

ABSTRACT

Making connections: vloggers in the age of social media

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Keywords: Vlog, social media, vloggers, connections, virtual community

Social media has significantly changed our life and the increasing number of vlog sharing websites allow people to produce and share content. This research explores the question: 'How do vloggers use content creation strategies to engage their audiences?' Its purpose is to address the gap in the literature and explore the content creation strategies used in vlogs by examining PhD vlogs and interviewing PhD vloggers via three Chinese video-sharing platforms: Bilibili, Douyin and Ixigua. The study uses an interpretive framework and qualitative exploration to investigate social media content strategies. The researcher employs a qualitative content analysis to analyse 20 video samples of online PhD vlogs, and semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 PhD vloggers about their vlogging experience. With the 20 video samples, the researcher used critical incident technique to select from a large data set, and videos were analysed using multi-modal analysis. The subject in the thesis is Chinese PhD vloggers. They are not limited to students who are studying in China, but use their Chinese citizenship and native Mandarin language to express themselves in the platforms. This oral presentation focuses on the how Chinese PhD vloggers make connections through vlogs and build networks in the virtual community. Emotional change and interpersonal communication are important for vloggers. The results will contribute to further understanding of social media content strategies, visual and digital communication, user-generated online content and the relationship between content creators and followers.