Chapter XXXIX
An Analysis of a Decade of Research Published in the "Journal of Computer Mediated Communication"

Jamie Switzer
Colorado State University, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores how, in a single decade (1995-2005), research into computer-mediated communication (CMC) has evolved by examining the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication (JCMC). *JCMC is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, open-access electronic journal that publishes primarily empirical research and presents a significant body of work falling under the rubric of CMC. JCMC has published diverse scholarly articles that further researchers' and practitioners' knowledge and understanding of CMC. This chapter synthesizes the research results presented in JCMC during its first 10 years of publication, examining the topics, methodologies, and populations utilized in those articles as well as an interpretation of the trends present in the research. Within the 279 articles analyzed, nine major categories of sample populations and eight different broad research methods were determined, and eleven broad categories of inquiry and scholarship were identified. There was no indication of any clear trends in CMC research.*

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores how, in a single decade (1995-2005), computer-mediated communication (CMC) research has evolved by examining the scholarship published in one seminal journal. The findings and conclusions presented in this chapter will add to the body of knowledge of CMC research by illustrating how scholarship in the field has developed and progressed. The intent of this chapter is to detail different characteristics of CMC research as presented in a specific journal, as well as to provide a framework for further scholarly dialogue with respect to CMC.

The *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication (JCMC)* was chosen as the representa-

tive journal for this study because it publishes interdisciplinary research exclusively in the area of CMC. Other communication and new media journals examine a broader scope of topics. Because JCMC is targeted specifically at CMC research, the topics of articles submitted to and published in JCMC tend to define the nature of the scope and study of the subject. JCMC is one of the oldest and most respected CMC-studies journals, publishing articles by such prominent CMC scholars as Nancy Baym, Charles Ess, Carolyn Haythornthwaite, Susan Herring, Steve Jones, Sheizaf Rafaeli, Fay Sudweeks, and Barry Wellman. It is also indexed in communication research databases such as EBSCO Host.

JCMC is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, open-access electronic journal that publishes primarily empirical research and presents a significant body of work falling under the rubric of CMC. It is currently edited by Susan Herring and sponsored by the Indiana University School of Library and Information Science and the Indiana University School of Informatics. Launched in June 1995 by Margaret McLaughlin and Sheizaf Rafaeli, JCMC has published diverse scholarly articles that further researchers' and practitioners' knowledge and understanding of CMC.

This study synthesizes the research results presented in JCMC during its first 10 years of publication (Volume 1, Issue 1 through Volume 10, Issue 4), examining the topics (from now on referred to as "categories of inquiry and scholarship"), methodologies, and populations researched in those articles. This study concludes with an interpretation of the trends present in the research published in JCMC.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several previous studies that have examined similar variables in specific journals over a distinct time frame. Bryant and Miron (2004) conducted a content analysis of three top-tier journals

(Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, the Journal of Communication, and the *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*) that assessed the evolution of mass communication theory in the latter half of the 20th century. The results of their study identified theories and paradigms of scientific investigation, the schools of thought that created such paradigms, the scientific fields and areas that generated them, and how the cited theories were used in the studies published in the three journals. The use of theory in information systems research has also been explored (Schiller & Mandviwalla, 2007) by researching the frequency, pattern of use, and ontological basis of 25 virtual team-relevant theories.

Riffe and Freitag's (1997) study of 25 years of *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* reviewed how content analyses have evolved in terms of frequency, authorship, focus on different media and content, sampling, reliability reporting, links to theory, and use with other methods and data. Prior reviews of new media and Internet research in several academic publications (indexed by five major databases), as well as the primary issues and concept clusters of concern to Internet researchers, were summarized by Rice (2005). Crawford (1999) evaluated two primary academic librarianship journals on the basis of type of articles published, structure of the articles, types of statistics used, and data collection methods used.

Lee, Driscoll, and Nelson (2004) reviewed four prominent distance education journals (*The American Journal of Distance Education*, the *Journal of Distance Education, Distance Education*, and *Open Learning*) to determine research trends and explore potential research directions. They specifically examined articles to determine what general and specific research topics were present, and what research and statistical methods were employed. Trends in content-analytic research in the *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* over a 45-year period were determined by focusing on the percentage of content analyses, percent-

Related Content

Overcoming Hurdles to Trust: Infomediaries and Public Records
Robert M. Easterand Linda L. Brennan (2008). *Computer-Mediated Relationships and Trust: Managerial and Organizational Effects (pp. 218-227).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/overcoming-hurdles-trust/6894

Branding Identity*: Facebook, Brands and Self Construction
Geraldina Robertiand Alberto Marinelli (2012). *Networked Sociability and Individualism: Technology for Personal and Professional Relationships (pp. 147-168).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/branding-identity-facebook-brands-self/60496

Chat Rooms for Language Teaching and Learning
Cheng-chao Suand Karen Garcia (2008). *Handbook of Research on Computer Mediated Communication (pp. 947-968).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/chat-rooms-language-teaching-learning/19798

Developing Interoperability in Mass Customization Information Systems
Ricardo Jardim-Goncalves, António Griloand Adolfo Steiger-Garcao (2010). *Mass Customization for Personalized Communication Environments: Integrating Human Factors (pp. 49-74).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/developing-interoperability-mass-customization-information/38508

E-Governance on a Global Campus
 (2011). *Anonymity and Learning in Digitally Mediated Communications: Authenticity and Trust in Cyber Education (pp. 58-83).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/governance-global-campus/53389