WEB 2.0 AND THE MARKETING OF MEDIA:

THE (R)EVOLUTION OF PRODUCT

by

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Traditional media companies are launching new marketing strategies that make use of the tools Web 2.0, the interactive Internet, has to offer. This thesis examines the elements of the traditional marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) in a Web 2.0 context.

Using generative criticism to conduct a rhetorical analysis of articles from *Billboard* and *Variety* magazines and a series of interviews with marketing practitioners, I present case studies and industry context for two media companies—Live Nation and NBC—that typify the transition into the digital era. The themes that emerge support my argument that the ultimate effect Web 2.0 is having on the marketing of media is a blurring of the lines between the elements of the marketing mix and increasing ambiguity in the definition of product. These findings are consistent with the principles of remediation theory, the idea that new media embrace old media and transform them.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Media companies are struggling since the advent of Web 2.0—the interactive Internet. Historically, they have been forced to adapt and regroup with each disruptive media innovation (radio, television, the original Internet, etc.), but the interactivity of Web 2.0 and its apparent ability to mimic or replace traditional media seem to be especially threatening to the old guard. Traditional media companies, anxious to build and retain audiences in an atmosphere of change, are launching new marketing strategies that make use of the qualities Web 2.0 has to offer with varying degrees of success. The results of these efforts beg the question: **How do the traditional elements of the marketing mix translate to the interactive Internet?**

Marketing has traditionally been seen as a mix of four "P's": Place (distribution), Promotion, Price, and Product. While many companies appear to be consumed by finding fresh ways to promote their existing products in this new environment without compromising existing pricing models, some seem to be more focused on developing innovative products or revising their existing products to make the best use of online opportunities. **My interest is primarily in exploring how products are affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0; however, I will look at all four P's.**

Although the struggle to adapt exists in all media businesses, this thesis focuses primarily on entertainment media, specifically the television and music industries, as exemplified by NBC and Live Nation, respectively. My focus on entertainment media relates directly to my career aspirations in online marketing, but my research will be valuable to others because the cutting-edge practices I examine can be applied through other media functions as well—particularly in news and information media.

I chose NBC and Live Nation because of how often they appeared in the press in 2007 for their activities related to the Internet. At a glance, it seemed that NBC was being consistently linked to bad news, and that Live Nation was being consistently linked to good news.

I was especially interested in NBC's dispute with Apple about price, a dispute that led to NBC's content being removed from iTunes. NBC also caught my eye with its role in instigating the writers' strike, reportedly taking advantage of the staff writers for shows, including "The Office," by ordering content especially for the Web without compensation or acknowledging value in the mini-"Webisodes" beyond promotion for the show (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6hqP0c0_gw).

I was attracted to Live Nation because of the frequency with which I saw the company discussed in *Billboard* for accumulating other businesses, expanding services, and signing major artists (i.e. Madonna) to comprehensive deals. Live Nation's business model appears to be almost entirely Web-based, and the company is thriving. In every

Billboard article that extolled Live Nation's latest moves, a significant portion of the rest of the issue's content would be dedicated to the woes of the music industry in general, especially regarding digital issues.

I use remediation theory as the lens through which I focus my research, using analyses of NBC and Live Nation as case studies that shed light on whether new media embrace old media and transform it and, if so, how.

The primary method employed for this study is a rhetorical analysis of articles concerning Live Nation and NBC from *Billboard* and *Variety* magazines, respectively, and of transcripts of interviews with marketing professionals who work with Web 2.0 and media. The articles were selected from issues dated July to December 2007, with the criterion that content must discuss both the media company and its Web 2.0-related activities. Once coding was completed, the data were subjected to a generative criticism, as outlined by Sonja Foss.

I chose *Billboard*, a trade magazine for the music industry, and *Variety*, a trade magazine for Hollywood—the film/television/theater industry—because they are well respected within their respective industries and have been in print for approximately 100 years.

Once the analysis of article content was completed, I interviewed professionals who specialize in a combination of marketing, new media, and entertainment. Interview questions were informed by the article analysis. Transcripts of the interviewees' comments were coded and analyzed using coding categories and techniques applied in the article analysis.

The speed with which the Internet is enabling business practices to evolve is stunning. Scholars face the challenge of keeping up with the fields students are preparing to enter. A challenge for me, as a researcher, was finding a thread of constancy in the midst of a changing landscape, and by focusing on the evolution of the marketing mix within the context of marketing media, I hope to have chosen a baseline that will remain relevant, even as the technology involved in this study changes. Because of the potential for issues related to the marketing elements to have a longer shelf-life than that of any technology that affects them, my research findings contribute both to the field of marketing and to the larger discussion of marketing elements and application at the academic level.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I establish the foundation for examining elements of the marketing mix and Web 2.0, the interactive Internet, through a lens of remediation theory.

Marketing

According to the American Marketing Association, "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (AMA)." Although I am concerned with marketing in general in this thesis, I focus on marketing as represented in the elements of the marketing mix, or the "four P's."

The Elements of the Marketing Mix

When McCarthy introduced his model of the elements of marketing in 1960, I doubt he knew how long his four P's—Product, Price, Place, and Promotion—would be upheld as the pillars of the marketing mix.

McCarthy defined the four P's as follows:

- *Product*: The product or service that the company chooses to offer to the target consumers.
- *Placement*: Where, when, and by whom the goods and services are to be offered for sale; wholesaling, retailing, transportation, storage, and financing; all the problems, functions, and institutions involved in getting the right product to the target consumer.
- *Promotion*: Any method which communicates to the target consumer about the right product which will be sold in the right place at the right price; sales promotion, advertising, development and training of the sales force.
- *Price*: The price that will make the product attractive to consumers while generating profit for the company; markups, discounts, and terms of sale. (McCarthy, 1960, pp. 46-47)

Since 1960, a number of researchers have challenged the validity of McCarthy's four P's and suggested replacement concepts or alterations. The revision that is most harmonious with my approach in this thesis is that of Yudelson, as discussed in his article "Adapting McCarthy's Four P's for the Twenty-First Century" (1999).

Yudelson posits that, contrary to what his predecessors suggested, the four P's should not be added to or replaced, but should be adapted to better reflect modern marketing at the turn of the twenty-first century (p. 63).

Yudelson's updated definitions for the four P's are as follows:

- Product should be redefined as all the benefits (present or anticipated) that the buyer or acquirer obtains from the exchange.
- Promotion [should] be redefined to include all of the information that is conveyed between the parties to the transaction.
- Price should be redefined as everything that the acquirer gives up to obtain the benefits.
- Place can be now defined as all that is done and required to facilitate or bring about the exchange (pp. 64-65).

Since McCarthy's four P's were the "traditional elements" of the marketing mix that I had in mind when I started down the path of this thesis, I felt it was important to use them as the baseline when determining how I should classify my units of analysis. Yudelson and others have been tinkering with the originals for some time, however, exploring the evolution of the marketing mix. For this thesis, I have blended these two sets of definitions, as follows:

- Product: the tangible or intangible object of trade, its characteristics and its accompanying collateral and/or benefits.
- Place (or distribution): how the product gets to the customer and all that is done and required to facilitate the exchange.

- Promotion: marketing communications, especially as relate to sales, advertising, publicity, and/or public relations.
- Price: the cost, in terms of tangible and intangible resources and finance, associated with the product, including profit and loss.

My goal in creating my own definitions is to preserve the intention of the original four P's, which were the elements with which I was trained, while acknowledging their evolution in the literature since 1960. Current marketing practitioners and scholars may find, as I did, that my revised definitions are not as limiting as the originals, particularly in a Web 2.0 context.

I began working in marketing in 2000, mentored by a seasoned professional. She was the first to introduce me to the four P's. In 2003, I took an advertising class at Orange Coast College, in which the professor introduced the four P's as a marketing industry-standard concept. In 2006, I enrolled in the Communication and Society program in the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication, focusing heavily on marketing and public relations. The four P's were mentioned in several classes, usually introduced as the commonly understood elements of marketing. In every case, the definitions offered for the four P's was based on McCarthy's original, convincing me that the original P's are still in use, despite critical examination by scholars and marketing professionals like Yudelson. Furthermore, this repeat exposure suggests to me that McCarthy's four P's form the basis for a great deal of marketing theory and practice in the era of the interactive Internet.

Web 2.0—the Interactive Internet

Academic literature dealing with the interactive Internet seems to focus on two areas: specific social media and the ways in which people interact through social media. I have found, as of yet, no scholarship that deals with Web 2.0 in a marketing-specific context. Although there are an increasing number of articles considering the social, medical, business, and educational applications of the interactive Internet, I was unable to find academic literature specifically focused on its marketing applications. In addition to searching the databases available through University of Oregon's library and Google Scholar, I enrolled in a course called "Web 2.0: Theories and Issues" at UO. The professor for this course, Kim Sheehan, offered a remarkably current and comprehensive selection of texts from both academic and popular press publications. Even in this course, marketing in Web 2.0 was represented by Anderson's (2006) *The Long Tail*, a trade book. In fact, in trade and popular press literature, there is a wealth of information regarding this (probably) transitional and (definitely) revolutionary step in the evolution of communications media. I believe the apparent dearth of academic literature may be related to time required to complete rigorous research and the peer review process for publication.

Tim O'Reilly (2007), CEO of O'Reilly Media, Inc. (http://tim.oreilly.com/short_bio.csp), is widely credited with spreading the term "Web 2.0." O'Reilly's definition of Web 2.0 is so heavy-laden with jargon, that I have opted to share Wikipedia's boiled-down definition, which does cite O'Reilly as the force behind the term's spread, instead:

> Web 2.0 is a term describing the trend in the use of World Wide Web technology and web design that aims to enhance creativity, information sharing, and, most notably, collaboration among users. These concepts have led to the development and evolution of web-based communities and hosted services, such as social-networking sites, wikis, blogs, and folksonomies. The term became notable after the first O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference in 2004. Although the term suggests a new version of the World Wide Web, it does not refer to an update to any technical specifications, but to changes in the ways software developers and end-users use the Web. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2)

For the purposes of this thesis, Web 2.0 is defined simply as the "interactive Internet" for the sake of concisely capturing the essence of the difference between the two eras of the Internet so far: Web 1.0 was made up, essentially, of static and informational pages for "visitors," where Web 2.0 focuses on community building, feedback, and dialogue between and among sites and "users."

Among the books surveyed to gain a broad perspective on what interactivity includes in Web 2.0 was *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*, by Tapscott and Williams (2007). Tapscott and Williams chronicle the emergence of "open source" collaborations online and off-line. Wikinomics, which is a play on the name of the popular community-generated online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, focuses on the collaborative aspects of modern research and development, production and manufacturing, software and hardware development, and more.

"Open source" is a phrase often associated with Linux, a user-modified computer operating system that is used world-wide and has been developed primarily through free mass-collaboration. The Linux model has inspired a great deal of the open source and community-generated interactivity in Web 2.0. The gist of this model is that a company, group, individual, etc., will open a problem or project to the community at large, often through posting it online, and ask for contributions from anyone who is interested. These contributions might be strictly voluntary, voluntary with an expectation of intangible compensation through social capital, or compensated with tangible payment of some sort—including, but not limited to, money.

Marketing and Web 2.0

As stated earlier, I have yet to find a scholarly study that deals with the Web 2.0 in a marketing context. In a search for academic papers in the EbscoHost, Google Scholar, and LexisNexis databases using the keywords "Web 2.0" and "marketing," very little came up, and in courses called "Web 2.0: Theories and Issues" and "New Media and Digital Culture" at the University of Oregon, my professors offered journal articles that dealt with one or the other, but not both. However, trade literature has been especially rich in its evaluation of marketing in the context of Web 2.0.

Wikinomics' exploration of collaborative products and how they are changing the business landscape is relevant to this thesis's focus on the Web 2.0 incarnation of the four P's. Anderson's *The Long Tail* (2006), Gillin's *The New Influencers: A Marketer's Guide to the New Social Media* (2007), and Scoble and Israel's *Naked Conversations: How*

Blogs are Changing the Way Businesses Talk With Customers (2006) are more directly marketing-related.

The Long Tail (2006), which expands on an article Anderson originally wrote for *Wired Magazine*, for which he is Editor-in-Chief, and has become more than a book since its publication in 2006. It has become a cultural artifact, spawning a buzz-phrase and a great deal of debate. In *The Long Tail*, Anderson uses economics to illustrate how the interactive Internet has allowed for a sea change from a culture of scarcity to "a world of *abundance*" (2006, p.18).

Tracking sales patterns on Web sites like Amazon.com, eBay, and Rhapsody, Anderson (2006) asserts that the online marketplace, which allows for new product, placement, and Price models through digital distribution and empowering small businesses or individuals as sellers, challenges traditional notions about supply and demand. According to the Long Tail model, supply has previously been restricted by scarcity (of storage and shelf space, among other things), and now that those restrictions have been lifted through doing business digitally, abundance reigns. Therefore, demand can expand beyond hits and new releases—expand into niches and old or obscure products.

In addition to expanding what consumers are able to demand, Anderson (2006) points out that geography and scheduling are also obsolete as consumption inhibiters, since Web 2.0 enables communities to form across vast differences. He hints at how media can now be consumed in a time-shifted manner (outside its originally scheduled time). Says Anderson, "People are re-forming into thousands of cultural *tribes of interest*, connected less by workplace chatter than by shared interests" (p. 184).

Gillin (2007) explores time-shifted media in *The New Influencers*, pointing specifically to iTunes and other podcast sources as media content options wherein a niche product is available to target audiences in a delivery channel (Place) independent of schedules. Gillin dabbles in a variety of new media in this book, but the theme throughout—a theme that surfaces in all of the literature mentioned in this section—is the "conversational" nature of marketing in Web 2.0.

Conversational marketing, a phrase that originated in *The Cluetrain Manifesto*, by Levine, et al. (2000), refers to the interactivity of marketing campaigns in Web 2.0. Gillin (2007) defines conversation "in a social media context" as "two-way communication facilitated by blogs and other personal publishing tools" (p.220). This two-way model affects all four of the P's, but perhaps most obviously Promotion.

This conversation with customers is at the heart of Israel and Scoble's *Naked Conversations* (2006), which uses a series of anecdotes to illustrate the many ways in which companies can expand their customer base, benefit from customer input on product development, and improve efficiency on a number of levels through the strategic use of blogs. Blogs, short for Weblogs, are "online journal[s] that [are] frequently updated and intended for general public consumption" (Gillin, 2007, p. 219).

The changes to marketing practices within the context of Web 2.0 are significant, but at their essence they are merely adaptations to a new environment—not revolutionary new practices or radically changed old ones. One might draw a parallel between this shift and that of how Gutenberg's introduction of the printed Bible to the masses changed the dynamics of the Church. Godin's *Meatball Sundae* (2007) explores the awkwardness with which many companies are currently attempting to sell old-fashioned products with new-fashioned promotional tools, likening the mis-match of certain products and ideas with Web 2.0 marketing tools to a plate of meatballs topped with whipped cream and sundae "fixin's." He contends that more than needing new marketing, companies need to consider seeking entirely new business models in the digital era.

Remediation Theory

Remediation theory, the lens through which I will interpret my results, argues that new media embrace old media and transform them. I believe that this embrace touches marketing elements, translating the traditional into something new without erasing the original altogether. Bolter and Grusin say in *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (1999):

> Each new medium has to find its economic place by replacing or supplementing what is already available, and by popular acceptance, and therefore economic success, can come only by convincing consumers that the new medium improves on the experience of older ones. (p. 68)

A goal of this thesis is to accurately represent current trends in marketing, especially in the media sector. It is worth noting the point Gladwell makes in *The Tipping Point* (2000) that a convergence of factors is often responsible for a seemingly dramatic trend. In his example of a syphilis outbreak in Baltimore, Gladwell traces the epidemic to three root causes—not just one. Likewise, the emerging trends in marketing in the digital era are rooted as much in outsourcing, globalization, changing social norms, and other factors as they are in available technology. This thesis, however, focuses only on technology, and only on one aspect of that technology. As Bolter and Grusin (1999) say:

> New digital media are not external agents that come to disrupt an unsuspecting culture. They emerge from within cultural contexts, and they refashion other media, which are embedded in the same or similar contexts. (p. 19)

Considering the evolution of marketing in the context of remediation, I want to define a context for phenomena like the long tail. Rather than begin with an unmanageably broad question, such as "What has really changed?," I decided to focus specifically on the elements of the marketing mix. Looking at these elements from a point of view rooted in remediation theory, I ask the following research questions:

RQ1: How do the traditional elements of the marketing mix-- product, price, place, and promotion-- translate to the interactive Internet?

RQ2: How are products affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0?

Sub-Questions: How/are price, place, and promotion affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0?

Expected Contribution

Although a respectable body of scholarly literature dealing with Internet marketing exists, little could be found relating specifically to marketing in the interactive Internet, Web 2.0. This thesis seeks to illuminate ways in which the interactivity of the modern Internet has changed how media companies need to think about marketing. This thesis will contribute to a discussion of how media companies might reconsider audience expectations of their products in this medium, and how those expectations will contribute to the evolution of the products themselves.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL METHODOLOGY

I have chosen to use a rhetorical analysis of my artifacts: articles from *Billboard* and *Variety* magazines, and transcripts of interviews I conducted with working professionals who have contributed to the public discourse on how Web 2.0 is used in the marketing of entertainment media. I have used the chapter on generative criticism from Sonja Foss' book, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice* (1996), as my guide for selecting and examining my units of analysis, and a piece by Foss and William Waters that appeared in the "All-But-Dissertation Survival Guide" (http://www.abdsurvivalguide.com/News/020603.htm) to organize the coding process. Remediation theory influences the analysis process and the presentation of results, and the units of analysis focus on the four P's according to my variation on McCarthy and Yudelson's versions:

- Product: the tangible or intangible object of trade, its characteristics and its accompanying collateral and/or benefits.

- Place (or distribution): how the product gets to the customer and all that is done and required to facilitate the exchange.
- Promotion: marketing communications, especially as relate to sales, advertising, publicity, and/or public relations.
- Price: the cost, in terms of tangible and intangible resources and finance, associated with the product, including profit and loss.

As noted earlier, the questions I am attempting to answer are:

RQ1: *How do the traditional elements of the marketing mix-- product, price, place, and promotion-- translate to the interactive Internet?*

RQ2: *How are products affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0?*

Sub-Questions: *How/are price, place, and promotion affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0?*

To answer my questions, I decided to develop case studies of the companies that inspired the thesis topic. Since the principles I wished to examine appeared so sparingly in the academic press and so recently in the popular press, I was unconvinced that surveys or focus groups would give me the data I sought as readily as the material I had already casually reviewed—*Billboard* and *Variety* magazines. I decided to also conduct informational interviews with industry professionals as a check on my analysis of the popular articles and to provide context for the data collected.

I decided to examine my texts by using generative criticism to conduct a rhetorical analysis. Sonja Foss (1996) explains rhetorical acts as being intangibles, like musical or artistic performances for live audiences. She contends that when these performances are captured on film—applying remediation theory to Foss, when they are *remediated*—they become rhetorical artifacts (p. 7). Since my area of interest was media-specific, I felt that examining articles and interview transcripts about media (arguably products of remediation themselves) should begin by identifying the texts as rhetorical artifacts.

In her book, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration & Practice*, Foss (1996) describes the process of deriving units of analysis from one's research question(s) as "generative criticism" (p. 485), hence my decision to use the four P's as my units of analysis. According to Foss, "carefully and thoroughly examining the artifact for any traces or evidence of the phenomenon suggested by the unit of analysis" (p. 486) is the primary process in conducting generative criticism. Therefore, I opted to search for examples of the four P's in the texts of selected articles and the transcriptions of interviews and to let occurrences of the P's provide the framework for the story my results and discussion sections would tell.

My decision to apply this type of criticism was based both on its accessibility—since I was exploring somewhat uncharted territory, I felt it would be beneficial to let the questions guide the analysis—and on sample articles I found that employed this type of criticism.

Foss (1996) provides, as an example, an article by Robert E. Terril (1993) in which the author deconstructs Tim Burton's film, *Batman* using generative criticism. In the article, Terrill uses a Jungian lens to seek parallels to the film in society His structure and the pop-culture quality of the media he examines seemed similar enough to my texts to convince me that the method would work for my purposes; however, I wanted a more rigorously academic example to reinforce that impression. I found that example in a chapter from a doctoral dissertation.

In Grim's (2005) chapter, "Contesting Chronotopes: Expert and Citizen Discourse on Talk of the Nation," the author analyzes transcripts of episodes of National Public Radio's show "Talk of the Nation" that deal with euthanasia. The selection process and media content were similar to mine, and although Grim opted to use chronotopes to further analyze results, this text demonstrated that generative criticism could be successfully employed to find and interpret the underlying themes in my articles and interviews.

Since reading issues of *Billboard* was part of the initial inspiration for this thesis, I looked no further when deciding which texts to analyze in my Live Nation case study. In order to equitably examine the other company I was studying, NBC, I sought a comparable trade publication, which I found in *Variety*. Since my hope for this study is that it will provide a preliminary answer to my research questions and inspire me an others with ideas about where marketing may be going in the future, I felt that relying on these two well-respected publications would be sufficient. If the study were to enter a second phase, I would seek additional and alternative artifacts to broaden the scope of analysis.

The events that sparked my initial interest—Madonna signing with Live Nation, NBC falling out with Apple, the Writer's Guild of America strike over royalties for online content, and Live Nation's impending split with TicketMaster—all occurred within the last six months of 2007, I decided to limit my analysis to articles published during that timeframe.

For the case studies, my units of analysis are *any mention of the elements of the marketing mix within the context of the company in question and its operations in Web 2.0*. For NBC, I chose to include references to Digital Video Recorders (DVRs) in my definition of Web 2.0 because of the frequency with which they are linked to or mentioned in conjunction with time-shifted viewing, viewing a program after its original air-date, and streaming video, video viewed on the Internet directly through the host without first downloading a file. I also include mentions of the 2007/8 Writers Guild of America strike because digital distribution was the primary issue on which the parties involved could not agree.

In both case studies I also accepted any mention of Live Earth, a global concert event staged in 2007, as representative of operations in Web 2.0 because the streaming digital video offered online during the concerts is implied in discussions of concert promotion and distribution, even when it is not named outright. Likewise, I accepted any mention of Madonna's "360" deal with Live Nation, her recently negotiated and comprehensive contract with Live Nation that binds her to the company for everything except music publishing, as representative of operations in Web 2.0 because the digital aspects of her contract are implied, even when they are not listed specifically.

Since generative criticism dictates that the units of analysis be drawn from the research questions, I broke my questions down to their elements before beginning the coding process to determine what I was really asking and what I needed to know.

My first question, "How do the traditional elements of the marketing mix—product, price, place, and promotion—translate to the interactive Internet?," suggested that what I really needed to determine was what element of the mix was being referenced in an article or portion of an article.

My second question, "How are products affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0?," and its sub-questions, "How/are price, place, and promotion affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0?," also relied on my being able to identify the individual elements of the marketing mix in my texts. I decided, therefore, to color-code the individual elements and highlight passages from the texts that I was able to identify as relating to one or more of the four P's.

In their article on coding qualitative data, Foss and Waters (2003) suggest, "Write a paraphrase, phrase, heading, or label that describes what you are seeing in that passage or chunk or quote that is most important…" and "Avoid coding according to what you want to find…." (http://www.abdsurvivalguide.com/News/020603.htm) Following this advice, I allowed the simple color-coding to tell me what themes were emerging from my texts and made notes next to highlighted passages to classify the themes. Although I opted not to physically cut-and-sort my coded pages, as Foss and Waters suggest, I was able to discern that there were a few dominant themes, and they compose the framework of my results sections.

I decided to conduct interviews with working marketing professionals shortly after I began my case studies. It had become clear to me that I was not unbiased in what I expected to find. After a professional peer suggested that my bias was affecting my data collection, I determined that speaking with people using the technology I was studying would help check my bias. Although the coding system for the interviews was identical to that of the articles, the themes that emerged were decidedly different and inspired me to revisit nearly every chapter of this thesis.

Ultimately, I coded 37 articles from *Variety*, 25 articles from *Billboard*, and the transcripts of 7 interviews. In *Variety* I identified 68 mentions of Price, 64 mentions of Place, 30 of Product, 63 of Promotion, and (included in these numbers) 10 instances in which multiple P's were mentioned concurrently. In *Billboard* I identified 41 mentions of Price, 68 mentions of Place, 60 mentions of Product, 82 of Promotion, and 10 instances in which the P's were indistinct from each other. The interviews skewed heavily towards the promotional aspect of marketing, and I identified only one mention each of Price and Place, only three of Product, two instances of overlap, and 59 mentions of Promotion. The collection, interview, and coding process took approximately 47 hours over the course of two months.

The process by which I selected interview subjects, as well as more minute details of the selection of other texts, is outlined in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDY ONE: LIVE NATION

In this chapter, I report the results of my rhetorical analysis of articles from *Billboard* Magazine spanning the last six months of 2007. I have coded articles that mention any of Live Nation's activities in conjunction with Web or digital issues or applications.

Methods

Text Selection

While researching Madonna's career for a previous study, I subscribed to *Billboard* Magazine in order to gain access to its online archive.

> *Billboard* magazine has served the information needs of the entertainment business since 1894. Today, that means a core focus on the music business, providing charts, data, analysis, profiles, news and trend reporting for aspiring artists, top executives, tour promoters, publishers, radio programmers, lawyers, retailers and others. (Billboard.com)

During the months in which I was forming my research questions for this thesis, Live Nation emerged in *Billboard* articles as a powerhouse in a struggling industry. The announcement in October 2007 of its revolutionary "360 degree" contract with Madonna to handle all aspects of her music career (except publishing) solidified my decision to examine the company. According to *Billboard's* Antony Bruno, "The 360-degree record deal is a concept where labels sign artists to contracts that include a cut of not only album sales, but also their merch [merchandise], touring and other revenue that historically the labels did not get a piece of" (December 8, 2007, para #2).

According to *Fortune Magazine* online (Sloan, 2007), Live Nation is a two-year-old spinoff of Clear Channel "that generated $4.4 billion in revenue in the past 12 months by running concert tours—more than any other outfit in the world—and owns venues large and small, like the House of Blues chain" (para. #3). Live Nation is:

> …a one-stop operation that handles their every musical need. [Live Nation's] offer: We already operate your tours. Why not let us make your albums, sell your merchandise, run your website, and produce your videos and a range of other products you haven't yet thought of? This is the age of the empowering Internet, after all. Artists are in charge. Who needs a record label? (Sloan, para. #4)

Rather than completing an exhaustive history of Live Nation leading up to and beyond the signing of this contract, I decided to focus on the months leading up to the announcement and following it, analyzing articles from *Billboard* that focused on Live Nation within the context of my interest in marketing media in Web 2.0 and the evolution of the marketing mix. In the end, I wound up with 25 articles pulled from July to

December 2007 *about* (focused entirely on) or *referring to* (mentioning in a larger context) Live Nation's activities (see Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of *Billboard* Articles Analyzed

Date	Title	Subject	Focus
7/7/07	Channeling Concerts	Concert TV & Video On Demand	Refers to L.N.
7/21/07	Maroon 5 for the Long Run	Maroon 5 signs tour contract with L.N.	About L.N.
7/21/07	Did the Earth Move?	Aftermath of Live Earth concerts	Refers to L.N.
7/28/07	Zune Hits the Road	Microsoft & L.N. form partnership re. Zune mp3 players	About L.N.
7/28/07	A Ticket Timeline	History of L.N. ticketing	About L.N.
7/28/07	The Future of Ticketing	L.N. & TicketMaster may end partnership	About L.N.
9/1/07	Tickets to Ride	L.N. & TicketMaster may end partnership	About L.N.
9/1/07	Live Nation Causing a Commotion	L.N. rumored to be brokering 360 deal w/ Madonna	About L.N.
10/20/07	Numbers Crunch	Financial aspects of Madonna deal	About L.N.
10/20/07	Madonna Causing a Commotion	Financial / mktg aspects of Madonna deal	About L.N.
10/20/07	Tour de Farce	Slicing the touring $ pie	Refers to L.N.
10/27/07	Madona: Pulling a 360	Madonna signs with L.N.	About L.N.
10/27/07	Behind the Madonna Deal	Details of Madonna's deal with L.N.	About L.N.
10/27/07	Four Focuses of Artist Nation	L.N.'s new artist services	About L.N.
11/3/07	Risky Business	Financial aspects of Madonna deal	About L.N.
11/17/07	Top Talk in Touring	State of the touring industry	Refers to L.N.
11/17/07	Standing Ovations	Profile of L.N. touring exec	Refers to L.N.
11/17/07	OneRepublic, One Nation	Profile of artist Ryan Tedder	Refers to L.N.
11/17/07	Live Nation Unveils 3-D Seat Maps	L.N. enhances user options on Web site	About L.N.
11/24/07	Billboard Touring Conference	Recap of Billboard Touring Conference	Refers to L.N.
11/24/07	A Prince of an Idea	Web 2.0 changing industry	Refers to L.N.
11/15/07	Live Nation Artists Acquires Merch Company Signatures	L.N. acquires merchandise licensing company	About L.N.
12/8/07	Digital Entertainment: Full Circle	360 is the new way	Refers to L.N.
12/22/07	Year in Music & Touring	Recap of 2007 music biz in the UK	Refers to L.N.
12/22/07	Top 10 Stories of the Year	Recap of the big stories of 2007	Refers to L.N.
Total # of stories about L.N.: 14		Total # of stories referring to L.N.: 11	
Key: about- focused entirely on; referring to- mentioning in a larger context			

These articles vary in length from less than one page to more than four pages, or from four-to-47 paragraphs, with the average length being about 14 paragraphs. I did not account for the number of words or pages in each article, as some of the articles analyzed mentioned my subjects only briefly—but significantly. I did not differentiate between news stories, editorials, and features when coding because my interest was in frequency and context of appearance of the four P's rather than the type of article in which they appeared. My selection process was based entirely on the relevance of the mention(s) of Live Nation to my topic. Articles referring to Live Nation outside the stated context of the marketing elements and digital media were eliminated during the selection process without being counted or coded. For example, articles that referred to Live Nation in the context of the company's concert promotion focus without mentioning any other facets of its products or services were not coded.

While reading, I looked for answers to my research questions: How do the traditional elements of the marketing mix translate to the interactive Internet, how are products affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0, and how/are price, place, and promotion affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0? I color-coded sections of the text according to which one or multiple elements of the marketing mix were being discussed and made note of how they were being discussed.

Since my purpose was to observe how the four P's were represented, rather than how Live Nation was being represented, I was not interested in the tone or language being used to describe the company. I felt that the language being used was indicative of the authors' attitudes towards Live Nation as a company, rather than their attitudes towards the concepts, often enough to render the language an inaccurate marker. I was interested in the frequency with which it was mentioned in my target context and the variety of ways in which it was associated with digital media. I discovered that there are certain types of Web-based services and technologies, as well as certain marketing models, which warranted a mention of Live Nation, regardless of the article's focus.

Results

Product

As stated earlier, for the purposes of this study, I am defining *product* as the tangible or intangible object of trade, its characteristics and its accompanying collateral and/or benefits. I determined that Live Nation's products fit in essentially three categories: consumer products; artist products; and products for sponsors, partners, and investors. Following is a bulleted list of the articles that yielded content for these categories, then an examination of the articles in each category.

<u>*Consumer Products*</u>

- Live Nation TV (Peters, July 7, 2007)
- Concerts and concert tickets (Billboard Staff, July 28, 2007; Waddell, July 28, 2007; Waddell 2, October 27, 2007; Bruno, December 8, 2007; Waddell, December 22, 2007)
- Interactive display areas in concert venues for Microsoft Zune music players (Bruno, July 28, 2007)

- merchandise
- digital distribution
- artist/fan relations, fan sites (like MusicToday.com)
- recorded music ("recorded rights partnership")
- VIP ticketing
- Madonna's tours, merchandise, albums, etc. for the next ten years (Christman, October 20, 2007; Christman, Novermber 3, 2007; Peters, November 24, 2007; Billboard Staff, December 22, 2007)

Artist Products

- Concert promotion (Billboard Staff, July 21, 2007; Waddell 2, October 27, 2007; Waddell 3; October 27, 2007)
- artist development, services and support (the 360 deal) (Waddell 1, October 27, 2007; Waddell 2, October 27, 2007; Peters, November 24, 2007; Bruno, December 8, 2007; Billboard Staff, December 22, 2007)
- Maroon 5's "It Won't Be Soon Before Long" tour (Waddell, July 21, 2007)

Sponsors, Partners, and Investors

- Concert venues (Billboard Staff, July 28, 2007; Waddell 2, October 27, 2007; Waddell 3; October 27, 2007)
- Consumer data (Waddell, July 28, 2007)

- Digital rights/DVDs, sponsorships, and branding (Waddell 2, October 27, 2007; Waddell 3; October 27, 2007, Bruno, December 8, 2007)
- And merchandise licensing and marketing rights for more than 150 artists (Walsh, November 24, 2007).

The customers touched by these products are fans (consumers), artists, sponsors, partners (i.e., other concert promoters) and investors (Live Nation is traded on the New York Stock Exchange as LYV) (LiveNation.com). Some of the products Live Nation offers are dependent on Web 2.0, meaning that the product exists only digitally and has no exact analog counterpart.

Consumer Products

The products Live Nation offers directly to/for consumers include Live Nation TV, concerts and concert tickets, interactive display areas for Microsoft Zune in Live Nation concert venues, merchandise, albums by Live Nation artists, and fan sites.

Despite the substantial revenue streams related to other customer groups, the fans are possibly the most important to Live Nation. Says Ed Christman in a November 24 article, “Everywhere you look, deals are being done with the goal of directly selling to consumers in mind” (Christman, November 24, 2007). Ray Waddell makes a similar point, saying: “The entire industry is moving toward increased levels of service, more targeted marketing, a wider menu of touch points with artists and an improved concert experience. All this comes at a price, but fans have shown they're willing to pay for better access (Waddell, September 1, 2007)." And perhaps "access" is the word that would best characterize the theme running through the company's consumer products.

Live Nation is using Web 2.0 tools to reach music fans and grant them a greater degree of access to the musicians they care about. MusicToday.com, for example, is a "direct-to-fan site" that combines a number of fan clubs, merchandise and ticket sales, and news and reviews (Waddell 1, October 27, 2007). Live Nation TV, hosted at LiveNation.com, features concert footage and interviews with artists—both of which may also become available as downloads through iTunes, free with the purchase of an artist's album (Concepcion, November 17, 2007). LiveNation.com now offers 3-D seat maps for the majority of its amphitheatres, giving fans a preview of the view from the seats they would have before they purchase tickets—access to information they would otherwise have to get in person (Peters, November 6, 2007). The interactive Microsoft Zune display areas in Live Nation concert venues will give fans an opportunity to sample the Zune while enjoying a concert and potentially win access to future concerts (Bruno, July 17, 2007).

With all the access Live Nation provides fans through digital products and portals, one might assume that fans would have diminished incentive to purchase concert tickets and attend live shows. This company, however, believes that selling access will increase sales of tangible goods and concert tickets. "Fans are far more willing to buy concert tickets and merchandise online—and therein lies a huge opportunity for tour promoters and ticket merchants. The line between buying an album or song and buying a concert ticket has blurred in the digital age" (Bruno, December 8, 2007). Bruno continued:

> The ace up the touring industry's sleeve is the cold hard truth that a concert can't be pirated. You can't steal a live show. You can't send it to millions of users with the press of the button. Sure, maybe some can distribute a bootlegged recording of a live show or post cell phone videos on YouTube. But ticket sales, merch sales, concession sales, sponsorship dollars—those are pirate-free.

Live Nation's attitude toward using digital media to circumvent piracy is a key element of what makes the company stand out in the music industry. Rather than fearing that fans downloading tracks and videos for free online will deplete profits from sales, this company uses recorded music as collateral that encourages sales of other products. "While digital music distribution has largely disrupted the major labels' business model, it has only enhanced that of the touring industry" (Bruno, December 8, 2007). Perhaps this is because Live Nation, to a degree, treats its digital "products" like marketing collateral, expecting that by giving something away, it will draw paying customers to live shows or merchandise outlets.

Artist Products

The major products aimed at artists mentioned in the *Billboard* articles analyzed for this thesis are concert promotion and artist development, services and support. Concert promotion is a practical product: Live Nation stages the concert and takes responsibility for driving fans to it. The new "360" deal offered by Live Nation to artists, beginning with Madonna, presents musicians with a combination of one-stop-shopping for a variety of services and access to the fans the company is reaching through the many products mentioned in the previous section.

Signing with Live Nation for an unusually long tour-promotion contract, Maroon 5 benefits from Live Nation's venues and marketing tools.

> Maroon 5 manager Jordan Feldstein of Career Artist Management says, "We are really excited to be working with Live Nation to promote the tour over the next year-and-a-half. Using one promoter throughout all of North America gives us a great opportunity to nationally market and brand Maroon 5." (Waddell, July 21, 2007)

Although it might be argued that the 360 deal is something the artist sells Live Nation, since the inaugural contracts have involved a great deal of cash up front from the company to the artist (Waddell 1, October 27, 2007; Waddell 2, October 27, 2007; Peters, November 24, 2007; Bruno, December 8, 2007; Billboard Staff, December 22, 2007), what Live Nation offers artists through this arrangement is management of

> their "unified rights," (growing) their fan bases and (reaching) fans through Live Nation's global distribution platform and marketing proficiencies. (Live Nation Artists) has significant infrastructure in place to execute such revenue generators as recorded music, merchandise, studios, media/digital rights, fan cub/Web site and sponsorships…
>
> Live Nation is now in the recorded-music business . . . and the merch business, the digital distribution business, the branding business and, of course—still—the live music business.
>
> And, to great fanfare, the Madonna business, with the announcement of a new, all-encompassing 10-year deal that published reports say is worth $120 million. With the deal Live Nation unveils its Artist Nation division, headed by veteran Rolling Stones dealmeister Michael Cohl. Artist Nation will serve as a conduit between artists and fans, via fan sites, VIP ticketing, digital rights/DVDs, merchandising, sponsorships and branding (Waddell 1, October 27, 2007).

Furthermore, the company expects "the profile of the Madonna deal to attract new artists to the Artist Nation fold (Waddell 1, October 27, 2007)," which suggests that artists who invest in the 360 product are hoping for fame-by-association.

Sponsors, Partners, and Investors

Live Nation's most traditional (goods and services for a price) products are fan-oriented. Its artist-oriented products are intangible or service-based. And its products for other stakeholders—sponsors, partners, and investors—are essentially its other customer groups.

Since its inception, Live Nation has had a contract with TicketMaster that restricted its role in ticket sales and thereby its profit. Over the course of the last half of 2007, Live Nation opted not to renew its contract with TicketMaster and to begin selling tickets directly through its online and physical distribution outlets (Billboard Staff, July 28, 2007; Waddell, July 28, 2007; Waddell 2, October 27, 2007; Bruno, December 8, 2007; Waddell, December 22, 2007). This decision might seem on the surface to be opening up the revenue stream of ticket fees and surcharges, but it may have more to do with creating another product: consumer data that is extremely valuable to partners and sponsors.

> More than the millions of dollars per year that service charges from ticketing can generate, Live Nation's endgame is probably more about the value of connecting with fans, ticket-buyer intelligence and data, and the inherent value in marketing and sponsorship that holds. If Live Nation controls its destiny in selling fans tickets, it could own the keys to the customer kingdom. (Waddell, September 1, 2007)

Likewise, the introduction of Artist Nation and signing a contract with Madonna and other artists of her caliber ["Last year Madonna was second only to the Rolling Stones in gross touring dollars, taking in nearly $200 million at the box office and playing to more than 1.2 million people in just 60 shows" (Waddell, October 20, 2007).] will give Live Nation tremendous marketing capital. Madonna's brand power will allow

> Live Nation to distribute three studio albums, promote concert tours, sell merchandise and license her name… The tipping point for profitability could be Live Nation's ability to exploit Madonna's branding. Madonna's H&M fashion line, for example, is believed to have earned more than $20 million-plus in its first year. Live Nation could benefit substantially from future such deals.

Thus, Madonna's marketability makes her an asset Live Nation will be able to use to attract sponsors, partners, and investors.

Place, Promotion, and Price

What becomes obvious when considering how the customer groups targeted by some of Live Nation's products become products themselves to other customer groups is that there is overlap in where products fit into the marketing mix. Indeed, this overlap extends to all of the elements of the marketing mix—primarily as it relates to Promotion.

As mentioned above, Madonna's promotional potential becomes a product when framed for an audience of potential investors or sponsors. Likewise, the interactive Web sites and digital products available to consumers are both promotional tools and distribution (placement) channels.

Live Nation TV, the first product listed in the consumer section, is offered to consumers as a product—content will be available for download through LiveNation.com and iTunes (Concepcion, November 17, 2007)—and it offers an adscape on the Web page surrounding the video feed and is a place where concert videos (other products) are displayed. When built into the list of assets included in Live Nation's half of a deal, similar to the one mentioned with Maroon 5, it is also part of the value exchanged—or Price.

Summary

After coding 25 articles from *Billboard* magazine, taken from the last six months of 2007, for mentions of Price, Place, Product, and Promotion, I was left with a preliminary answer to my research questions, which are:

RQ1: *<u>How do the traditional elements of the marketing mix-- product, price, place, and promotion-- translate to the interactive Internet?</u>*

RQ2: *<u>How are products affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0?</u>*

Sub-Questions: *<u>How/are price, place, and promotion affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0?</u>*

I identified a handful of distinct categories into which Live Nation's products appear to fall: consumer products; artist products; and products for sponsors, partners, and investors. What became clear during the coding process is that the four P's are less distinct from one another in Live Nation's marketing mix than they might have been in the past or might be in a non-media business. Product, Price, Place, and Promotion were rarely mentioned alone, and were sometimes indistinct from one another.

This trend seems to answer all of my research questions—in the interactive Internet, the lines between the four P's blur, and product in particular seems subjugated to serve more than one purpose. For example, Live Nation TV is presented as a product for music consumers available on the company's Web site, but it is also a promotional tool used to draw customers to the site and to entice prospective customers to purchase concert tickets.

CHAPTER V

CASE STUDY TWO: NBC

In this chapter, I conduct a rhetorical analysis of articles from *Variety* magazine spanning the last six months of 2007. I have coded articles that mention NBC or its English-language sister networks (Bravo, SciFi, Sleuth, and USA) as well as any Web or digital issues or applications.

Methods

Text Selection

Concurrent to Live Nation catching my eye in *Billboard* magazine, NBC caught my eye in a variety of other news outlets:

> The NBC Television Network's strength derives from combining NBC's strong national identity and programming with the local identity and programming of its affiliates in communities across America. The sale of advertising time enables the NBC Television Network to provide programming to the public free of charge.
>
> Affiliated television stations are an integral part of NBC's overall broadcast service. The NBC Television Network broadcasts approximately 5,000 hours of TV programming each year, transmitting to more than 200 affiliated stations across the United States. These independently owned

> affiliates then broadcast the NBC signal to an estimated 99 percent of all homes in the United States with television sets. (NBCUni.com)

Since 2005, I had been hearing stories about NBC in conjunction with emerging digital media, and I wanted to create a profile of NBC from a single, reliable source within the Web 2.0 context.

Having already selected *Billboard* as the best text source for the Live Nation case study, I chose *Variety* as the comparable trade publication for the television industry:

> Recognized and respected throughout the world of show business, *Variety* is the premier source of entertainment news. Since 1905, the most influential leaders in the industry have turned to *Variety* for timely, credible and straightforward news and analysis– information vital to their professions. And, since 1933, unchallenged industry leader *Daily Variety* has been required reading for key showbiz players, delivering breaking news, exclusive scoops and must-read features.
>
> *Variety* brings (readers) the week in show business with in-depth news, exclusive reports, industry trend stories, essential box office information and comprehensive production charts, delivered with global perspective imperative to our readership representing 84 countries. (Variety.com)

As two of the stories I'd heard about NBC—NBC's falling-out with iTunes and the Writers Guild of America strike—had also happened in the last six months of 2007, I decided that the company, the magazine, and the timeframe were a good match for the Live Nation case study and would suit my needs. I selected articles from *Variety* that mentioned NBC within the context of my interest in marketing media in Web 2.0 and the evolution of the marketing mix. In the end, I wound up with 35 articles pulled from July to December 2007 about or related to NBC's activities. As with the previous case study, the articles coded were either *about* (focused entirely on) or *referred to* (mentioned in a larger context) NBC's activities (see Table 2).

These articles vary in length from one paragraph to two full pages, or between one and 44 paragraphs with an average length of 17.5 paragraphs. As with Live Nation, I did not differentiate between news stories, editorials, and features when coding because my perception was that the frequency of mentions of NBC in my target focus was more important than the type of articles in which it was mentioned. Articles referring to NBC outside the stated context of the marketing elements and digital media were eliminated during the selection process without being counted or coded. As with Live Nation, my purpose was to observe how the four P's were represented, rather than how NBC as a company was represented. I color-coded sections of the text according to which one or multiple elements of the marketing mix were being discussed and made note of how they were being discussed.

Table 2: Summary of *Variety* Articles Analyzed

Date	Title	Subject	Focus
7/9/07	Broadband Blahs	Online TV Channels Failing	Refers to NBC
7/16/07	The Black and White of Going Green	Re-cap of Live Earth	Refers to NBC
7/16/07	Reilly's Move Fans a Feud	NBC-Fox Rivalry	About NBC
7/23/07	High Anxiety: The Stresses of Strikes	Humorous look ahead at possible WGA strike	Refers to NBC
7/23/07	Eye Goes Digital Alone, Sort Of	CBS' digital strategy	Refers to NBC
7/23/07	Uri's mind field	Uri Gellar pulls content from YouTube	About NBC
7/23/07	It's Never Too Late for Leno	Jay Leno's contract up soon	About NBC
7/23/07	GE and NBC: We're Number… Oh Never Mind	NBC is 4th-ranked network	About NBC
7/30/07	TV Biz Banking on its Tentpole Titans	Syndicated shows to aid in ratings war	Refers to NBC
8/6/07	TiVo-town L.A. Provides Snapshot of the Future	LA leads in time-shifted viewing trend	Refers to NBC
8/6/07	USA 'Intent' on Thursday Mission	USA running new episodes of L&O CI	Refers to NBC
8/13/07	Rush to Judgment	Rush to green-light projects in face of WGA strike	Refers to NBC
8/13/07	NBC Gaga for Games	NBC to stream Olympics	About NBC
8/13/07	Nervous Nets Look Beyond '07 as they Rev up for '08	Strike inspiring long-term planning	Refers to NBC
9/3/07	Photo Finish for Cable News Nets	Ratings race between cable news channels	Refers to NBC
9/10/07	Peacock Chuck-ful of Ideas for Selling Uber Nerd	NBC's online publicity of Chuck	About NBC
9/24/07	TV Gets Blockbusted	Scripted TV getting pricier	Refers to NBC
9/24/07	Nets' Dream: Ad Stream	Internet strategies of networks	Refers to NBC
9/24/07	Google Ogles Media Gaggle	Google seeks publicity	Refers to NBC
9/24/07	Rich in Niche, 'Hit' Shows Losing Mass Appeal	Long tail hits TV	Refers to NBC
10/1/07	It's No Laughing Matter: pay Now or Pay Later	Networks adopting online distribution	Refers to NBC
10/1/07	Fall Sked on the Download	Availability of shows online	Refers to NBC
10/8/07	The Crowded Couch	Hierarchy of talk shows	Refers to NBC
10/8/07	Nets Play the Rating Game	Ratings incomplete in digital era	Refers to NBC
10/15/07	Crix Mix Needs Fix	Blogging & Web affecting critics	Refers to NBC
11/5/07	Studios' Digital Dilemma	Studios at Apple's mercy	Refers to NBC
11/5/07	Hulu Swings Debut	NBC launches Hulu	About NBC
11/12/07	The Tout is Out	Promotion affected by strike	Refers to NBC
11/12/07	The Blogs of War	Striking writers vent on blogs	Refers to NBC
11/26/07	This Pen's for Hire	How writers earn $ during strike	Refers to NBC
11/26/07	Promo of the Week	Tin Man promo items on eBay	About NBC
12/3/07	'Heroes' for Netflix	NBC to stream Heroes on Netflix	About NBC
12/17/07	NBC Shows get FanFare	NBC makes shows avail for download on FanFare	About NBC
12/17/07	Global Race Run from L.A. Base	Int'l DVD offices moved to L.A. by parent companies	Refers to NBC
12/17/07	Int'l Homevid Leader Report	Who's who in DVD	Refers to NBC
Total # of stories about NBC: 10		Total # of stories referring to NBC: 25	
Key: about- focused entirely on; referring to- mentioning in a larger context			

Results

Product

As with Live Nation, I am defining *product* as the tangible or intangible object of trade, its characteristics and its accompanying collateral and/or benefits. NBC's products include break down into two major categories: Viewer Products and Advertiser Products. As in the previous chapter, following is a bulleted list of the articles that yielded content for these categories, then an examination of the articles in each category.

Viewer Products

- Original online and TV programming (Zeitchick & Fritz, July 9, 2007; Meza, July 23, 2007; Lowry, July 23, 2007; Guider, July 30, 2007; Lowry, August 6, 2007; Dempsey, August 6, 2007; Schneider, August 13, 2007; Lowry, October 1, 2007; Hopewell & Meza, October 15, 2007; McClintock & Graser, November 12, 2007; Littleton, November 12, 2007; Littleton, Fritz, & Graser, November 26, 2007)
- Streaming video through multiple distribution channels (Learmonth 2, July 23, 2007; Lowry, July 23, 2007; Littleton, October 1, 2007; Variety, December 3, 2007; Variety, December 17, 2007; Netherby, December 17, 2007)
- Online streaming video destination, Hulu (Zeitchick and Fritz, July 9, 2007; Schneider and Adalian, July 16, 2007; Learmonth, July 23, 2007; Bart, July 23, 2007; Fritz, September 24, 2007; Littleton, October 1, 2007; Variety, November 5, 2007; Kirsner, November 5, 2007).

Advertiser Products

- Original online and TV programming, together with contracted actors and personalities (Fleming, August 13, 2007; Learmonth, September 3, 2007; Adalian, September 10, 2007)
- Broadcast rights to special events (Guider, July 16, 2007; Variety, August 13, 2007)
- Hulu.

Although as with Live Nation, there are other stakeholders, the two referred to most consistently in the *Variety* articles surveyed are viewers and advertisers. Also similar to Live Nation, some of the products NBC offers are dependent on Web 2.0—they have no physical counterparts.

Viewer Products

Relevant products produced by NBC for the general public that were mentioned in the texts included streaming video through multiple distribution channels, original online and TV programming, and DVDs of programs. Since the DVDs do not qualify, by my definition, as a product related to the interactive Internet, I will focus on the online viewing options and online original programming. I have eliminated DVDs because they are, by nature, a physical product. By contrast, albums, concert tickets, and television programs are all media that can be remediated through a variety of distribution channels.

NBC.com began offering streaming video for a handful of its television shows at the beginning of the 2006-07 season; but over the course of the last half of 2007, the company built and launched the site Hulu.com with partner NewsCorp, owner of Fox Television. The site is first mentioned in the articles surveyed as an exception to the trend of broadcasters abandoning external sites that hosted their video streams (Zeitchik & Fritz). Intended originally to "rival YouTube" (Schneider & Adalian), the service launched in November (Variety in the News, November 5-11, 2007), and is now one of many places NBC's programs are available for online viewing. One of the features of Hulu that sets it apart from rival networks' online programming vehicles is the option for users to edit clips from the movies and television shows hosted on the site and to embed the content into other sites, such as blogs or social networking site profiles (Fritz, November 24-30).

In addition to Hulu, NBC has experimented with "NBC Direct," a service that allows users to download episodes of NBC programs to their hard-drives, rather than streaming them over the Internet. During the course of this study, NBC's programs were available for viewing through NBC.com, NBC Direct's beta version, Hulu (Littleton, October 1-7), Netflix (Variety News Briefs), and San Disk's FanFare (Variety in the News, December 17-23).

In addition to providing the service of online viewers to customers, NBC engaged in the first experiment with moving a series from the Internet to television with the show "QuarterLife." The show, which debuted as a Web exclusive on social networking behemoth MySpace.com, was purchased by NBC as a mid-season replacement for the 2007-08 TV season, in part because of the Writers Guild of America strike. Said series co-creator Marshall Herskovitz (Littleton, Fritz, & Graser, November 26-December 2) :

> We're trying to create a new model (for episodic production), but it's just a transitional model… We feel that this is our way of saying, "Can you create something very ambitious for the Internet that has the same possibility for the same kind of adoption and passion (among TV viewers) that would bring in significant advertising dollars?" (para. #19)

Advertiser Products

The other major customer base that emerged in the text was advertisers. NBC products mentioned that appeal to this group included original online and TV programming—including contracted actors and personalities, broadcast rights to special events, and streaming video through distribution channels—including Hulu.

The programming broadcast on NBC stations, combined with the number of viewers tuning in, has always been the primary product package the company had to offer advertisers. Since the advent of videocassette recorders and cable television, networks have been battling fragmentation of the home viewing market—having more options means fewer viewers for each option. VCRs also introduced the option of fast-forwarding through ads (Gillin, 2007, p. 212). The Internet has added to time-shifted viewing options and ways to circumvent ads, and the major networks have different opinions about how to retain ad revenues in the changing marketplace. NBC has chosen to make its content available through a number of sites for the sake of staying relevant to its audience, hoping that ad revenues will follow (Fritz, September 24-30): "Peacock net… announced it will become the first network to offer free, ad-supported downloads of its shows" (Fritz).

Examples of special events NBC to which has and has had broadcasting rights are the global Live Earth concert that aired on July 7, 2007 and the upcoming 2008 Olympics. Although TV ratings for Live Earth (the barometer by which advertising prices are set) were "rather modest, millions of additional viewers streamed parts of the concert over the Web..." (Guider, July 16-22). And the 2008 Olympics coverage will "for the first time... include live streaming broadband video, represent(ing) more Internet and on-air time than all previous Summer Games combined" (Variety in the News, August 13-19).

Place, Promotion, and Price

Perhaps to a greater degree than Live Nation, NBC is seeing more change in the other three P's than it is in Product—particularly in Place and Price. Web 2.0 has both introduced a new distribution channel and contributed to the market fragmentation that is negatively affecting ad revenues and forcing all of the networks to reconsider the value of expensive programming.

Although programs have not necessarily consisted of original content generated by the networks for their own use for some time, and although cable television affiliates have given the major networks alternative outlets for their syndicated or specialized programs, it is with the advent of the interactive Internet that networks are faced with the challenge of managing multiple concurrent distribution channels—international channels. Among the institutions being affected by this change is the Nielsen ratings system, which has long been a major determining factor in both setting ad rates and determining which shows would survive each television season.

> NBC research topper Alan Wurtzel says the days of instant Nielsen nirvana are over. "This is a whole new world, and anyone who doesn't understand that is behind the times," he says. "I recognize that everyone wants to understand what their performance is quickly, but the days of having a single number that reflects a show's performance are over" (Adalian & Schneider).

The combination of DVRs and streaming video is changing the speed at which the number of viewers for a show is tabulated.

> Wurtzel and NBC are experimenting with new ways to rate shows in the multiplatform universe. They're developing something called Total Audience Measurement Interactive (TAMi) in a bid to better quantify a show's overall audience. "Everyone's still focused on the network numbers," [Wurtzel] says. "But while you can still tell a lot from the national ratings or the overnights, it's not a complete picture" (Adalian & Schneider).

The ways in which place (distribution) is changing and the ensuing effects on pricing concerns indicate changes to the entire marketing mix. Like Live Nation, there is a definite blurring of the lines between the four P's at NBC. Hulu, for example, is a product offered to both the audience and advertisers. It is also a distribution channel. And a promotional tool.

These blurred lines were partially responsible for the recent writers' strike, as writers for NBC's "The Office" were among those to stop work over revenues from Web content. Writers from "The Office" and other shows had been asked to create Web-exclusive content, which the networks considered promotional and the writers considered ad-revenue-attracting product. Because of the difference in definition, the networks were not paying writers for the content.

> A three-minute on-the-picket-lines video produced by some of the scribe-thespians from NBC's "The Office," riffing on why new-media residuals are important to scribes, was viewed more than 175,000 times in 24 hours on YouTube... (Littleton, November 12-18)

Questions about which category (element of the marketing mix) media content falls into are also generating legal issues. One of the inspirations for this thesis was NBC's cease-and-desist action against YouTube in 2005, when users were distributing clips of digital short films from "Saturday Night Live" on the popular video-sharing site. From one perspective, NBC was exercising a legal right to protect its product—the television show—from illegal distribution that robbed the network of immediate profits associated with ad revenues. From another perspective, the network stopped a phenomenon that was contributing to an increase in ratings for the sketch-comedy program, and ratings, as we have seen, are the basis for determining ad rates.

Although this incident unfolded in 2005, the issues behind it are still unresolved, as "self-proclaimed psychic" Uri Geller forced "YouTube to kill clips of 'The Successor' in which he appears to slip a device on his thumb before magically moving a compass needle with his mind… the fuss likely will only feed interest in his NBC show…" (Meza, July 23-29) In this instance, it is difficult to say whether the clips were NBC's and Gellar's copyrighted property, and they were attempting once again to claim their legal rights, or whether the network does understand now that online buzz can fuel broadcast ratings and construct a situation to gain publicity. Was the clip a product or a publicity vehicle?

Summary

Coding 37 articles from *Variety* magazine, taken from the last six months of 2007, for mentions of Price, Place, Product, and Promotion, reinforced the preliminary answer to my research questions gleaned from the *Billboard* articles. The questions again are:

RQ1: *How do the traditional elements of the marketing mix-- product, price, place, and promotion-- translate to the interactive Internet?*

RQ2: *How are products affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0?*

Sub-Questions: *How/are price, place, and promotion affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0?*

As with Live Nation, I was able to identify categories into which NBC's products appear to fall: viewer products and advertiser products. Also like Live Nation, it was apparent during the coding process that the four P's were less distinct from one another in the marketing mix than I'd expected, and less distinct than they might have been in a non-media business. Again, Product, Price, Place, and Promotion were rarely mentioned alone and were frequently indistinct. In the Live Nation case study, Product stood out as the element serving the most purposes and thereby appearing to be in the greatest state of flux. In the NBC case study, Price also stood out as an element in transition. For example, the ways in which Web 2.0 was altering consumers' options by allowing for time-shifted viewing were affecting the Nielsen ratings system, which has traditionally been the gauge by which ad rates are set and the monetary value of television shows as properties are defined.

CHAPTER VI

INTERVIEWS

This chapter reports my rhetorical analysis of transcripts of interviews with working professionals who have contributed to the public discourse on how Web 2.0 is used in the marketing of entertainment media.

Methods

Text Selection

After choosing NBC and Live Nation as the case study subjects for this thesis, I realized that my personal bias toward the companies and their respective efforts was in danger of coloring the results. I first began to lean toward NBC as a case study subject when I learned that Apple had dismissed all NBC Universal content from iTunes as of January 1, 2008 (Kirsner, 2007). In my opinion, this move demonstrated extreme foolishness on NBC's part. Fighting Apple to control the pricing of NBC content available for purchase through iTunes without already having a strong platform that could compete with the Web's most popular source for digital downloads suggested to me that

NBC was out of touch with reality, and I intended to frame the case study as a "what not to do."

While talking with a friend in marketing, I rambled on proudly about the ways in which I was savvier than NBC, and blasted the company for its many foolish decisions. My friend said, "Actually, Hulu is considered a success," referring to NBC's joint-venture with Fox that allows users to watch myriad movies and TV shows for free online. I was sincerely shocked, and as I delved further into my texts, I began to see that NBC was far less clumsy in the digital world than I thought. I decided that more conversations with similar people would likely give me even more perspective on the subjects to whom I had become perhaps too close to analyze objectively. In order to help provide context and (ideally) reinforcement for the conclusions suggested by the initial research, I decided to interview experts in the industry—specifically those in media marketing.

The experts were selected based on my first- and second-degree knowledge of who's who in the marketing of media today. After having read a number of books on marketing and branding in 2007/08, subscribing to podcasts and Twitter feeds on marketing, and reading a number of blogs on the subject, I e-mailed everyone I could think of, and anyone my targets recommended—approximately 25 people altogether, who also met the criteria of working in marketing with/for media and either writing about it or being written about themselves. The seven interviewees included here are those who responded to my request.

The Interviewees

CHAS EDWARDS

Chas Edwards is CRO and Publisher at Federated Media Publishing. He

came to FM by way of CNET Networks, where he was VP of sales and marketing for that company's B2B Portfolio, managing the team representing News.com, ZDNet and TechRepublic to business-to-business marketers. Chas shares his thoughts on the business at ChasNote, which chronicles metrics, successes & flaming disasters in digital marketing. (Edwards)

JENNIFER JONES

Jennifer Jones is the creator and host of MarketingVoices™ and is a 25-year technology marketing veteran. Her career is broad and diverse: she was a marketing partner at Mayfield, a top-tier venture firm; an executive vice president and general manager of Regis McKenna Inc, where she oversaw work with Apple and Intel; the creator and host of the first television show in technology called High Tech Visions and a broadcast executive with CBS News affiliated stations. (MarketingVoices.com)

MARTY NEUMEIER

Marty Neumeier is president of Neutron LLC, a San Francisco- based firm specializing in brand collaboration. Before launching Neutron in 2002, Neumeier was editor and publisher of Critique, the 'magazine of graphic design thinking,' which had quickly become the leading forum for improving design effectiveness. In editing Critique, Neumeier joined the conversation about how to bridge the gap between strategy and design, which led directly to the formation of Neutron and the ideas in his new book, The Brand Gap. The Brand Gap is 'a whiteboard overview' that presents his unified theory of branding in a clear, direct, and visually entertaining format. (Neumeier)

KENT NICHOLS

Kent Nichols is a filmmaker, co-creator of the online series Ask A Ninja, and a consultant specializing in marketing and branding in the digital world. In 2005, Kent Nichols and Douglas Sarine created the award-winning online series Ask A Ninja. Since then, the series has been viewed more than 80 million times, quoted on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, featured in the New York Times Magazine and endorsed on numerous blogs. Kent also blogs at blogging.la and is a contributor to This Week in Media and he has spoken internationally on the topic of new media. (Nichols)

JOSH RABINOWITZ

Josh Rabinowitz is Senior Vice President and Director of Music for Grey Global Group. He has been involved with some of the most high-profile initiatives to integrate compelling music with advertising, including campaigns for Dr. Pepper featuring prominent recording artists. Since 1996, he has written and/or produced about 1,000 tracks for advertisements. Additionally, he is a columnist for *Billboard*, writing a bi-weekly piece called "Making the Brand." He has been cited in the *New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Boston Globe, Crain's, AdAge, Adweek, Shoot, Media Magazine, Fast Company*, and *Creativity*. (BoardsSummit.com and Canadian Music Week)

LAURA RIES

> Laura Ries is president of Ries & Ries, an Atlanta-based marketing strategy firm that she runs with her father Al Ries. In 1994, Laura partnered with her father to form Ries & Ries. Together they have consulted with many Fortune 500 companies. They have also written four books: The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding (1998), The 11 Immutable Laws of Internet Branding (2000), The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR (2002) and The Origin of Brands (2004). In 2002, Business 2.0 named Laura a 'management guru' and issued trading cards with her picture and statistics on them. (Ries, L.)

MARCIA SIMMONS

> Marcia Simmons is an account manager in the Author Services department at Federated Media Publishing. Marcia has a diverse background in media. Before joining FM, she was managing editor for the North Bay Business Journal, a New York Times Co. publication. She has also been a freelance journalist, public relations consultant and broadcaster. Marcia blogs at Smart Kitty.org. (Simmons)

The Interviews

My interview questions were designed to establish the background of the interview subjects for my records and to allow opportunities for the people with whom I spoke to provide perspective on how the Internet is affecting elements of the marketing mix. I opted not to disclose the companies I used for the case studies at the outset, for fear of winding up with interviews focused on Live Nation and NBC rather than on the trends I was examining. I was also deliberately vague about what I meant when asking what the marketing elements were, in their opinions, hoping to determine how much time and whether today's marketing practitioners actually spend categorizing what they do according to the four P's. I asked all interviewees the same questions, as indicated below.

Interview Questions

1. Please describe how you began working with marketing.
2. Please describe how you began working with online marketing.
3. What are the primary marketing elements, as you understand them?
4. Do the marketing elements differ in Web 2.0? If so, why and how? If not, why and how?
5. In your opinion, how does online marketing compare with marketing in traditional media?
6. Have you noticed new ways of marketing used in Web 2.0? Tell me about them.
7. Describe one or two especially effective marketing campaigns done in Web 2.0. Some especially poor ones.
8. Can you name some media companies who really seem to be flourishing in Web 2.0? Some companies who are not?
9. What is the role of interactivity in Web. 2.0 marketing? How does it compare with interactivity in traditional marketing?
10. Do you have anything else you would like to add?

I arranged the interviews with my subjects by e-mail, using a recruitment letter format approved by the University of Oregon's Human Subjects Review Board (see Appendix 1) to ask them to select a time and date at which it would be convenient to spend 30 minutes to an hour talking with me. At the designated times, I either placed or received a call from the interviewees according to their preferences. Preceding each interview, I used a verbal consent script also approved by the HSRB (see Appendix 2). After reading the verbal consent script, I ensured that it had been clear to my subjects, obtained interviewees' consent to proceed, and launched immediately into the interview using the questions above.

I deviated from the questions during my interviews only on the last one opting to exclude it when interviewees made it clear that they were running on a tight schedule. This deviation occurred twice. Each interview lasted between 30-60 minutes, which was determined primarily by the detail with which the interviewees answered the questions, rather than the amount of time we spent chatting less formally after the formal interview.

In each case, I disclosed to the interviewee at the conclusion of the interview that my intention in asking what they understood the elements of marketing to be was to determine how consistently the four P's would be mentioned. This disclosure resulted in brief conversations about the elements of marketing in which all but two of those interviewed, Josh Rabinowitz and Marcia Simmons, acknowledged that they were familiar with the four P's.

Results

The first surprise in the interviews was that none of the interviewees referred to the four P's when asked what the primary marketing elements are. At the conclusion of the interviews, I disclosed to my subjects that the questions had been vaguely phrased to see if it Product, Price, place, or promotion naturally came out in their answers. All of the people with whom I spoke said something to the effect that the four P's would not have occurred to them. We generally agreed that although that might be due to the informal roads that led most of them to this area of marketing, it might also be due to the changing times. Jennifer Jones, for example, said: "In Web 2.0, the four P's don't factor in. It's all about having a conversation."

Although I coded the transcripts of the interviews according to the same units of analysis that I did the articles, I found that the themes that emerged here differed from those in the articles. Rather than hearing consistent references to the four P's and the customer groups served by media companies, my interviewees focused on "brand." They also referred to "transparency" and "authenticity" as core values in Web 2.0 and they emphasized that the communication model in marketing has changed from "advertiser/company-to-audience" to "two-way communication."

Brand

As noted earlier in *The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding*, one of the books she has written with her father and business partner, Ries (2002) says, "Any and every proper noun is a brand, whether it's owned by an individual, a corporation, or a community (Ries, 2000, p. xii)." When I asked her what the primary marketing elements are, Ries answered, "Those activities that help build and maintain brands."

However, Ries wasn't the only interviewee who equated brands with the marketing elements. Kent Nichols said that the marketing elements are: "Branding. Brand, brand, brand. And an emotional connection to your audience." Rabinowitz said the "most important aspect (of the marketing elements) is sound—how your brand sounds…."

The subjects of my interviews use "brand" as a catchall for the things that might once have been broken down into the four P's. When Ries said, "TMZ took advantage of all the benefits of the Internet and built a new brand—one that wasn't restricted by a weekly or hourly schedule," she was rolling the company's products and distribution channels and promotional capabilities into one idea: the brand.

Similarly, when Edwards said, "As brands recognize that they're publishers and they want to do what they've always done, which is getting their target audience to talk about them, you can also do a better or worse job of creating assets," he was attributing production of assets (Product) and promotional capabilities to "brand."

Transparency and Authenticity

In addition to focusing on brands and branding, those interviewed referred repeatedly to the importance of transparency and authenticity in Web 2.0, suggesting that audiences in this medium demand honesty from companies and can detect lies in a way that previous audiences and audiences in more passive mediums did not.

Wal-Mart, which I included as a media company because it is one of the largest distributors of DVDs and CDs in the United States, made a foray into Web 2.0 marketing that more than one interviewee cited as an example of failure due to inauthenticity. Said Edwards:

> Wal-mart is (a) bad example. In an effort they did, they hired PR professionals to pretend that they were really excited Wal-Mart customers who were going to blog about driving across country to blog about shopping at different Wal-Marts, and the problem was Wal-Mart wasn't being transparent. It's harder to lie in Web 2.0. By not being transparent they got a lot of flack for trying to take advantage of Web 2.0 without being sincere.

Jones concurred, saying: "I think a company that hasn't done a good job is Wal-Mart. They've used Edelman to create false blogs that weren't authentic, and they aggravated their customers. They retracted it, but they never really said 'sorry.'"

Other interviewees also held authenticity and transparency up as virtues without linking them directly to one brand. Simmons noted that one of the positives in a campaign she is working on for BMW is that Federated Media is "being transparent about what our goal is." And Nichols said, "I think you have the new generation of consumers (who) require honesty and transparency."

Two-Way Communication

In his book, *The Brand Gap*, and its accompanying visual presentation, Neumeier (2003) refers to the old corporate communication model as "a monologue (Neumeier 2, p. 121)," illustrating the model with a chart that depicts a message being sent from a sender to a receiver. He refers to the modern communication model as "a dialogue" (2, p. 122), and depicts messages going back and forth between the sender and the receiver.

Neumeier reiterated this idea during an interview for this thesis, pointing out that the interactivity of Web 2.0 affords—and demands—this kind of back-and-forth. He said:

> Another thing (about Web 2.0) is that the interaction is better, so that allows for more two-way conversations. What that does to advertising is change the whole game because advertising up to this point has been a one-way conversation… It's less about pushing messages on people; it's more about pulling people into tribes… Traditional marketing… it's not like there's any interaction when you're looking at a TV commercial or a magazine ad, so there's no real conversation going on. That was a flaw—an annoying part of advertising. Now people have a voice and advertisers can find out what people are thinking about their products and adjust, and that's a huge change – it's a good thing. People don't like being talked at, and the Web turns that upside down.

The concept of interaction between company/brand and customer was perhaps the strongest theme to emerge from my interviews, appearing in almost all of them. Said Edwards: "I think it's important to give your audience the opportunity to engage with you directly and have their voice heard. It's important that everyone allow for that…."

Rabinowitz said: "I think that stake (customer interaction) gives people a sense of participation and that they have control over something they didn't have much control over before. That gives it more legitimacy, and people care more about it."

Simmons answered "clear communication" when asked what the marketing elements were. She went on to say:

> [Web 2.0 is] definitely more of a conversational marketing format since it's more of a social medium. More marketing efforts are concentrated on having marketing be a conversation and giving people an opportunity to participate. I've seen a greater focus on soliciting responses and being more about what you're getting from the audience and less about what you're putting out there….
>
> I don't think there is Web 2 [sic.] marketing without interactivity, and I think that's the major difference between [it and traditional marketing]. While you can run a traditional campaign that is interactive, you don't have to... In a traditional campaign, there are just fewer avenues open to

> you for interaction because you are so far away from the people you're communicating with, whereas online you are in the same place.

Nichols suggested that the communication between company and customer extends to letting the dialogue with the marketplace determine the direction in which the brand evolves. He said:

> (John) Battelle's conversational marketing theories are somewhat valid. Brands are conversations. The idea that one central agency or corporate marketing department has the say about what a brand is is a little naive. I think "brand" is moving forward and marketing is holding it firmly-but-loosely so you can guide it—but you can't control it from cradle to grave.

This is echoed by Neumeier, who said, "Most of the things that were true 50 years ago are no longer true because the customer is in control of the advertiser, which is really a lot more human than it was in the past."

Jones summed up all three of the dominant themes in one statement:

> You [marketers] need to think about the customers you're trying to work with. It's more transparent today. The customer is in control of the brand. They have the power to voice their opinion on the Web through blogs and forums and complaints they can put on companies' Web sites. That's what's different. In terms of marketing and its objectives and how it should be done, I don't think it's too different [from traditional marketing]. The Web has allowed for this conversation, so that is the difference.

Summary

My interviews with seven working marketing professionals followed a fairly rigid format, using scripted questions and a formal verbal consent. Rather than seeking a concrete answer to my research questions through these informational interviews, I was seeking context and a check to the bias I had against NBC. As with the case studies, however, the interviews suggest that the four P's are not necessarily distinct from one another in the world of Web 2.0. Unlike the case studies, the interviews introduced the idea of "brand" perhaps being the next step for the marketing mix.

Brand, which I define more fully in my concluding chapter, seems to be the next step in marketing concepts in this sphere. Rather than concerning themselves with the individual elements of marketing, my interviewees represented their approaches as being more about the big picture—the overall identity and purpose of a product or campaign—the brand. They also raised the idea of "transparency" and "authenticity" being core values in Web 2.0, echoing Scobe and Israel's *Naked Conversations* (2006). The authors called these qualities "essentials" for blogging and other Web 2.0 applications (p. 51).

My interview subjects also returned repeatedly to the value of two-way communication in Web 2.0 marketing and how that differs from older models. They suggested that the willingness of companies to hear what their customers have to say reinforces the appearance of authenticity, and that it would be taken advantage of so seldom that it wouldn't be overwhelming for companies to adopt an open communication model. Chas Edwards said: "I think it's important to give your audience the opportunity to engage with you directly & have their voice heard. It's important that everyone allow for that, and the reality is that most of us are not talking back to the media every time we interact with it."

Finally, the interviews did effectively check my bias against NBC. Although Edwards cited NBC as an example of a media company that is "mostly struggling" online, other interviewees pointed out innovative things the network has done or is doing. Kent Nichols, for example, cited NBC's Hulu Web site as an example of a media company doing well in Web 2.0. What was more telling, perhaps, was how infrequently the interview subjects mentioned NBC at all, suggesting that it is not commonly thought of as a floundering company.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Bolter and Grusin's (1999) assertion in the definition of remediation theory that "each new medium has to find its economic place by replacing or supplementing what is already available" (p. 68) serves as the foundation for my analysis. In my two case studies and collection of interviews, using the variation on the four P's I introduced in the literature review, I have determined that Web 2.0 ultimately affects elements of the marketing mix by blurring the lines between them. Media products are evolving from *being the goods or services a company is selling to less tangible assets—like the audience.*

When I began this study, my intention was to discover and articulate how media companies are changing the way they approach the elements of marketing, as I had been trained to understand them, when they operate in Web 2.0. I marched confidently into the coding process with the four P's on my mind, expecting to be able to identify each of them easily according to the "Laurie Variation" on McCarthy's marketing mix:

- Product: the tangible or intangible object of trade, its characteristics and its accompanying collateral and/or benefits.
- Place (or distribution): how the product gets to the customer and all that is done and required to facilitate the exchange.
- Promotion: marketing communications, especially as relate to sales, advertising, publicity, and/or public relations.
- Price: the cost, in terms of tangible and intangible resources and finance, associated with the Product, including profit and loss.

What I discovered was that, in the cases analyzed, the four P's were less distinct in Web 2.0 and that they had overlapped and merged to become something called "brand."

The evolution of the marketing mix first became apparent when I was studying Live Nation. In the last six months of 2007, Live Nation used digital media and Web 2.0 applications liberally in most of its business ventures. I was surprised by the difficulty I encountered while coding the articles and presenting the data because, although many of the company's activities did align with one of the elements of the marketing mix, most aligned with more than one. Live Nation uses its Web 2.0 applications to connect with customers for direct sales and community building (Promotion and Price), for distribution of tickets and concert videos (Place). LiveNation.com is a concert search engine and host of Live Nation TV (both Products and Place), and all of its online activities serve as promotional tools for the company's artists and live concerts.

While examining NBC, the same issue became apparent. NBC uses its Web 2.0 applications to deliver content (Place), but this delivery option is a promotional tool intended to attract both viewers and advertisers. The content created by NBC for the Web (webisodes mentioned in conjunction with the WGA strike) and pulled from the Web (QuarterLife) is Product from one perspective, Promotion from another.

In an interview, Chas Edwards (February 18, 2008), Chief Revenue Officer and Publisher at Federated Media Publishing, said:

> Of the traditional folks, the NBC Universals and the FOX & the NY Times- most of the traditional media who moved online are mostly struggling. The cost basis of their businesses- the cost basis of creating content and distributing it are based on a model where they can control distribution. Because they were the unique proposition to sell to an advertiser in that model, they could charge a premium because they had a limited amount of commercial avails. They have been effective in building an online audience, and that's been around a model around content production that doesn't yet reflect the ad rates on the Internet. The abundance of supply drives the pricing down.

During the course of the interviews, my goal was to seek context and confirmation (or non-confirmation) for the findings of my case studies. My research questions, "How do the traditional elements of the marketing mix— Product, Price, Place, and Promotion— translate to the interactive Internet? " and "How are products affected when a company operates in Web 2.0?" had been answered to my satisfaction by the case studies, but I believed that it would benefit my thesis to check my satisfaction. So I challenged my presumed results by seeking the opinions of experts, and to my surprise, the themes that emerged from the interviews cast a new light on the themes I'd identified in the case studies—specifically, and perhaps most important, the emergence of brand as a catch-all term for the same ideas that might otherwise be referred to using the elements of the marketing mix.

According to marketing experts Al and Laura Ries, "Any proper noun is a brand" (Ries, 2002. p. xii). As revealed in my article analyses, this broad definition seems consistent with the way in which the term is used in trade literature, but Marty Neumeier (2003) offered a contradictory definition for the term in *The Brand Gap*, saying: "A brand is not a logo… A brand is not an identity… A brand is not a product… A brand is a person's gut feeling about a Product, service, or organization" (Neumeier, p. 7-14).

Tom Brown et al. (2006) clarified commonly used marketing terms, suggesting that "identity" and "image" would be more appropriate words than "brand" in many instances while expanding on the idea of brand as it is often used. According to Brown and his colleagues, "identity" would be the correct term for describing who a company or Product—or proper noun— is at its core, and "image" would be the correct term for how it is intended to be perceived. The noun's "intended image" is what it and any PR professionals are trying to put forth to the public as its identity (selling), and the noun's "construed image" is what it and public relations professionals believe the public perceives. Furthermore, the noun's "reputation" would be what the public actually perceives (Brown, et al, 2006, p. 102).

Although their article's intention is to change and standardize the language with which brands are discussed, the terms Brown et al. (2006) suggest as alternatives for brand make an accessible bridge between the definitions Ries (2002) and Neumeier (2003) have offered.

Since brand did not emerge as a significant theme in my article analyses on its own, and because it was such a constant theme in the interviews, if this study were to enter a second phase, I would ask interviewees to define "brand," and I would expect them to use similar language to how I have defined the four P's—or perhaps something that sounded like the alternative names for brand offered by Brown et al. (2006, p. 102). Furthermore, if I used their definitions of brand to inform choosing additional units of analysis to code in the articles studied in this thesis, I believe there's a good chance that brand would emerge as a theme. Brown et al.'s terms seem to be a mirror-image of the four P's merging into brand. Product, Price, Place, and Promotion have merged to become brand, and brand has expanded or may expand out into identity, image, intended image, and construed image.

As would any study, mine has limitations. I am most conscious of the limitation of focusing on one television company and one music company. In addition to excluding news media and the film industry, both of which would have been equally valid subjects for this research, the exclusion of other television or music companies may have led to results that do not mirror industry-wide trends. My selection of NBC and Live Nation was based in part on my own professional interests, and in part on the resources available for this study—particularly in terms of time and access. However, limiting this project did allow me to examine the two cases more thoroughly and to establish a baseline for future work on both broader and deeper levels.

Another potential limitation to the value of this study is the speed at which the Internet is affecting the evolution of business practices. There was a chance this research would be obsolete by the time it was finished. Although the elements and ideas behind the work may still be useful 10 years from the date of completion, it is quite possible that the institutions or units of analysis examined will have changed dramatically or disappeared. Original scholarship has value in and of itself, however. My research recorded and analyzed the state of marketing practices with Web 2.0 as reflected in publications about two companies and in the opinion of seven professionals, thus making possible comparison with past and future practices.

Marshall McLuhan's (1964) statement that "the medium is the message" could be applied in this thesis to mean that the distribution channel (Place), Web 2.0, is becoming the Product or promotional tool. This evolution is consistent with the principles of remediation theory. Where the types of media produced by Live Nation and NBC, or their peers, in another era may simply have been songs or programs sold to consumers through television and radios, today the songs and programs are nearly indistinct from advertising agendas, methods of delivery and budget concerns. "New digital media are not external agents that come to disrupt an unsuspecting culture. They emerge from within cultural contexts, and they refashion other media, which are embedded in the same or similar contexts" (Bolter & Grusin, p. 19).

The principles at the heart of remediation theory are exciting—refreshing. Bolter and Grusin (1999) say: "Each innovation rearranges and reconstitutes the meaning of earlier elements… true novelty would be a new medium that did not refer for its meaning to other media at all. For our culture, such mediation without remediation seems to be impossible" (p. 270-271).

I opined in my introduction that media companies have been struggling since the advent of Web 2.0 and that the interactive Internet requires more from them than the adaptations other disruptive media innovations have. Bolter and Grusin's comment suggests to me that the evolution of how media will be marketed in this digital world is consistent with other evolutions and revolutions related to any other technological advancements in any media.

I stated that my interest in conducting this study was primarily to explore how products are affected when a media company operates in Web 2.0, and I have succeeded in beginning to answer that. The analyses I conducted suggest that media products are multi-purpose—that they are what one might expect at face value—goods and services intended for sale and profit, —but they also are promotional tools and price-points and, sometimes, distribution channels.

Ultimately, the conclusions my research suggests leave me with more questions. If Product is blurring into Place, Price, and Promotion in entertainment media in the realm of Web 2.0, how are other media products being affected? How are information media products evolving, and what does the future hold?

Based on this work, my guess about the future of marketing media in Web 2.0 and beyond is that we are entering an era in which media products will be given to consumers at no monetary cost, but that value will change hands. That value may consist of consumers being asked more frequently to exchange personal data for media products, or it may be corporate sponsors embedding an increased amount of advertising into media products. On the surface, products will be free. In reality, they will act as promotional tools— and more.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear [*insert name*],

My name is Leona Laurie from the University of Oregon, School of Journalism and Communication and I am writing to invite you to participate in my graduate research study. This is a study about marketing practices on the Internet. You're eligible to be in this study because you are a recognized expert in this field, meaning that you have written a book or column on the subject, or that your firm specializes in it. I obtained your contact information from [*describe source*].

If you decide to participate in this study, please respond to this e-mail with dates and times that would be convenient for a relatively short telephone interview about marketing practices on the Internet. I also may want to send you follow-up questions by e-mail.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you'd like to participate or have any questions about the study, please email or contact me at L.Ementary@yahoo.com or 714.343.2587.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX B

VERBAL CONSENT SCRIPT

This is Leona Laurie, from the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication. As explained by e-mail, I am calling to interview you for my Master's Thesis. Thank you for agreeing to participate. This interview will contribute to my overall research, which is helping me understand marketing practices on the Internet.

Today you will be participating in an individual phone interview, which should take approximately thirty minutes to one hour. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you may stop at any time. Responses will be transcribed as they are given, stored on my personal computer, and included in my thesis paper with full disclosure of your identity. The paper may be published or posted online once it is complete, and I would be happy to share a copy with you, as well. Taking part in this interview is your agreement to participate.

If you would like a copy of this letter for your records, please let me know and I will e-mail it to you. If you have any questions regarding the research, contact my advisor, Julianne H. Newton, also of the UO School of Journalism and Communication, at JHNewton@uoregon.edu or 541.346.2167. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office for Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Oregon, (541) 346-2510. This Office oversees the review of the research to protect your rights and is not involved with this study.

Thank you again for your help.

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