

**The Brave New World of the “New Media”:
How Social Media Has Revolutionized
the Communications Landscape**

Arianna Huffington

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Présidente et éditeur en chef de la “Huffington Post”

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Merci beaucoup, Denis. Mesdames, Messieurs, je suis ravie d’être parmi vous ce soir à l’occasion de cette cérémonie de remise de prix, en particulière puisque ce prix s’adresse à de jeunes scientifiques de tous horizons à qui je souhaite tout le succès possible dans la suite de leur carrière. And now on to English!

I’m delighted to be here and even though French was my first foreign language, since for all Greeks French was their first foreign language when I was born many, many centuries ago, after all these years in England and the United States, I’m afraid I’m much more comfortable speaking in English, so I apologize that you have to listen in translation. I want to add again my congratulations, in English, to the laureates; it’s just a wonderful success and I understood some of the stuff that you awarded these prizes for, but I will look forward to learning more and watching your careers bloom through the years ahead. I am particularly delighted that there is a woman among the laureates and congratulations to all of you again.

I’m also really delighted to be here on this occasion when the Latsis Foundation is presenting the prizes. I was telling Spiro Latsis that I followed in his footsteps trying to get a PhD at the London School of Economics, but I left and wrote a book instead, so he’s the one with a PhD and I only have an MA from Cambridge, which those of you who know Cambridge and Oxford know that it doesn’t mean very much, because you get it automatically after your BA, unless you get put into jail or something. I was also delighted to meet John Latsis and to see that the family tradition of having one academic in the family at all times continues.

This topic that I am going to address tonight, and I look forward to questions and a discussion after I speak, is obviously very dear to my heart and what I want to focus on is the big trends happening in media. I want to specifically address three mega trends. The first mega trend that is absolutely key is that we have moved, in media, from presentation to participation. The times when media was simply presenting information and readers or viewers were absorbing it, are over. That great sage, will.i.am, put it best when he said that we used to consume the news sitting on a couch and now we consume news galloping on a horse. We don’t just consume it: we share it; we pass it on; we add to whatever it is that we receive. This is a big transformation and this is really the big distinction between all the new media, although increasingly all the media are doing more and more to incorporate engagement and participation in what they’re doing. At the *Huffington Post* participation and engagement is at the heart of everything we do, which means basically that, at the same time as we are a journalistic enterprise that has over 700 full-time editors, journalists and engineers working at the company across ten countries at the moment, at the same time that we are that, and we won a Pulitzer last year showing that we are really very invested in long-form investigative journalism, at the same time, we are a platform. We are very proud to be a platform because being a platform means that we offer distribution to many people who otherwise would not have a voice. We also offer distribution to people who could be published in any of the old media publications, but the thing that I love the most is that provided somebody has something of quality to say, they can say it on the *Huffington Post*. It’s not a free-for-all; it has to be something of quality. But as a result we have about 50 000 people who blog, cross-post whatever it is that they are already perhaps posting on their own blogs or their own academic theses. We would love to post what you are doing; I’m addressing the laureates. We have a science section so even if all the lay people may not be able to understand, the scientists among our readers will understand. The great thing about having this platform is that we never know who is going to read it and what the repercussions are going to be. Recently, for example,

a homeless teenager wrote a blog on the *Huffington Post*, a really beautiful blog, and the Harvard Admissions Office happened to read it and offered him a place at Harvard and he's now at Harvard. That is one of the things I love. There are a lot of things that might otherwise have remained in the shadows that can be pooled and see the light of day; whatever is of quality can really surface. Also, there is no hierarchy: you can have a blog by François Hollande next to a blog by a college student, so the level playing field is around quality. Basically, what media companies, brands and the public generally need to understand is that self-expression has become the new entertainment, because a lot of people still ask why people are blogging for free or why people are updating Wikipedia entries for free or posting on Tumblr for free, while the truth is nobody ever asks why people are watching bad TV for free. Now, people would much rather be part of the story of their time by contributing their own understanding of what is happening whether in politics, in business, in culture, in lifestyle or in any topic.

The other thing that has become more important with the birth of new media is the ability to actually conduct biopsies and not just autopsies on big public events. What I mean by that is that old media have been very good at doing big investigative stories, but often then abandoning them and moving on. New media stay on a story and stay on a story often until it breaks through, because they constantly develop it with whatever it is that comes from the readers. I think it's time to abandon the debate as to whether journalism is at risk because of new media, because if you look in the past, you see that old media did not do a very good job when it comes to a couple of the big crises of the past. If you take, for example, the war in Iraq, the media, in the States especially, did a really terrible job in informing the public that the information being given by the Administration was not accurate, that in fact there was no real nuclear threat coming out of Iraq. That happened with tremendous consequences that we're still paying for and we're going to be paying for, for many years to come. In the same way, if you look at the financial meltdown in 2008, there wasn't a lot of preparation in the media to make it more likely that we would anticipate what actually happened. Old media have been very good at autopsies and we need to get much better at biopsies to prevent the crises that are happening.

Moving on to the second mega trend, traditionally media has been based on the assumption that, as we say in the States, if it bleeds, it leads, meaning bad stories tend to attract more of the attention and more of the traffic, whether it's burglaries, murders or hurricanes. What we are finding now at the *Huffington Post* is that, in fact, people really want to share news about what *is* working. One of our most popular sections is actually called "Good News" and it only has good news. Trust me, the *Huffington Post* does plenty of coverage around what is not working, what is dysfunctional, what is corrupt, the multiple crises around the world, but we are actually very, very committed to also covering what is working, putting the spotlight on the good things that are happening, because that's the only way to help scale and replicate them. We did that because we believe in it, but also it has turned out to be an incredibly important business decision. For example, we launched a section called "What Is Working Around Job Creation?", because, of course, we are doing an enormous amount of coverage around the rise of youth unemployment especially, the lack of jobs in so many industrialized countries, as well as Third World countries. We also wanted to cover all the start-ups that are booming around the world and all the outpouring of ingenuity and creativity, especially among Millennials. We started this section called "What Is Working" and then as it happened, Goldman Sachs came to us and is now sponsoring this section because they're actually spending \$500 million helping young entrepreneurs, mentoring them and helping their businesses scale all around the world, including a programme called "Ten Thousand Women", of women entrepreneurs. What we are finding is that putting the spotlight on what is working is great across all fronts. Readers love them; this is the content that they most want to share. Increasingly, of course, traffic doesn't come directly to the front page, it comes to us through side doors, through people sharing whatever they're reading on the

Huffington Post, who knows who shared the Marcel Proust story you mentioned, but if they posted on Facebook, or if they shared it with their friends, that's a way to bring new, unique visitors to the website. Because social media is what we're calling the new front door, we are finding that good stories, stories of ingenuity, creativity are stories that people most want to share with their friends and those who follow them. We've gone further than that: we've actually helped to raise money for non-profits; we partnered with the Skoll Foundation and we launched an entire competition called "Job Raising" and raised money for start-ups, then we raised money for women's non-profits and we're now in the process of doing a third round of raising money for different start-ups and non-profits, doing amazing work. We see the role of media as going beyond just covering all that is dysfunctional and being part of the solution, at the moment, when there are so many crises and such a need to involve readers and viewers in the solutions.

The third mega trend that I see, that social media are a big part of, is the fact that the internet is growing up; what I mean by that is that at the beginning of the internet, 25 years ago, the internet and social media were dominated by the search for information. Now, increasingly, people are consumed by the search for meaning. There's an incredible amount of awareness, right now, that a lot of what is happening in our world is not working. You mentioned something when awarding the first prize about how we know really what to do, perhaps, around global warming, but we're not doing it and you could say that about many, many other big issues of our time. The question is, "Why?" Why is it that we have so many leaders making such terrible decisions—in politics, in business, in media; it's not they are not smart, they have very high IQs, great degrees. I think it's because they're not wise and there is a big distinction between IQ and wisdom. Of course, going back to the Greeks, you know, our Greek philosophers were acutely aware of this distinction. But something has happened in the last 200 years and we're about to change it, so this is going to end on an optimistic note. The Greeks, all the Greek philosophers that I studied, since I went to a school that only taught us the Classics, so I graduated without knowing anything about mathematics... but as a result I was very thrilled to be brought up on what the Classics were. The Greek philosophers all asked three questions: "How do you govern the city?" "Why do we need to know?" And: "What is a good life?" And then after Spinoza, we stopped asking the question: "What is a good life?" Western philosophy became really about marginal things: about semantics and deconstruction and abandoned all the big questions of what is a good life, which is, after all, the central question of any human being.

Right now, we are coming back, often through social media, asking these questions. The reason partly why we're coming back to these questions is because leading our lives without asking these questions is no longer working. It is so clear. A Belgian philosopher, Pascal Chabot, called burn-out the "disease of civilization". We look around and we see that people are burning out and I even looked up the statistics here in Switzerland; it's kind of amazing that even here in Switzerland, which is, according to the latest UN and World Economic Forum 2013 survey—I don't know if you knew that—but you are the third happiest country in the world and you're eighth in depression. That's fantastic news, but even here with all this great news, one third of workers define themselves as chronically stressed and the highest amount of stress is among the young, 15-34 years old, and 90% of medical consultations were stress-related. We've reached the point where really something has to change. In the United States, where our healthcare system, you may have heard, is in disarray, 75 per cent of healthcare costs are because of chronic, preventable diseases.

So wherever we look, we see the need for some change and at the *Huffington Post*, as a result, even though we started as a politics and news site, we responded to this need in the culture and among our readers and now we have over 20 sections that are devoted to how we live our lives, including an entire, dedicated section on sleep. I was very delighted at lunch to discuss sleep with

Denis Duboule who was telling me that, in fact, a lot of modern science—biology, etc.—is dealing with this problem now, in a way that they never dealt with it before, because sleep was supposed to be some kind of luxury that people who were not very busy just did and, especially among men, sleep deprivation had become a kind of virility symbol. Now, this is changing; people are drawing the connections between sleep and disease, between sleep and diabetes and hypertension and obesity. Personally, just to tell you a personal story, I became a sleep evangelist in 2007 when I fainted from exhaustion, hit my head on my desk, broke my cheek bone, had four stitches to my right eye, then I started reading everything about sleep, to the point where I was invited by the Harvard School of Medicine Sleep Division to join their board. I'm now a new woman because I now get seven to eight hours rather than four to five hours and the difference it has made is dramatic; we hear that again and again and we see science confirming what individual experience makes absolutely clear. When I gave a commencement speech at Smith to the graduating class of women in May, I urged them to sleep their way to the top, literally. This is a big, game-changing shift, because we see that the need to redefine success is something that is all over social media right now.

At the *Huffington Post*, we have a dedicated section on that which we call “The Third Metric” and I'll explain why. Success so far has been equated with two metrics: money and power, which is a little bit like trying to sit on a two-legged stool: sooner or later, you're going to fall off. We came up with “The Third Metric” and “The Third Metric” consists of four things. The first one is our health and well-being. You know, success is meaningless if we are not taking care of our health and well-being and we see that everywhere; you look around the west and you see very successful men, especially, having heart attacks in their fifties as a matter of course, like a kind of price of success. Among women, the risk is even greater: there's a 40% greater incidence among women of heart disease and a 60% greater incidence of diabetes among women in stressful jobs. Clearly, something dramatic has to change. At the same time, I was talking to Jean-Dominique at lunch, and I was delighted to hear from him that he has recognized the importance, say, of unplugging and recharging. I love the story and I want to use it in my book on “The Third Metric” with your permission, Jean-Dominique, that you actually live over the weekend, whenever you can and go to your cabin, to your chalet, up in the mountains where you can be away from the constant barrage of incoming information. You presented that in medical and biological terms when you said that we are products of evolution and our minds are not used to constantly receiving information and dealing with it. As a result, modern research shows that we are in a perpetual fight-or-flight mode. On my smart phone, my screen saver is a picture of gazelles and the reason for that is because I was reading a book by Professor Mark Williams, who is a clinical psychologist at Oxford. He wrote about gazelles saying that when gazelles sense danger, they really run like crazy; they get stressed, the adrenaline goes etc, but once the danger passes and the leopard, lion has gone, they just graze. They move into that recharging space that is so hard for modern human beings because we just never really graze. The problem with having a mind is that when we're not in the present, we're either in the future, worrying about what's going to happen, or in the past, worrying about why things didn't happen better. As Montaigne said, “There were many terrible things in my life, but most of them never happened.”

That's the human brain and that's the constant presence of stress in our lives that is something that we all desperately need to get away from if we are going to be able to protect our health and also move to the second part of “The Third Metric”: tap into our own wisdom. The problem with being surrounded by technology is that we never really disconnect. It's critical that we learn to disconnect from technology in order to reconnect with ourselves, in the States, especially. I'm very impressed to see here that not many of you are multi-tasking and looking at your smart phones. In the States, you can never really go anywhere where people are not doing two things at once. Now, of course, modern research shows that there is no such thing as multi-tasking: it's

really task switching and it's the most stressful thing you can do. We write about these things, our readers tell us their stories and this is the most successful content for us on social media. People are really now trying to empower themselves to make these decisions because our culture has kind of abandoned that search, so individuals, and this is really the paradox, are sometimes using technology to learn to disconnect from technology. The most popular feature that Apple introduced recently was called "Do Not Disturb" which you can put on your Apple phone and can stop you from getting e-mails etc; you would have thought you could just put your iPhone in a different room, but modern human beings are not that self-disciplined so they need that feature to stop them from receiving e-mails—whatever it takes! Actually, at *Huff Post*, we launched our own app—there has to be an app for that—a year ago, called "GPS for the Soul". We worked with medical technologists; you can download it for free from iTunes, if you have an iPhone. You tap the sensor of your camera and it gives you a proxy for your stress level, your heart rate variability, and then you can launch a guide with all the things that help you course correct. In my case, my guide is public so you can see there are lots of pictures of my daughters when they were young and unproblematic, a long time ago. It has music that I love, landscapes... whatever it is. In under a minute, you can course correct. That's what is so amazing about the science of this: it doesn't take long to course correct. What is the problem is that if you allow that stress to accumulate until it has a health impact. We're finding that there is a real longing among our readers to address these issues, share them with each other and have discussions online about all that. Increasingly, again, this is the most shareable content: this is what people like to share because they are trying to find ways to lead the lives they want and not just the lives they settle for.

The third element of "The Third Metric", beyond well-being and wisdom, is wonder. You know, so often, again, because of technology, we find ourselves completely caught up in what is coming our way. You walk down the streets of New York, where I live, and there's hardly anybody just walking: people are on the phone, texting. Now, more people are dying because they are texting while driving, than are dying because of drunken driving, seriously. This is the new big crisis in the United States and if it hasn't come here, if you don't stop it quickly, it will come here. As a result we're kind of never in the moment. My mother, who was a kind of natural-born Greek philosopher, always kept saying to me, "Don't miss the moment." At the time (she died in 2000) I found it amazing; going out to the grocery store or to the farmers' market with her was always like a very lengthy experience because she could not have any impersonal relationships so she would connect with the shop assistants and find out everything about them before she could make a purchase. She lived in a different world; she lived in a world where she was not perpetually rushing. Now, there's a term for what most of us are experiencing: it's called "time famine". Most people are perpetually running out of time and that again has huge consequences on their stress levels. I have a quote by Brian Andreas on my desk that really makes my life much easier when I remember it. He said, writing about somebody, that her life changed the day she realized that she had all the time in the world for all the things that mattered. That's really the distinction; so often we don't make a distinction between the urgent and the important and everything in our minds becomes urgent.

The final part of "The Third Metric" is giving. The Latsis Foundation has demonstrated the power of giving but every person, however little or much they have, by giving, enters that area of abundance that is so essential to living a life that involves thriving and not just succeeding. Giving is just again a natural impulse but so often we relegate it to the less important parts of our lives. If we teach our children from early on that giving is a natural part of life and as the Bible says, "From whom much is given, from Him that much more shall be expected", it transforms their lives and their priorities. Right now, you see children absolutely addicted to technology. In fact, the American Pediatric Association put out a statement urging paediatricians to tell young

parents not to give iPhones and iPads to their children under the age of two, then after that age, while they are in Elementary School, not to let them have screen time for more than an hour and a half a day. These are becoming incredibly important priorities because you see more and more children suffering from ADD because they are having a really impossible time focusing. I think the world, in the future, is going to be run by people who can focus because the majority of people will be incapable of focusing; it's all about trying to do multiple things at once, which they think keeps them productive but it doesn't. The key thing here is that, as the world changes faster and faster, the people who are going to be most effective and most creative are those who can tap into their own wisdom and creativity. In fact, we examples already: even a technology giant, Steve Jobs, famously told his biographer, Walter Isaacson, that all his best ideas for what became the most iconic Apple products came during Zen meditation. It doesn't matter what it is: it can be meditation; it can be prayer; it can be walking in the woods; it can be fly fishing—whatever is each person's choice. The important thing is the time to connect with ourselves and disconnect from social media. I know here I am running a media company, but I'm acutely aware, maybe because I run a media company, of the need to learn to disconnect.

At the *Huffington Post*, I've tried to bring all these ideas into our company. Three years ago, for example, I instituted two nap rooms in our news room and at first our journalists were looking at me like, "Who is going to be seen walking into a nap room in the middle of the afternoon?" Now, they are perpetually full and we need to start a third one, although I must say, the other day, I was passing by one of them and I saw two people coming out of the nap room and I thought to myself, "Whatever it takes to recharge you. Just don't tell HR." We have weekly yoga classes, meditation classes and breathing classes, trying basically to make sure that our employees operate at their best because, ultimately, you don't pay people for their stamina, you pay them for their judgement. Having people sitting at their desks for 14 hours a day when in fact they are largely absent, is not to the benefit of any company. In the States, they are already estimating that \$300 billion a year are wasted by businesses because of stress. All this is changing and it's wonderful to see we have an editor who spends her day going all over the web, tracking what people are saying on the subject and it's absolutely amazing. From individuals to CEOs, the awareness is growing every day. Marc Benioff, the CEO of Salesforce, was interviewed two weeks ago and he said that he had been meditating for two decades and Steve Jobs, and it apparently had never come out before, asked that the last thing to be given to all his friends at his memorial service, in a brown box, was not the latest iPod or iPhone but the book that was the most important book in his life and it turned out to be the autobiography of a yogi because it's a book about self-actualization. It's really interesting to see how a lot of the technology icons have actually recognized the importance of learning to disconnect from technology and reconnect with ourselves. We also see examples at the other end: recently, Kai-Fu Lee, who was the former president of Google in China, went to his 50 million Weibo followers, his 50 million followers on the equivalent of Chinese Twitter, to tell them that at the age of 50 he was diagnosed with cancer. He wrote this very moving piece because, you know 140 characters in Chinese, you can actually write a whole essay, and he said, "I naively used to compete with others to see who could sleep less and made fighting to the death a personal motto, and it's only now when I'm suddenly faced with possibly losing 30 years of life that I've been able to reconsider." It was a really moving piece by somebody who was completely rooted in the world of technology. It had a big impact in China, which itself is suffering. I was there two weeks ago and literally, every day, you could not see anything because of the pollution in Beijing; it is suffering the unintended consequences of industrialization and very rapid growth.

Let me wrap up by saying that every religion and every philosophy really comes down to the same truth. Every religion gives it a different expression but in order to cover atheists as well as the theologians present, let me just speak instead of a fellow Greek, Archimedes, who said,

“Give me a place to stand and I can move the world.” And that is really the key: every human being has that place, that place of strength, wisdom, peace, that place from which you are invincible, from which anything can happen and we can deal with it. But social media and modern technology are making it harder for us to tap into that place and that is a real danger right now that all of us need to deal with. If you think of it, if you remember the last time you were perhaps at a funeral or a memorial service and listening to a eulogy, when people are eulogized, you don’t hear things like, “You know what, George was absolutely amazing; he increased market share by one third.” Or, “He became SVP at the age of 35.” Or, “She never ate lunch except at her desk, that’s how committed she was to her job.” No, instead, you hear about people’s character, generosity, sense of humour and how they made others feel. What is really interesting is that that’s not how we live our lives; that’s not how we make decisions. Maybe it’s time for us to learn to live our lives based on our eulogies and not our résumés and that will dramatically change the place of technology in our lives; then technology and social media can be in the proper place as a servant that makes life easier, that makes connections easier, that brings the world together, but not as a snake in the Garden of Eden. Technology can be a Garden of Eden. We see all the amazing impacts it has had and we see the amazing impacts social media has had from the Arab Spring to the ability to connect with friends and family in the easiest possible way, but if we don’t deal with these unintended consequences then the snake can really take over. The results, as we’re already seeing, can be incredibly detrimental. Being a natural optimist, both because I’m Greek and a naturalized American, so I have a double dose of optimism, I believe that we will solve these problems and stand by the growing awareness and the growing discussion around these themes in social media. I hope you can all join the discussion and accelerate the moment when we will put technology in its proper place. Thank you so much.