Rhetoric and Communications, Issue 4, July 2012

Hyperlocal communication as a function of globalization

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Abstract: The current essay is an attempt to present one relatively new topic namely the hyperlocal communication in the context of the globalization. The focus is on the binome hyperlocal – global.

Keywords: hyperlocal communication, hyperlocal marketing, globalization.

Hyperlocal marketing is riding the wave of contemporary communication. It is modern. It is new. It is cool to be hyperlocal. Only the word *Hyper* says it all!

What stands behind this new marketing mantra?

One ordinary googling pours cold water over the fire. The first result in the search says: "Hyperlocal Marketing: The Oldest Form Of Marketing Around. Hyperlocal marketing may be a new buzz word but it is probably one of the oldest methods of marketing in existence. In the days before the Internet, television, radio - even before printing, merchants had no choice but to rely on hyperlocal markets to survive. The only thing that has changed over time is the technology available to analyze and market to micro areas." [1]. Writing this Lahle Wolfe, About.com Guide makes me think it over twice before start singing another *ditiramb* for the "brand new" communication tool.

Anyway I will risk to globalize a little. Though the *hyperlocal marketing* term is the buzz one, I think that **Hyperlocal communication** is the general term. Hyperlocal communication combines marketing, PR, advertising, Journalism and every other form of communication that doesn't fall in some specific category. Humankind has really evolved from the tribal village to our contemporary global village but in terms of communication many aspects are very similar.

The Spiral Theory Of Knowledge which has its roots back in Aristotelis' *On the Soul* (Greek Περὶ Ψυχῆς (Perì Psūchês) says (this is a very simplified version of it, indeed) that because the soul is the core center of the human being everything rotates around it and, periodically, knowledge comes again over the same projection but on a different level of development. So to say it "Oprah way" our hyperlocal communication may look in some ways very much like the voice of the merchant centuries ago but it is really very very different now; and not only because it is technologically enhanced. The global level of interaction helps just a single user of all the surrounding machinery to reach every aspect of knowledge of the surrounding world.

Starting with the weather – present temperatures, past analysis for this place, dating back many years ago, forecasting for the next couple of hours, days, even forecasting concerning planetary and solar science newest theories.

Going further with the news – the ever caring Google and other bunch of searching tools we find out there are some special ones that can dig out every piece of hyperlocal news in a second. There is so much difference in such channel from the mere verbal question: "What's going on around dude?" And although the contextual search and **hyperlinking** is working basically like in the ordinary conversation where one can intervene hooking to some word or

subject, there really is big difference in how this is done. Local communication is local only even if it refers to some global subjects. Hyperlocal communication is a very peculiar part of global communication. The local is analyzed by global instruments and with the whole back-up of the global knowledge for other similar cases. When speaking about local news – there is no "local only" news any more. If the news is important, interesting, concerning more people (there is even recipe for what to put inside) the news becomes global within the blink of an eye. The most obvious example is the *viral way of spreading the news*. Back in 2006 communication experts were amazed how fast a small movie encompassed the planet. A *Diet Coke and Mentos eruption* (or *Diet Coke and Mentos geyser*) is now in the books showing how a local experiment gets a celebrity status, multiplies and even jumps into the Guinness World Records [2]. Of course it is not exactly journalism and maybe not a journalism at all but this way of broadcasting is already a thread from our communication canvas. The so called **Integrated Mass Communication** (obviously derived from **Integrated Marketing Communication**) is caring for the message and the effect it causes – not for the vehicle itself.

But let us return back to our local sheep: when someone starts search for specific "local" news, he can voluntary or not cause ripple effect which can globalize this news. This can be done by mere searching, sharing by mail, social networking etc. Sometimes even the "butterfly effect" occurs – a piece of, not so important, news for one place can cause a media hurricane in some other specific location.

In the **continuum of interconnectivity** there is no isolated event.

And this can be good or bad. The whole planet was celebrating the royal wedding in Britain but at the same time every country is suffering the global crisis. Many people are thinking that "The problem could have been avoided, if ideologues supporting the current economics models weren't so vocal, influential and inconsiderate of others' viewpoints and concerns" [3]. That is possible because a person does not send an opinion any more. He shares it. And even if it is on the local issue the opinion can be "glued" to similar other issues, multiplied and enlarged to general and planetary scale. Once having received the government of Farther Spain after his prætorship, Caesar came to a little town in passing the Alps; and his friends, by way of mirth, took occasion to say, "Can there here be any disputes for offices, any contentions for precedence, or such envy and ambition as we see among the great?" To which Cæsar answered, with great seriousness, "I assure you I had rather be the first man here than the second man in Rome."—PLUTARCH: *Life* [4]. Today it is not so difficult to became first in Rome being at the same time the last in a distant village. Casting *Music Idol* in Bulgaria Valentina Hasan become a viral star and got her minute of glory with the famous, not only locally, hit *Can LI*. Of course this was easy fading glory but you cannot say the same about the amateur video "Silvio Berlusconi humping on police woman" [5] which is forever attached to the image of the naughty Italian billionaire and former PM.

So, no more local events!

Starting to mirror the local reality with the help of the World Wide Web we have already started the globalization of the local. It is easy to be done when there are images used as message carriers. But being *communication Caesar* today, organizations and corporations like Google can use the power invested in them for good. Google has gotten involved with the *Endangered Languages Project* [6], an initiative to document and prevent the extinction of more than 3,000 languages worldwide. Some cane say that this is a kind of afterlife, but the important question is that with the help of the global communication a local merit becomes a global one.

I started with the weather. And not only because of the old local British habit to start a conversation: if we start to dig out how the weather forecast is produced we will see that it is

not only satellite images and animation. Many weather stations all around the world are transmitting every second data about temperatures, winds, pressure etc. which are forming current condition for a place or region and which are helping the forecast: not exactly mass communication but a perfect example how hyperlocal data are contributing to the global view.

Being no adept to solipsism an individual wants to know the weather condition in his place. Without belonging to the non-social type one wants to know the news about one's neighborhood not about the planet. The ordinary man wants to know if there is some cash in the ATM machine near him, not in the entire bank system of the European Union. The housewife wants to check if there are discounts in the nearest store, not for the season on the whole.

And at the same time the individual, after checking the local weather and because he is an ever-learning human, he or she wants to check where the global climate is going to. And because He or She is the ever curious human, they will want to check the news about other places like this, to share the hyperlocal news with people on the opposite site of the planet. And because there is no money in the local ATM machine the user can pay Amazon virtually and expect the goods to be delivered exactly to his very local, very private home castle. And because in her local store the discounts had started earlier the ever helpful and friendly housewife will tell everyone of her friends about it, which physically will allocate some people there to gnaw the store down.

Today we are praising the hyperlocal communication. It is neither new in concept nor in principle as some people say but it is very influential. *Hyperlocal* is only one side of the binome *hyperlocal – **global.*** The contemporary Hyperlocal communication is only possible as a function of the globalization and at the same time it helps and builds the globalization process. Every time when someone starts to create something local there is a new brick laid in the fabric of the global building of the planetary knowledge, even it is the smallest and not so important an this moment one.

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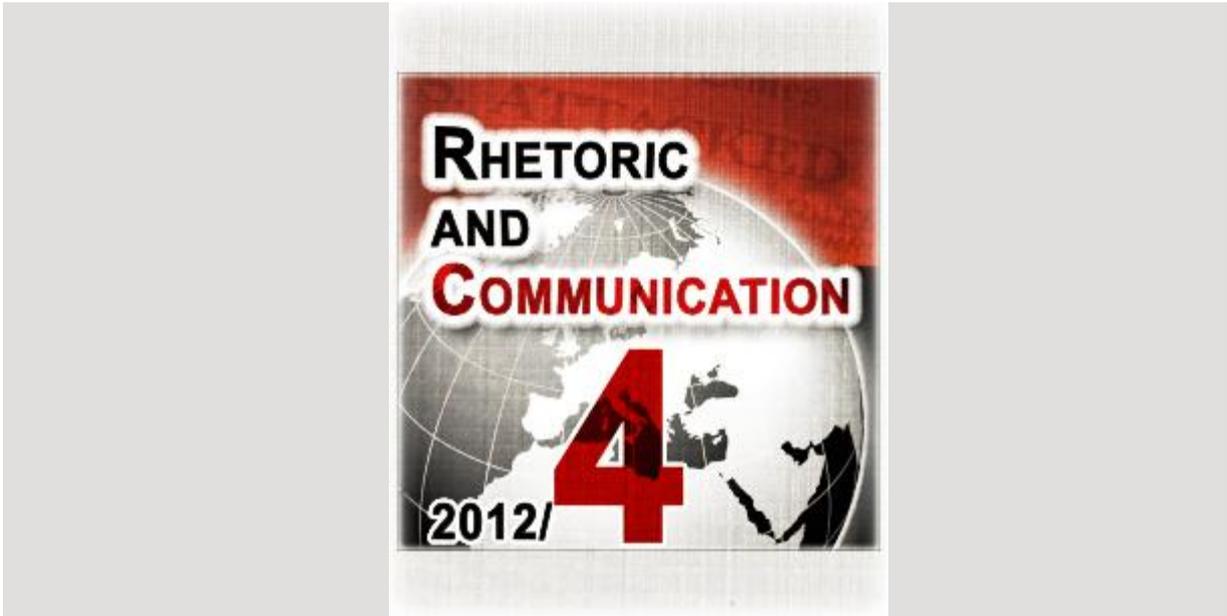
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