows are young, impressionable women," says van der Wal, host of *Cover Shot* on TLC.

Psychologists and eating-disorder experts are worried about the same thing. They say the fashion industry has gone too far in pushing a dangerously thin image that women, and even very young girls, may try to emulate.

THIN MODELS: Is thin still in? | How good is gaunt? Tell us your thoughts

"We know seeing super-thin models can play a role in causing anorexia," says Nada Stotland, professor of psychiatry at Rush Medical College in Chicago and vice president of the American Psychiatric Association. Because many models and actresses are so thin, it makes anorexics think their emaciated bodies are normal, she says. "But these people look scary. They don't look normal."

The widespread concern that model thinness has progressed from willowy to wasted has reached a threshold as evidenced by the recent actions of fashion show organizers.

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Should too-thin be out?

Should the fashion industry ban underweight models?

Yes

Celebrities linked with health conditions

self portrait

Neve Campbell believes in self-fulfillment

The former *Party of Five* star prefers life outside of Hollywood.

Interview by Shelley Levitt

I love ballet and always expected to become a dancer. I started dancing at 6 and joined the National Ballet School in Canada at 9. But the pressure was intense and, at 14, I had something of a nervous breakdown, so I dropped out. In the ballet world, I watched many friends damage themselves through anorexia and bulimia. We can get self-critical about our bodies, but I try hard to keep myself in check because I've seen how unhealthy that kind of obsessing can become.

In 1996, my whole life changed when I got the lead role in the movie *Scream*. The shows *Party of Five* and *Friends* were still new, and Courteney Cox, [then] Arquette and I were all just starting out. We felt like we were on this big, fun camping trip. None of us had any clue how popular the movie would be. Then, after it opened, we were suddenly celebrities.

I grew up with three brothers, and I was a tomboy. Maybe that's why I'm not that comfortable at photo shoots or on the red carpet. When I studied dance, I used my body as a tool in my craft, but being seen as a sexual icon was completely foreign to me. I was also oblivious to pop culture. My agents used to call and say, "Coppola wants you to read for him," and I'd say, "Who's Coppola?"

I lived in L.A. for 12 years. For a while, my mother lived there, too, and I realized it isn't much of a place for a divorced, middle-aged woman. Most men her age were dating 25-year-olds. "There's something really wrong with that. I moved to London to be with my boyfriend a year ago, and I love that it's not all about the movie industry or how much you weigh.

My cousin Colleen and I have always been best friends. We were born eight days apart, and when she was diagnosed with epilepsy at 18, it was a shock for us both. She rarely talked about her condition because she never knew how others would react. Even after she became a successful make-up artist, she kept it a secret, telling her agent only this year. The two of us worked to launch the Bill of Rights for People Living With Epilepsy (EpilepsyBillofRights.com), a document to help epileptics manage their condition and cope with issues that come up at work. It's about educating people the way Colleen educated me. Being around her keeps me grounded.

- Self Magazine
- People Magazine
- Health Magazine
- For Me Magazine

LeAnn Rimes and Eczema

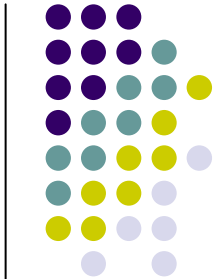
Purchasing Need:

- Online pharmacies
- Pre-purchase research, commercial sites
- Searching online for information to guide purchase
- Getting online doctor treatment

The Digital Environment Has Spawned Features That Make Communication…

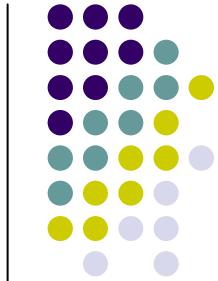
- Immediate
- Participatory
- Mobile (AND Immediate)
- Searchable
- Customizable
- Rich in sight, sound and movement
- On demand (time shifting)

Usability Features of Each News Medium



Media Features	Media				
	Newspapers	Radio	TV	Cable News	Internet
Participation easy					X
Customizability					X
Time shifting	X				X
Time flexibility (24/7)				X	X
Mobility	X				X
Interactivity					X
Search capacity					X
Immediacy		X	X	X	X
Images			X	X	X
Sound		X	X	X	X
Doesn't require high attention		X	X	X	X
Doesn't require reading skills		X	X	X	X

In the digital health world, people can choose among media that have desirable features



- Immediate (checking breaking health news on the Internet)
- Participatory (commenting on a a health blog story)
- Mobile AND Immediate (cell phone updates)
- Searchable (checking on symptoms or new treatments)
- Customizable (personalized home pages, RSS feeds)
- Rich in sight, sound and movement (streaming video)
- On demand (time shifting, TiVo)
- Interactive

The Digital Environment Has Increased the Number of Kinds of Voices in the Media

- Health information that comes from a long-established source is most credible (authoritative)
- Health information from other people like me is something I can really trust (opinionated)
- I like learning health information from the perspective of people who are experiencing it (created)

People Are Migrating Away from the Authoritative Voice

- Authoritative: Created and produced by professionals
- Created: News and information produced by audiences
- Opinionated: News and information with attitude and personality

Powerful patient voices

researchers are now running the clinical-trials page on her foundation's Web site, mpdinfo.org, to keep participants up to date on developments.

Online patient groups have become an increasingly powerful force for health-care consumers over the past decade, raising funds for research and offering patient information and support. Now, as the cumulative power of their memberships grows, these groups are becoming invaluable partners to researchers and physicians searching for cures.

Making the Connection

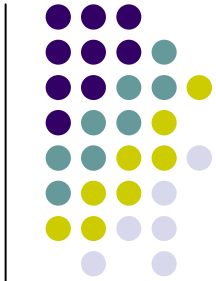
Online patient groups with ties to medical researchers:

Group / Web site	Comment
Association of Cancer Online Resources ACOR.org	159 online cancer groups work with researchers and inform patients of clinical trials, tissue banks and genetic studies.
LMSarcoma Direct Research Foundation lmsdr.org	Patients with leiomyosarcoma, a rare soft-tissue cancer, contribute to a tissue bank; raises funds for research.
Life Raft Group Liferaftgroup.org	Conducts drug side-effects studies of patients with gastrointestinal tumors; sponsors new research.
Myeloproliferative Disorders MPDINFO.org	Blood-cancer group helps provide DNA samples to researchers; participates in quality-of-life studies.

Patient groups are stepping up their participation in medical and public-health research and entering far-reaching collaborative efforts with researchers, scientists and drug developers. They are raising funds and taking part in studies to evaluate the impact of online patient sites. They are even conducting their own studies on side effects of medications, and working with researchers to recruit clinical-trial participants, provide DNA samples and start tissue banks.

Wall Street Journal, June 13, 2007

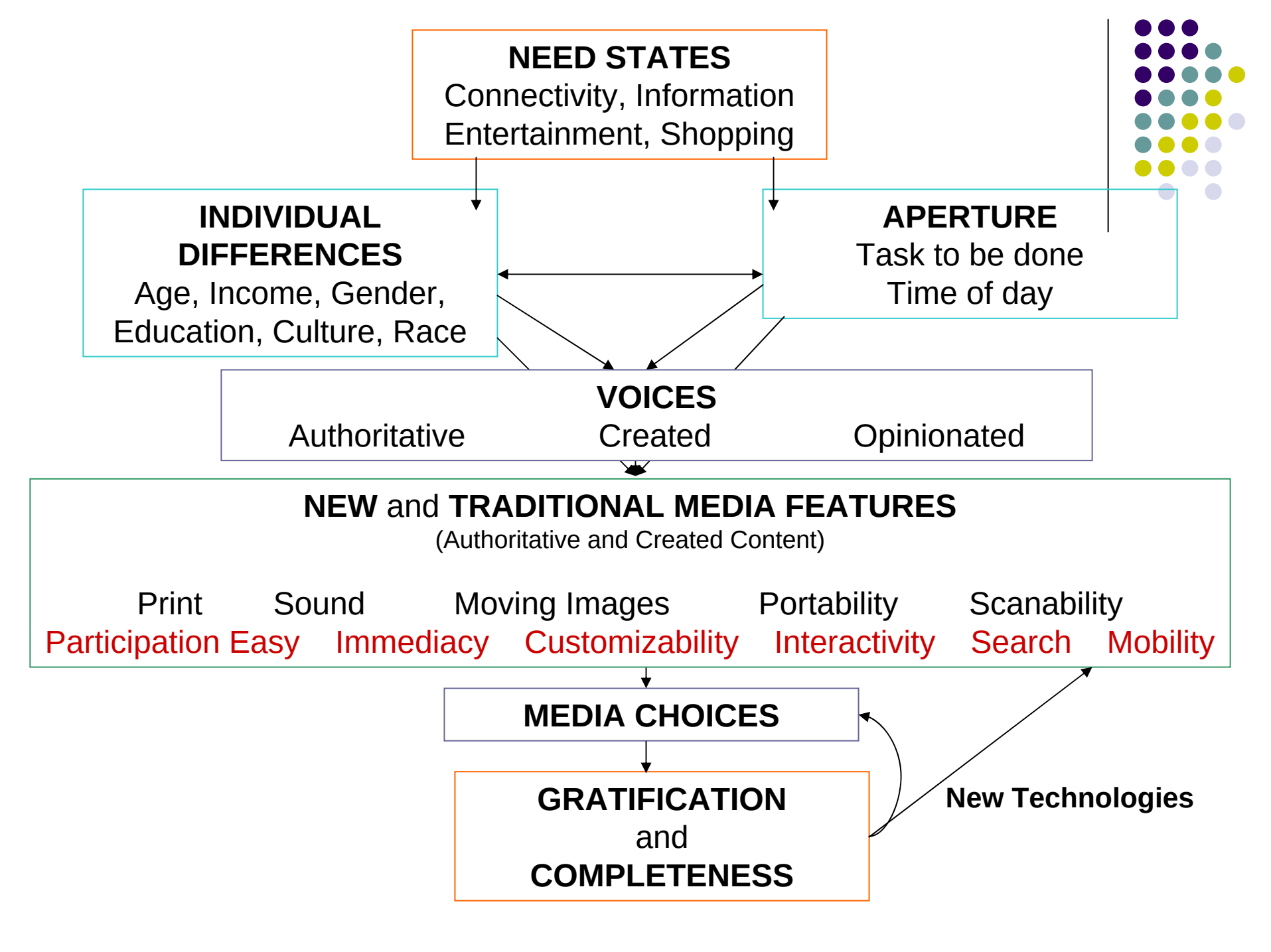
People's use of media is determined by "apertures"



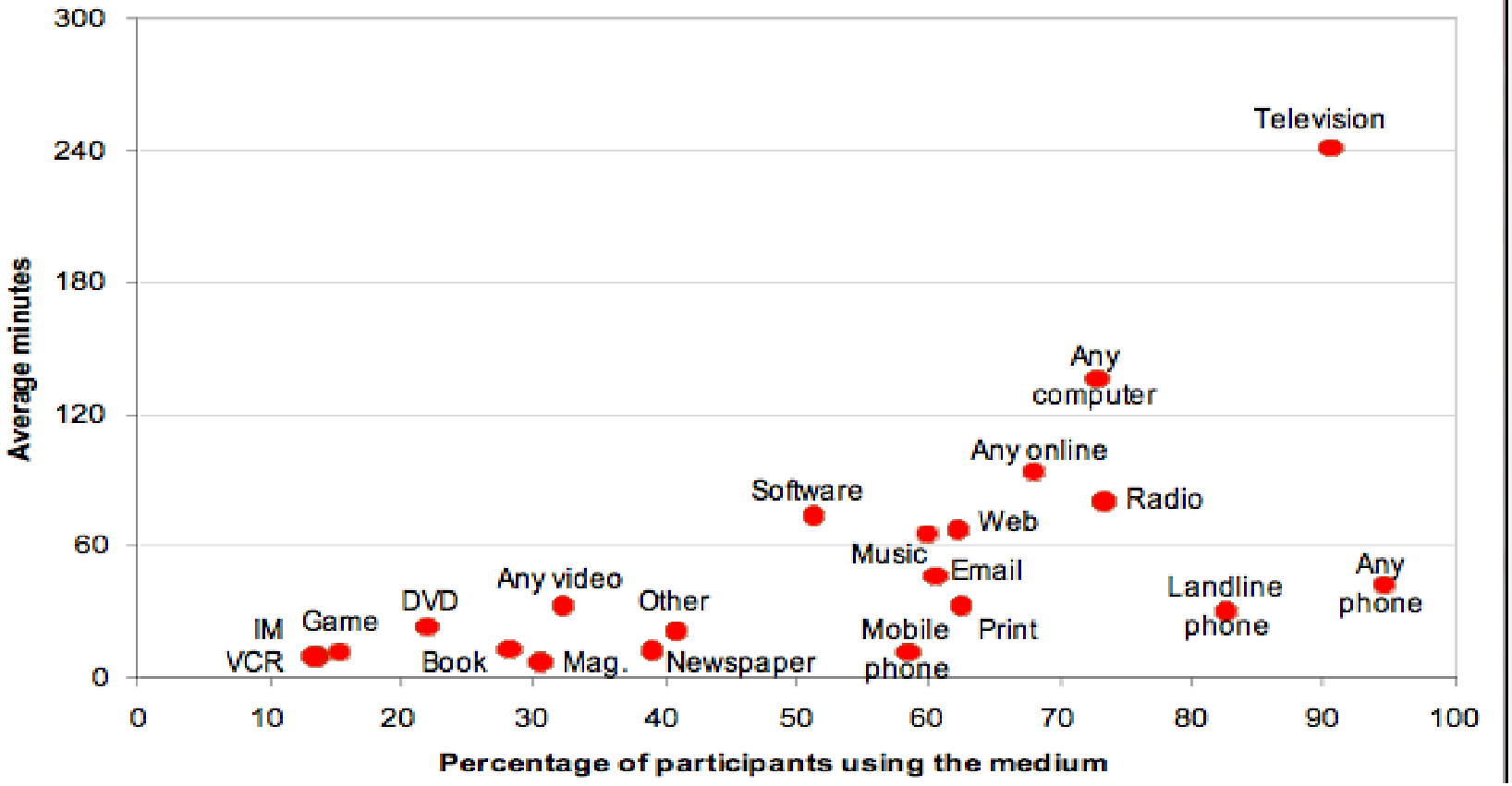
- Aperture is a window of time in which people are most likely to be responsive to a persuasive media message.
- For example, we only advertise cake mix on Thursday and Friday because cakes are only baked on the weekend.

Let’s put these variables together

- Uses and gratifications theory has proved one of the most useful in understanding people’s behavior in the digital environment

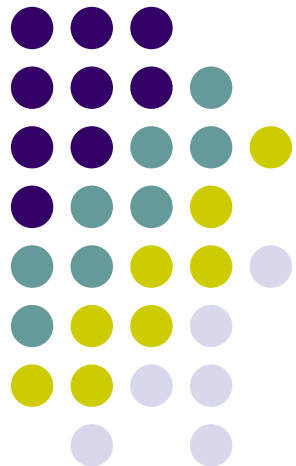

NEED STATES
Connectivity, Information
Entertainment, Shopping
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES
Age, Income, Gender,
Education, Culture, Race
APERTURE
Task to be done
Time of day
VOICES
Authoritative
Created
Opinionated
NEW and TRADITIONAL MEDIA FEATURES
(Authoritative and Created Content)
Print
Sound
Moving Images
Portability
Scanability
Participation Easy
Immediacy
Customizability
Interactivity
Search
Mobility
MEDIA CHOICES
GRATIFICATION
and
COMPLETENESS
New Technologies

Media gratifications have led to a redistribution of time spent with media



What does this mean for health communication?

So much has changed that it is crucial to do basic research before designing health campaigns



Measure communication needs of the target audience

- How important are each of the following in your choice to get health information from one form of media over another?

Health information related to connectivity needs:
Getting health information I can share with my friends
Getting health information that makes me feel smarter
Knowing who wrote or compiled the health information
Being able to see who is reporting the health information

Health information related to information needs:
Alerting me to damaging or harmful situations
Makes me think

Health information related to entertainment:
Entertains me, makes me feel relaxed, is supportive of my point of view

Measure Target Audience Preference for Media Features

- How important are each of the following in your choice to get health information from one form of media over another?

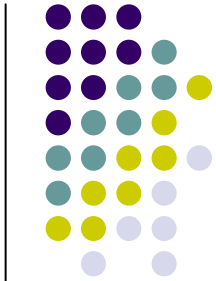
Getting health information when I want it
Getting only the health information I want
Getting health information as soon as it happens
Getting health information that's easy to understand
Getting health information that's rich with images
Getting health information that I can share with my friends

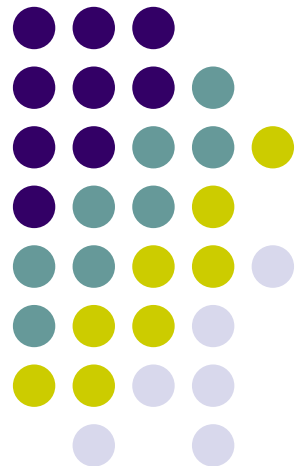
Measure aperture for the health messages you intend

- What media do you use in the

  ___ time of day to get health information, stay connected with others, be entertained, purchase health-related products?

What health communicators can do now



* Get a useful theory and let it guide you
* Conduct needs, features, and aperture research and act on the findings
* Be strategic first and tactical second
* Be medium agnostic
* Test and refine approaches for each target audience

Discussion