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Technology at work

Dr. K

Media Richness Theory

‘Testing Media Richness Theory in the New Media: The Effects of Cues, Feedback, and Task Equivocality’ by Alan Dennis and Susan Kinney is a research article in which the authors are attempting to look at another side of the Media Richness Theory and put it to the test. The authors are putting to test the side of the theory that argues that performance improves when team members use richer forms of media for equivocal tasks. The authors hypothesize that “richer media will improve performance in general.” and “richer media will improve performance to a greater extent for more equivocal tasks” (Dennis, 7).

The Media Richness Theory argues that different forms of communication media, such as social media sites, text messaging, phone calling, emailing, and facetime, have different levels of richness. A communication media form like Facetime would be the most rich out of all of them because it contains the most room for social cues. Facetime would be the most similar to face-to-face communication which is the most rich form of communication available. That being said, media such as email and text messaging would be lower on the scale relating to richness. This is because it has the least amount of social cues, no body language, no facial expressions, e.t.c.

The research article by Alan Dennis and Susan Kinney uses supporting evidence to further define and understand Media Richness Theory through their experiment. To sum up the experiment that these researchers did, the authors write this at the beginning of the article: “This

experiment studied the effects of media-richness on decision making in two-person teams using 'new media'. Media richness was varied based on multiplicity of cues and immediacy of feedback." (Dennis, 1). Even though the results of this experiment stated that "the results found no support for the central proposition of the Media Richness Theory" (Dennis 1), this experiment helps further define and understand Media Richness Theory because the findings not only experiment with this theory using 'new media' but it also experiments with it in a work setting which could bring a new understanding to this theory.

The Media Richness Theory can relate to both of the articles 'Timeline: The 30-Year History of the World Wide Web' by Frank Cardona, and 'Internet history timeline: ARPANET to the World Wide Web' by Jesse Emspak and Kim Ann Zimmermann. These articles are similar because they both include some form of timeline about the history of media and the internet. I think a timeline of the history of media and the internet can be related to Media Richness Theory. I think this because with the always changing trait that media has, the Media Richness Theory is in some sort also always changing. As new forms of communication media come out, the richest form of media can change. Facetime for instance came out in 2010 with the iPhone 4. That form of media completely changes how rich the media can get.

In conclusion, the Media Richness theory includes ideas on the richness, or the amount of social cues, included in different forms of media. The research article by Alan Dennis and Susan Kinney brought up a new idea related to Media Richness Theory, the theory in the workplace and if it affects decision making, and put it to the test. And lastly, that a timeline of the history of the media can definitely relate to the Media Richness Theory in that it can always be changing, similar to the advancements of technology over the years. The Media Richness theory overall is

very simple and easy to understand, but relating it to different ideas and putting them to the test can reveal more information on what it is about.

Reference Page

Dennis, A. R., & Kinney, S. T. (1998). Testing media richness theory in the new media: The effects of cues, feedback, and task equivocality. *Information systems research*, 9(3), 256-274.

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Emspak, J., & Zimmermann, K. A. (2022, April 8). *Internet history timeline: ARPANET to the world wide web*. LiveScience. <https://www.livescience.com/20727-internet-history.html>