A study on the relation between the evolution of media platform and mobile content culture in Korea

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Introduction

At the *candle rallies* in April 2008 protesting against the import of U.S. beef under Korea-U.S. FTA, the participants paraded in the street with a candle in one hand and a camcorder or digital camera in the other hand. Using their mobile phones and laptop computers embedded with high-speed wireless Internet, citizens broadcast, live, the scene of the rally to Internet portal sites 'Agora' in 'Daum' and 'afreeca.'

Figure 1. 'Daum' live broadcasting and Google Earth

The rallies took place, not only in the streets, but also at ordinary households throughout the country. Netizens who joined the *candle rallies* took satellite photographs of the scenes through 'Google Earth', reported the deployment and moving routes of police, and estimated the number of participants by counting candles in aerial photographs using pixel measuring software. Citizens gathered and reported news online using advanced technologies unimagined by established media companies and they also collected donations through the live Internet broadcasting of the candlelight rallies through 'OhmyNews' raising 100 million won (US$100,000) in eight days.

'One-Person Media' and multitude

Korea, which is expected to have a population of around 50 million in 2010, ranks first in the world in computer diffusion rate, super high speed communication network, and the digital opportunity index. Currently, as of 2009, the number of subscribers to high-speed Internet is over 15.5 million and that to mobile telecommunication is over 45 million.

Figure 2. One-person media

In this way, it was ordinary people and the public who opened the new paradigm of 'One-Person Media' in Korea. People who provided a ground for faster and more vivid communication than news by professional reporters are no longer a simple mass or crowd. They can be defined as 'Multitude' with swarm intelligence who are individuals and who participate voluntarily. Multitude is a political term first used by Machiavelli and reiterated by Spinoza. Recently the term has returned to prominence because of its conceptualization as a new model for organization of resistance against the global capitalist system - as described by political theorists Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt.

Figure 3. Digital citizen broadband democracy in Korea

Mobile content culture in Korea

Today's media environment created by the advance of information technology has made fundamental impacts not only on human society, culture and the arts but also on our daily communication and habits. In particular, space-centred human life has been deconstructed into the style of time-centred 'digital nomads'.

In the evolving media environment, the public or users broker the conventional way of communication and produce new content UGC (User Generated Content). In particular UGC based on Web 2.0 was a case of the materialization of the Web as a platform - which began to gain strength and leads user-centred online culture. In 2006, Google, the largest Internet search engine, took over YouTube, the biggest video content site in the U.S. YouTube has made a great contribution to the external expansion of UGC by broadening the width of UGC production and promoting its sharing and distribution - before culture is connected to consumption activity. On the other hand, the multitude's unique UGC creation method displayed at the candle demonstrations in Seoul in 2008, and the public mechanism for sharing the method - presented the vision of personal broadband. This means that network is replaced by the Internet as a ubiquitous environment: users and contents become

the centre of telecommunication, and a new content mass production system has been established. 'France 24' is a news broadcasting system in France, called a new form of expression through the medium of the Internet - 'broadband democracy.'

Multitude	Digital content producing activities	Media
Participator	a) Rally participants b) To communicate with other participants using calls and text message c) Notify to the friends and family about the situation	- Mobile Phone
Recorder	a) Take photos and videos at the rally, and then uploaded those files on the internet b) Live broadcast on the 'afreeca' though a laptop webcam.	- Digital Camera - Camcorder
Analyst	a) Posted information about attending the rally preparations such as candles, blankets, foods, even though when they are coped with police situation. b) Estimated the number of participants by counting candles in aerial photographs using pixel measuring software.	- Internet - Photoshop
Spreader	a) Free discussions and arguments on the personal blogs and public broadcasting boards. b) Update real-time news	- Internet - Broadcasting (Daum 'Agora', afreeca, ColorTV) - Blog

Table 1. Categories of multitude type as media activities

Conclusion

This study analyzed the new information communication structure in Korea through the case of media utilization in the *candle rallies*, and suggested the possibility of a new culture. In addition, we attempted to illuminate the characteristics of mobile content along with the evolution of media platforms by identifying distinctions between the multitude - using a transformed expression method - and conventional users.

References

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